

VIOLET HAMILTON; OR, THE TALENTED FAMILY.

CHAPTER V.

THE information which Mr Charles Herbert received from our heroine's Scottish nurse, now a house-letter in London in high trust, gave food for meditation during a long and solitary ride, on which the young man did not permit even his servant to follow him. On the whole, it had been much more satisfactory to him than was the intelligence which Mistress Linton had been able to extract from him, either relating to business or friendship. The old lady liked a reasonable *quid pro quo* in all things, and fancied herself rather unhandsomely treated when Charles, her great favourite, neither promised her his interest with his mother for her former nursling, "poor Miss Vilet," nor came to the point about the finances of Professor Cryppes. "Professor" sounded with dignity in her Scottish ears; but paying eighty guineas a month for a house, and six more for the stables, was astounding, whether for St Andrew's or Old Aberdeen.

With Mr Michael Twig, who was shortly afterwards sent by his master for a copy of the inventory, the Socratic, or, more correctly, the Scottish mode of questioning, or pumping, proved sovereign; though the result of the process was anything but satisfactory to Mistress Linton.

"A music schulemaster!—a fiddler that plays on the organ, the kist of whistles, in their Prelatic kirks, to set up to pay for a hoose like this!" was her indignant meditation over her tea. "And Miss Vilet breeding up for a play-actor; I think black-burning shame o't; were it but for the name she bears:—e'en the Cawmells, that were sic deacons at the trade, didna openly disgrace the country; they had the decency to ca' themsel's *Kembles*—set them up! And Major Hamilton's daughter to turn play-actor! Surely the misguided lassie might find a better calling: I'll speak to her myself; it's my duty, as a countrywoman, to a fatherless and motherless young thing. . . . And the clanjumpy she's among to run riot in a hoose like this! Mr Charles would need to look for sikker caution for the rent, I can tell him; and the waste o' the carpets, and clouring o' the knives, and smashing o' the chinee," &c., &c., &c.

On this subject, the judgment of Sir George Lees coincided remarkably with that of Mrs Linton, the shrewd Scotch house-agent. The agreement was no sooner concluded, than he assailed Herbert, when they met at their club, with—"What scrape is this you have got into, Charles, with little Cripps and Shuffleton's hoose? What the deuce has put it into his scheming head to take a thing of that sort!—he'll be borrowing of us next; and Shuffleton's attorney will never get one penny from him."

"He has me for surety," replied Herbert, in a tone of quiet irony. "To be sure that is not much."

"I cannot admire your prudence so much as his impudence, Charles. How could you be so raw?"

"What the deuce could I do? When Shuffleton's solicitor asked for references, and—the scrupulous knave—for security too, Mr Cripps did me the honour to refer to me. It had been wiser had he done you the honour, Sir George."

"Thank you!" was the thought of the baronet, who said aloud; "And to plant himself, with all his tribe, just under our noses:—it is enough, by Jove! to desecrate the entire quarter. Could you not have given Shuffleton's *doer* a hint to say that another negotiation for the house was all but concluded—that the rent was a hundred and fifty pounds a-month—that"——

"I did not think it worth while to *lie* about it, Sir George," said the young man, coldly.

"Ah, well, Mrs Herbert, dear kind soul, must just pay when the time comes—though I hope she may not need"——

"As do I—for she sha'n't;—that I am determined on, whatever be the consequence. My step-mother has been far too generous—too indulgent to me already. You know well, Sir George, the sacrifices which my generous mother has made to clear off my foolish Oxford and Turf encumbrances, and save me the exposure which I richly deserved. By heavens! I adore the spirit of my father's wife—I were the most ungrateful, insensible cub alive else."

And yet there were times when Charles Herbert was tempted to be thus ungrateful, and to wish that his step-mother, with much less indulgence, allowed him a little more personal independence. Lightly and gently as she carried the rein, he knew that the bit was there; though it was only felt from the restive motions of the proud and but half-broken colt. The extraordinary settlement of his father, which left him, even in pecuniary matters, so dependent on a lady on whose affections he had no natural claim, was more galling to his spirit than his reason justified, when he reflected upon the entire devotedness to him which, from early boyhood, Mrs Herbert had shewn. A mother could not have been more tenderly indulgent. He was aware that, still in the prime of life, and in the full possession of those personal charms which Time had mellowed into richer beauty, she had refused several flattering offers of marriage; though so far from being unambitious, that her greatest weakness lay in the other direction; and though she valued rank and distinction in society so highly, as to be jealously susceptible about that mere sufferance or notoriety after which ladies, more vain and less proud, panted, and bent their lives and fortunes to attain. Charles Herbert could scarcely believe that so young and beautiful a woman had entertained any deep attachment to his father, whom, he understood rather than knew, she had

married from pique and disappointment. His friend, his advocate, almost his ally against his father's severity, and more like an affectionate elder sister than a harsh step-dame, Mrs Herbert had early gained the heart of her son. He knew her latent ambition; but its aims were generous, and they were for himself. The object dearest to her heart was, that Charles should marry well; and her ideas of "marrying well" were neither sordid nor vulgar. About a year previous to the period of which we speak, the mother and son had been at Baden, where, among the English visitors, they became acquainted with the Earl of Tarbert, a widower, and his only daughter, Lady Laura Temple, in whom Mrs Herbert saw her *beau ideal* of a wife for Charles, with probably a title in reversion. The Earl had been long in public life, as ambassador at a great German Court; and Lady Laura, after her education was finished, had lived with him abroad. She was three or four years older than Charles Herbert, though this circumstance did not in the least, in the estimation of his step-mother, detract from the many advantages of the noble, intelligent, and charming Lady Laura.

"She is too good, too grand, too *superior*, as you ladies say, for me," would Charles laughingly reply, in parrying his mother's indirect attacks or attempts to direct his affections in the right channel; to elevate his sentiments and character, as she thought, by the influences of the noblest and the most generous affections; by the admiration and passionate love of womanhood's surpassing excellences, all combined in the dignified Lady Laura.

"It would be the dearest happiness which life now promises, to see you, my dearest Charles, the husband of Laura Temple; such a union would leave me nothing to desire, securing, not merely the happiness, but the dignity of your existence. I should feel that, at length, I had discharged my duty to your father:—you know not, Charles, its extent."

Charles began to think that his mother's extreme anxiety for this alliance, though at first most disinterested, now involved a little struggle for power. This was not the way to succeed. He discovered, too, or at least told his mother, that he wished to travel for two or three years; that he was too young for marriage; and that the Lady Laura, by some few years his senior, was ages beyond him in maturity of judgment and experience of life. His constant gay plea was, that he was quite unworthy of so high a destiny.

"She is a fine, intelligent, dignified creature, and I hope will marry some prince and share his principality; and if you, *Maman*, will repent, and accept the Earl—and what brows more beautiful could grace his strawberry leaves?—I should be proud to claim Lady Laura as my most illustrious connexion. . . . Besides, she never shews me the smallest particle of favour."

Mrs Herbert coloured and frowned. "This is not a theme of light talk, Charles. I have gone far, and perhaps too far, in permitting you

to see my own impression. Laura Temple is not the woman, whatever were her rank, to be won unsought."

By degrees, Charles learned that, in declining the offer of the Earl, Mrs Herbert had declared her fixed intention of never marrying, and of settling her whole fortune upon her husband's son, if he were happy enough to gain the favour of Lady Laura, to which, she insinuated, he aspired. In stating this to the Earl, Mrs Herbert did not mean to deceive. Her ardent wishes half deceived herself.

The Earl was wonderfully indifferent. His views for his daughter might, ten years before, have been more ambitious; but now, so cool, independent, and impracticable a young lady might safely be left to her own judgment; and the Earl was desirous that she should marry some one. In her rank, a woman of twenty-seven is very near being confounded with the old maids; and besides, his daughter's marriage would remove every obstacle to his own.

The families separated in the previous autumn, the Earl and his daughter both well-disposed to young Herbert; and Lady Laura, with the ardour of a generous nature, making up to Mrs Herbert by increased esteem and affection for her previous suspicion of the arts employed by the quiet, composed, but ambitious widow to captivate her uxorious father. Again, before leaving Germany, and when Laura herself had become favourable to the union, Mrs Herbert decidedly refused the Earl; while, so far as delicacy allowed, she expressed renewed anxiety for the marriage of the younger pair. She was certain that Charles had no other attachment, or none, save of the transient nature, likely to interfere with the splendid connexion on which she had set her heart and hopes.

The Earl and Lady Laura were now expected in London for the first time for four years; and Mrs Herbert could not help flattering herself that her darling project had some influence in their determination, as they had become almost naturalized in the circles of Vienna. In the mean time, to ward off the worse mischief of a serious attachment, she had been rather pleased with the "harmless flirtation" struck up between her friend, pretty little Mrs Somers Stocks of the Grove, and her volatile step-son; and still more satisfied, when, in a mood between the love of fun and the first stirrings of ambition, the young man had thrown himself into public life at the W— election; where he had relished the sport so much, that he declared the taste had whetted his appetite, and that he was almost tempted to become in earnest "The saviour of his country."

Mrs Herbert did not fail to expatiate upon these hopeful symptoms, in her epistolary communications with Lady Laura Temple, who, she justly said, was intended for something better than being the wife of a mere self-indulging, idle, and fashionable man of fortune. That Charles did not think of getting into Parliament, she imputed to his youth. That like too many clever young men of the day, he was inclined to *Liber-*

altern, she did not think it needful to repeat; rightly concluding, that in a man of very large property, married to the only child of a peer, this error was either likely to be speedily abjured, or never carried to an imprudent length.

Since the return of Mrs Herbert and her son from Baden, the latter had lived in Chambers, ostensibly for the advantage of greater seclusion in prosecuting his studies; and his new vocation of statesmanship. It was an arrangement which suited both parties; and it was with renewed zest that Charles daily left his confined lodgings to fly to the splendid dwelling and choice society of his refined and affectionate step-dame. With her he dined almost every day; or if at his club, or with a friend, his evenings were either spent with her, at home, or in attending her to public places and parties. They were indeed inseparable. It was in gaily relating to her his varied adventures at W——, on the evening of the day that he had met the Cripps party, and become the surety of "the Professor," that Charles became conscious of something unusual in the reserve, or awkwardness, or complication of emotions; which led him, in his provincial sketches, to omit all allusion, even to the existence of Violet Hamilton. Misfortune had either hallowed the beautiful orphan to his imagination; or that mystery, in which young love ever enshrouds itself, was already stealing over him; not that he had forgotten the friendly suggestions of Mrs Marion Linton; nor how much Violet required a powerful and benevolent protectress of her own sex; but that, really wanting confidence, he tried to believe he had not yet sufficiently pondered on the method of introducing the subject so as to ensure success. Mrs Herbert had been amused and interested by his adventures and sketches, and gay repetitions of his oratorical efforts. "And now, Charles," she said, "in return for your news, I have charming intelligence for you. Lord Tartert and Laura are to be here immediately. I have been so fortunate as to secure a first-rate house for them, such as would almost please me for yourself, had you already the felicity to call Lady Laura your own."

"Pray, my dear mother, don't make me too vain," replied Herbert, more, however, annoyed by the renewal of the old subject, now become more disagreeable than ever. "All-conscious of my own demerits and her bright perfection, I am afraid lest any hint of my ambitious audacity get abroad; besides, I have serious thoughts of espousing the Commonwealth—dedicating myself, like so many more patriots, to—My country!"

"And Laura Temple is the very being to give form and steadiness to such noble ambitions," replied Mrs Herbert, who would not be joked out of her attack: "How, Charles, you will yet bless my memory for raising your thoughts to this noble creature!"

"Far too good for me, I am sure; I would as soon think of proposing to the Majesty of Britannia ruling the waves, upon the reverse of one of our old coins, as of asking Lady Laura to be

my bride. Remember, mother, that though I may turn out a very great orator, I am still but a mere mortal."

"I thought better of your good taste, sir; than this style of conversation warrants."

Charles Herbert could not bear to offend his mother, nor to live under her seeming displeasure. She had learned, perhaps, in the course of her married life, to cherish a little sullen wrath, gilded over by a calm exterior; which would have corroded the warm and candid bosom of her son. He now hastened to implore forgiveness and vow amendment; and, while he kissed hands on his pardon, ventured, like a true man, to offend again, by saying—

"I shall learn to hate Lady Laura if she becomes, however innocently, the cause of disagreement between us, who, until we met her, had not alone the most cordial affection, but a league, offensive and defensive, against all mankind; hating and liking exactly the same persons."

Mrs Herbert was about to retort, but wisely recollected that she might injure her own cause; and, when Charles requested, as a sign of complete forgiveness, that she should grant him "one favour," she graciously acceded, saying—

"But I beseech you do not let it be that I should take up Professor Cripps and his musical daughter: you know how sensitive I am on the head of *Hoos* and *gentils* of every description—but particularly of the female sort: . . . : What, Charles, is the mighty favour?"

Herbert did not reply promptly: He looked embarrassed, uneasy.

"Merely, merely," he said at last, "that you give up the Opera, and go with me to Covent Garden to see Macready to-morrow. Since I became an orator and a public character, I am becoming curious about the graces of declamation."

"With the greatest pleasure, my dear Charles," replied the lady, with the proud alacrity and warm devotion of a real mother; "with the greatest pleasure; fine Operatic lady as you sometimes call me, I will accompany you to the theatre as often as you please."

"What a kind, charming woman she is, could she be but persuaded that a man is generally the fittest person possible to know the sort of wife that best suits himself. . . . : If this sweet, modest Violet were but Laura Temple!"

While Charles Herbert was studying declamation, or meditating in his solitary chambers upon the means of creating for Violet that interest in his mother's heart, which she was fast gaining in his own, Professor and Mr Jack Cryppes were not dallying in their arrangements.

Jack suggested that his father should instantly treat for the purchase of Mr Shuffleton's small cellar of "choice wine," which, however, was not for sale. The attorney fought shy. Jack, himself, bought the phaeton, though, probably, owing to his being the negotiator, the person from whom the carriage—"quite as good as new, the property of a person of quality who had no farther use for it"—was purchased, insist-

ed on having £80, hard down, to account—a proceeding which the Professor thought shabby. Sir George Lees, with an order on Mr Cryppes' banker, in his pocket, undertook, in the meantime, to look out for horses,—the family council held on one splendid horse or two handsome ponies, having been conclusive for the ponies.

Sir George was a thorough judge of horse-flesh, and an adept at bargaining for it. Sir George had even been flattered by the commission, humbly solicited as the greatest kindness by his quondam W—— canvasser.

"Will Lees really jockey little Cripps?" was Charles Herbert's secret and uncharitable thought. He rebuked it,—but it would return. He had begun of late to think that Sir George was neither overburdened with heart nor intellect; that he was more *hard* in his worldliness than most other men; all men being, he began to fear, more or less worldly. And though a knowing, pleasant, gentleman-like person, Sir George had ways of talking, and of thinking too, on many subjects, and particularly about women, which were disgusting, and at times abhorrent to the young man who had been the spoiled child, or indulged younger brother, of the refined and delicate Mrs Herbert, him who had admired the lofty and noble-natured Laura Temple; and who, with deep reverence for womanhood, was beginning to be fascinated by the freshness and sensibility of heart, the ingenuous candour and delicious softness of the lovely and friendless girl, whose image was taking possession of his fancy, the more irresistibly, as it seemed, from his efforts to banish it. Her, above every other woman, he could not now endure to hear named by the profane lips of his friend Sir George, without a thrill of indignation, not the less vehement that prudence demanded the concealment of his emotion; for how was he to constitute himself the cavalier of "Mademoiselle Gabrielle?"

But here we outrun our story.

On leaving the house in the Regent's Park, (now his own,) the Professor—his case stuffed, in passing, with the cards of address, which he had providently ordered that same morning—engaged the best looking equipage that could be obtained for hire; and, though it was already getting dusky, resolved to drive round to scatter them among a few of his particular friends.

"Any objection, till dinner-time, to a peep of London by gas-light, ladies?" said the Professor. "I can take you all." Jack, always alert, was, meanwhile scribbling the number of Shuffleton's house in the corners of the tickets his father was going to distribute, in a very small and neat back-hand.

"I vote for lunch, the fire side, and a song from La Belle Hamilton," cried he, squinting up into Violet's face with a look which instantly made her reply—

"I will be very glad to accompany you and Miss Cripps on your drive, sir."

"Then hey for the city! I must settle about the house." This was accordingly done, and, as we have seen, well done, by giving a reference

to Mr Charles Herbert; and then the Professor went on his rounds.

He was not one of those enviable persons who, on entering London, have merely to sow cards and reap invitations; but he had power of its own kind, and, what was far better, knew well how to turn it to good account. In the course of this zig-zag and round-about most eccentric drive, the Professor dropped his card at at least twenty doors of different orders of respectability; his industrious daughter diligently hunting up the Court Directory for him, and Mike Twig being kept in hot exercise. In London he had several old professional friends, who had thriven, and now held a respectable place in good musical, theatrical, and convivial society. He also claimed acquaintance with itinerating concert-givers, managers, and semi-managers, and wandering stars from the metropolis, who had enjoyed his hospitalities on the Mall at W——, and obtained his friendly offices with both the Whig and Tory newspapers of that opulent and tasteless town. In London, several of his old pupils were now settled in the world; and, among others, an enthusiastic scraper on the violin, who had, however, prudently given over crossing the soul of his city uncle, and taken seriously "o' mornings" to the serious business of the banking-house. His evenings were still devoted to the fine arts and pleasure. With a call at one or two music-shops, when the ladies alighted, the drive terminated, so far as they were concerned. Some new music was carried away, and a grand piano-forte chosen and ordered to be sent positively next morning to the new house. The Professor gave his orders, not in the undecided and sneaking way, which defeats itself, but in the tone of a man able to enforce them as tradesmen best love.

"I have provided for your pleasure, Mademoiselle, to-morrow evening. I do not mean that you should appear at the Opera till your dress is a little Londonized; but to-morrow evening, after the play, we shall try, with a few friends, what echo Shuffleton's walls give to good music."

The Professor had one more call to make—the last—in which his son was to accompany him. The ladies were, therefore, set down at their hotel; and Jack jumped up as they entered, his hands filled with beautiful exotics.

"For La Belle Hamilton! 'Sweets to the sweet!' Is not this a winter bouquet worth looking at, Polly?"

"From whom?" inquired Polly.

"Oh, ho! All my eye, Miss Polly. . . . Never tell tales out of school, Mademoiselle," said Jack, with an impudent but good-humoured wink, meant to be sly.

"Charles Herbert, I dare say. Gabrielle was raving about flowers to him this morning. Go, Quintin; you keep my father waiting," said Polly, sharply.

Violet, with a beating heart, made one step forward to rescue her welcome property, if it were hers—and then hesitated.

"They cannot be for me;" and her eye rested fondly on some beautiful white camellias which she was sure were at least twin-flowers of those she had admired that morning in Mrs Herbert's balcony.

"Not for you, Ma'mselle. Oh, no! this is not your address, I presume;" and Jack handed her a card which established the fact.

Violet was unable just then to feel offence at anything.

"Flowers are too precious to be refused on slight grounds," she returned, blushing slightly. "I welcome the lovely strays;" and she put out her hands to receive them. "Will you have some. Miss Cripps; here are plenty for both of us."

"No, I thank you," said the pouting Polly.

"Don't quarrel about your lovers, young ladies," cried the undaunted Jack; "London has abundant adorers for you both. I'll bespeak Burke Barker for you, Poll."

"What a tiresome fool you are, Jack."

"If Barker is engaged," said Jack, taking his place by his father, "with any important affair—cutting up Grey, or smashing the Whigs for tomorrow's *Cerberus*—you mustn't get crisp or snuffy, Professor, should he refuse to see us. I have known him slam his door in the face of a Cabinet Minister before now; or, at least, a Minister's Sec.: 'I turn you out, my Lord, the more effectually to keep you in,' was his neat pointed turn, on one such occasion."

"All vastly fine, Jack. . . . I hope Barker will see me though; for I want him. If these fellows who came down to W— were so anxious about small puffs in its paltry prints, what must be the power of the metropolitan press. . . . I fancied your friend a Liberal."

"So he was; but the proprietor of the *Cerberus* changed last Wednesday. We are now decidedly Conservative; Church and State—to the backbone."

"Jack, I think you don't altogether want sense," said the Professor, who had given but slight attention to the revolution in politics of the *Cerberus*.

"Thank you, sir!" returned Jack.

"You know of what consequence it is to me, and my family—yourself included, puppy—that I start well."

"Ways and means, papa?" said Jack, peeringly. "Mademoiselle is to be our philosopher's stone, I presume; the Cripps' Eldorado; stony enough she has proved, to poor Jack, who, *entre nous*, Professor, was never more in want of a few pieces than at this blessed moment."

The Professor drew out his purse.

"If you, Jack, with your abilities, could behave with but common discretion and tact"—The Professor counted out five sovereigns.

"Do make it the ten, father? You know I am about to make your fortune. For myself, hang law and letters, I will never make salt to my broth by them. I speculate on a dash in the line matrimonial:—Have at a city fortune! You wot come down the ten—make it even money, then?"

And six sovereigns were slipped into Jack's left hand, as, with the right, he rung at the door of Barker's chambers.

In the absence of his servant who, he said, had gone to fetch his horse, that gentleman opened the door himself, and a dark, tall, and thin, saturnine person, met the respectful scrutiny of the Professor. Mr Burke Barker was, probably, not above thirty years of age, if so much, though in the tear and wear of life, he was already quite bald; and, indeed, derived no inconsiderable advantage in physiognomy from the polish of what is called a highly intellectual head.

Whether it was that Professor Cripps was neither a Minister nor a Minister's Secretary, and that the Editor of the *Cerberus* saw no use in playing grand, he received his courteous and gentleman-like little visitor with frank affability.

Mr Barker had too deep a knowledge of the seamy side of life, to err by over-estimating the talents of any new provincial aspirant whatever; though he was disposed to judge favourably of the person soliciting his friendly offices as a journalist. He knew that Cripps was a good organist and pleasing composer; and that, though his manners savoured of the pomposity and elaborate courtesy of the past generation, and his musical principles might be equally ancient, he was not a quack. The Professor had had a thoroughly good and systematic musical education. Even Jack, with all the mountebankery for which Mr Burke Barker sometimes rated him in a friendly way, was a young fellow of quicker parts, and more universal acquirements, than ninety-nine in the hundred of those raw youths that yearly arrived in the metropolis with a collection of manuscript poems in their carpet bag—and a determination to become famous, and make their fortunes.

In Barker, on the other hand, the Professor saw, in the first five minutes, a man whom it was folly to attempt to humbug in the ordinary way; and he, at once, took the line of sense and propriety. It was, therefore, neither on his brilliant talents as a powerful journalist, nor his inestimable service to his patron, that the Professor plied Mr Burke Barker with delicate and well-turned compliments, implied rather than expressed, but upon the uncompromising independence, the stern integrity of his inflexible public principles.

Jack could not forbear squinting tremendously and comically up into his father's grave face of hypocrisy; but, fortunately, the obliquity was not perceived by either the speaker or the flattered person addressed, with whom the bait, or the balm, it is not, we fear, strange to say, had taken.

"Well, I fancied Barker a cleverer chap than that comes to, to be humbugged by the governor; but then he sometimes fancies he has a conscience, and it may require a sop: what a clever old shaver is *Papa*, too!—Turn Burke Barker's flank; but vanity, vanity, all is vanity."

Mr Barker, in the course of a general lively chat, politely offered his visiter a box order for

four for Covent Garden, next evening. Macready was to appear in *Virginius*.

"No thanks, my dear sir; it will afford me infinite pleasure if I can be of any use to you. Such trifles, you know, Professor Cryp-pes, circulate freely in our corporation."

Jack had dexterously inoculated Barker with the dissyllable, and the Editor also believed that Cripps had obtained a degree.

The Professor would accept the order only upon one condition—that Mr Barker would wave ceremony, and join his family *petit souper* after the play, to meet merely "his friends"—what a host of friends the Professor had—"Sir George Lees and Mr Charles Herbert, the young man who had cut so promising a figure at the W—election."

Mr Barker, although the proprietary of the *Cerberus* had changed politics since Wednesday, courteously accepted the polite invitation, and the nearer subject was modestly introduced. The Professor implored, not patronage, but advice. Mr Barker, with his tact, must know perfectly how the land lay—he asked for no undue favour, though friendly counsel was above all price."

"A fair start in London, Mr Barker, is all that I want—all that I am entitled to expect for my gifted pupil and myself. Of her talent, her genius, I ought to say, there can be no question. I have listened to Mara, sir, in her best days. I am getting an old fellow, Mr Barker, as that tall rascal proves, and have sat at the feet of Billington and Storace, sir. I have heard Salmon, and Mountain, and Dickens, and so forth, need I say how often? as for Sontag and Kitty Stephens, they are but chits."

The little Professor began to swell and blow out, when the eloquent squint of Jack gave needed check to his vanity, and recalled his better sense.

"My pupil is a rare and wonderful creature, Mr Barker," he continued, in a quieter tone. "No doubt, I may be partial, but I could venture my reputation that the girl will make a noise. She is very young, and peculiarly sensitive and shy, nor am I fond of familiarizing her to the public eye; but with *real* friends, such as I am proud to call Mr Burke Barker, and real judges too, the case is different. I do not bid you praise Gabrielle—no, sir!—I am proud for my pupil. I only entreat you will hear her and judge of her yourself, and I am not afraid of the result."

The Professor dropt a few mysterious hints about the private history of his pupil, while Mr Barker nodded gravely, from time to time, as if taking mental notes, and the visitors rose, with apologies from the Professor for intruding on moments so precious.

"We may depend on you, Barker, to assist at giving Mademoiselle and my sister welcome to their new home to-morrow night—Regent's Park, you know—Shuffleton's China Closet."

"Nay, nay, Jack, I did not promise for the young ladies," rejoined the Professor, laughingly. "They may be ever-fatigued and out of looks,

poor dears, and have not got dresses yet, and all that."

"Pho, pho, governor—so much more needful, if they are fatigued, of a spoonful of white soup, or a lobster patty and a glass, or, by're lady! a couple, of champagne, with a little music to recruit and set them to rights."

The Professor frowned and smiled at his incorrigible heir-apparent, and Mr Barker, by some sudden freak or other, or perhaps the natural reaction of Jack's high airs, relapsed into editorial dignity.

"If I possibly can; but pray don't expect me. My cab will be ordered for ten, at all events; for I must look in at the theatre—a few words will be looked for in the *Cerberus* in the morning; and Macready is a devilish good fellow."

"You don't hear him, governor—we don't hear you, Barker, I mean," cried Jack, offering as if to put his fingers in his father's ears, as he hurried him off. "He says he will come. . . . All my eye," continued Jack, as the carriage drove off. "I wish I were as sure this six sovereigns were sixteen, as of Barker appearing at the hour of eleven. . . . Heigh, ho, what a whirl-gig world it is, father. You ish humbug—I ish humbug—all ish humbug!"

The Professor was resentful; and the rest of the drive was devoted to a lecture upon propriety of manners and dress, and about idle frivolity that would never come to anything. Jack looked out at the window, and set his lips to whistle the air to which he durst not give breath.

"When did Charles Herbert fall in love with your pupil, father mine?" said Jack, at last. "I had an eye to her myself, if she make a hit. . . . a delicious little creature she is."

"Hold your tongue, sir."

Jack rarely cherished anger, or even spite. His affections possessed the qualities of a sieve. With a certain degree of art and cunning, he was so perfectly what the world terms good-humoured, that he had never even known what malice or rancour meant, and had often been utterly astonished to learn that his satirical verses, and lively sallies in the *Cerberus*, which were termed falsehoods, malicious slanders, and scurrilous libels, could be deemed other than as exceedingly amusing and pleasant by their unfortunate subjects, as they were by himself. The firebrands, arrows, and death which Jack scattered, were really thrown about him in sport—and for some small pay. Malice, Jack utterly disclaimed. He hated no one, and rather liked his mother, and Polly, and Susan, and Ned, and several "good fellows" and pretty girls—one, two, or three at a time, as it happened, for it was much the same to Jack. At the moment he was somewhat out of sorts with the governor: "Yet the old boy in this dash upon the town is shewing blood," thought Jack, whose high animal spirits and sanguine temper were a fortune in themselves. With six gold pieces in his pocket—generally cleaned out—and a good dinner, a bottle of wine,

and good music in prospect, Jack soon recovered his best humour.

Violet did sing that night ; she sang with her master ; to his accompaniment ; by herself ; and she sung enchantingly ; seeming no more aware of the presence of Jack, or of his *brava's*, than if he had been one of the music-stools. The Professor was charmed. His fortune was made, and in the way most gratifying to his pride ; for he would rather, in his grand moods, have been the instructor of an acknowledged *Prima Donna* than the father of a duchess, who might settle a handsome annuity upon him.

In his dash, *en Cossaque*, upon the metropolis, Professor Cripps, like other soaring and ambitious spirits, depended much upon rapidity of movement : on taking the enemy by surprise, carrying the war into his country, and there making war support war. Were we to state the real amount of his funds for this great enterprise, our veracity as historians might be questioned ; and, it may be enough to hint that, of money placed in his hands for the premium, board, and clothing of his pupil, and the handsome results of his Farewell Concert, much less remained than Mrs Somers Stocks calculated upon. That little was threatened to be made less. A letter by the next morning's post, from Mrs Cripps, announced the irritating fact ; that the shopkeeping churls of W——, that wretched, insignificant den, to which the Professor had sacrificed his prospects for so many years, were resolved, with every good wish for his prosperity in the metropolis, to have their little bills settled before the family and furniture were removed. They did not scruple—the more barbarous among them—to insinuate that the Professor had stolen a march upon them ; besides, the accounts were too long past due already, and must be discharged in full.

"Dem'd nonsense to expect any such stuff," cried the insulted gentleman, throwing down his lady's epistle. "Let them wait, and be cursed to them ; serve them right ; write instantly to your mother, Polly. Had she had the gumption to send forward the light luggage, they might have kept the trash." Violet was just entering with a letter in her hand ; her presence was ever a restraint on the Professor's vivacious sallies, recalling him to propriety of demeanour, when irritation banished his customary suavity. "Ah, Mademoiselle ! musical genii, I see by your eyes, have been all night hovering round your pillow !"

Violet liked the Professor less in his high-flown fits than even in his irascible humours ; but the sudden and forced changes from the angry to the treachy mood was worse than either.

"I have thought it right to apprise my friends in Guernsey of my sudden change of residence," said Violet, composedly. "Our rector is to be in London in June ; and, with your permission, sir, would take me home during the summer vacation, which I could then pass agreeably, without embarrassing the plans of Mrs Cripps and the family."

"Totally impossible, Mademoiselle. This is

the very crisis of your fortune. To-tally impossible ! My own summer plans are not yet fixed—time enough. Perhaps I may take you a run over to Paris, or rather Vienna, if we can't manage both, or only Brighton perhaps. Of course, when the season closes, we must go somewhere."

The Professor, though at present dazzled with bright flitting visions, would have been a poor violinist indeed if, in this great emergency, he had not had in reserve two or more strings to his bow. A concert at Brighton to stampt fashion, a stroll to wealthy Manchester and ostentatious Liverpool, after a *coup de main* upon Dublin, were all included in the possible ; not, however, until London had been fairly tried. Violet's face betrayed her disappointment. In intimating to her affectionate and humble friends that morning, the vague doubts and fears that were thickening in her path, they had taken a more marked form to her own mind ; and, though she could not tell all she felt, she strongly expressed her apprehensions of being as unfit as she was disinclined for the arduous, if brilliant and conspicuous, part to which her master directed her ambition.

Professor Cripps was not altogether selfish in his designs. The developement of the musical talent of his pupil—of that "divine gift" which she probably possessed in the abundant measure which he sanguinely believed—while it redounded to his large profit and immortal honour, must also crown the enviable possessor with glory in the eyes of all Europe, and ultimately secure her a handsome fortune, with, perhaps, rank and title, in a matrimonial alliance. What more common, if she played her cards well ? which he hoped she would ; his own character and interest being deeply involved in the game. Besides, however insensible his wife or daughter might be to the charms of the gentle and lovely orphan girl, the Professor's was no jealously feminine, nor yet "savage breast." Musical geniuses may be as intensely selfish as any other class of bipeds, and, by training and position, fully as profligate and depraved, but there is always some lurking enthusiasm, some latent sympathy with the beautiful, in their original nature ; and the hopes which the Professor had placed in the success of his pupil, the pains he had taken with her education, her rapid improvement, and the unconscious, undesigned fascination of her manners, had obtained great influence over his mind : Where he might have bribed and flattered an inferior girl placed in the same circumstances, relative to his own aspirations, he really liked, and warmly praised, Violet. She had not yet thwarted his views. "Cripps is a fool about that girl," was a not unfrequent remark of Mrs Cripps :

"Before your summer plans are fixed," said Violet, "I hope something may occur to change your views respecting me. In Guernsey I shall not be idle, I assure you. I was born a bird of the wild wood, and don't sing best in a cage. You are too good indeed, to think of Ger-

many or Italy for me. Your kindness would be worse than thrown away; for I never—never”——

“Bah! my dear Mademoiselle. . . I beg a thousand pardons—but I am busy this morning,” interrupted the Professor. “As for my *kindness*, as you politely call it, you more than repay it by your attention and improvement in our divine art. ‘Tis not common care, nor yet common attention, that can give Europe a new *Prima Donna*, my dear. Apropos, Polly, you know my plans for the day. . . . Stay; your wardrobe needs a little repair, probably. While you pursue your studies, and keep up your spirits and good looks; you must not neglect your toilet, Mademoiselle.” The Professor took out a rather well-replenished note-case. It was said of him, and the case is, we fear, too common among great professional geniuses, that, even when at the richest, he never sought either desk or banker save his breeches’ pocket. “This, in the meanwhile, for trifles to-day; to-morrow, when we obtain a local habitation; you may order what you require from our neighbour Mrs Herbert’s milliner, who supplies my friend Mrs Somers Stocks.”

“Madame Ramsden,” said Polly; “Charles Herbert was telling us a funny story about her, one day that he met Mrs Somers there.”

“Good! The directory will instruct you where to find her; and she must be a proper person. . . . It is scarce for me to give advice in affairs so far beyond a gentleman’s province. The stage is a law to itself; but, for private life, I should cite our Shakspeare’s great rule, Mademoiselle—‘Rich, but not gaudy.’ . . . Safely may all this be left to my charming pupil’s native good taste.”

“Really, papa, I am glad that mamma is a hundred and fifty miles off,” said Miss Polly, pertly; and the proud heart of Violet swelled with the sense of insult, and her eyes flashed, and filled with tears which pride kept in their lacid fountains.

“Bad taste, Miss Cripps,” said the Professor, strongly, while his angry thought was, “there is a grain of coarseness in that woman’s children, which, with all my pains, is enough of itself to mar their fortunes in respectable life.”

“Whatever Mademoiselle may want, I am sure I want everything,” said Polly; “ribands, fowers, shoes, gloves, a fan, and a bonnet monstrously!”

Violet was conscious of her own more pressing wants; and also of a circumstance which the Professor, in the exigencies of his more important affairs, had perhaps forgotten, namely, that the funds had been placed in his hands, which were to supply them. Her mourning was becoming very shabby, she was afraid; and on her good original supply of linen, the Misses Cripps had made unexcusable inroads. Petticoats were required for Emma; who was growing so fast, and night-things for Susan; and Miss Polly particularly admired Violet’s French handkerchiefs and silk stockings; while her notable mamma declared that anything above two or three

changes was utter nonsense for a girl, and Mademoiselle could have new things, fashionably made, as she needed them; yet, how could Violet now hint to her master, that she required some of her own money to make up for the plunder she had undergone?

There is certainly some national instinct which renders it next to impossible for English people to speak about money, with that frankness and directness with which they can discuss any other simple matter of business. Though all the world knows that obtaining the payment of debts, “getting in one’s own,” is often the subject nearest the heart, it is not to be approached, save with Chinese etiquette, vast circumlocution, and positive insincerity—“Oh, no matter about that; why mind such a trifle? it will all be in very good time; pray, don’t mention it,” &c. &c. Violet said nothing of this sort; but she was so far under the common English influence, that when she wished to ask for a few adveersigns of her own money, she blushed and hesitated, and began to stammer out what she could not express, when the quick tact of the Professor divined the exact nature of the case. The note-case was again in instant requisition, and the face of Violet was covered with deeper blushes, while she half feared that she might be taking her generous master at disadvantage, in robbing him all at once of so very much money, although, no doubt, it was her own, and she required at least a part of it.

“Indeed, sir, you give me far more than enough. Twenty-five pounds a year was, I think, my allowance for clothes; a very great deal too; more, I am sure, than I ever ought to spend upon myself, alone; pray”——

The Professor politely doubled up the small lily hand upon the magic bit of paper—bowed on the hand; as if he meant to kiss it, with a manner between paternal tenderness, and old-fashioned gallantry, whispering—

“Be prudent, but not shabby. Shew me young ladies who will not disgrace the Opera circle one of those nights. Take good care of Mademoiselle, Miss Cripps, and see that she is handsomely dressed. My idea is black satin—we’ll see whether a few appropriate ornaments may not be found to relieve it.”

The Professor, kissing his hand, hurried away on a thousand engagements, while his daughter burst into a fit of ironical laughter at the dismal looks with which Violet regarded the note.

“You don’t suppose it is forged, Mademoiselle, or that it will turn into slates or ashes, like the devil’s wages? If ever I heard of a young lady distressed by having too much money to buy clothes before! But do get your bonnet, if you mean to carry the Professor’s generous designs into effect. . . . Perhaps you mean to stay in rather, lest any *friend* call. Charles Herbert did seem curious yesterday about our plans.”

“You ought not—it is unkind, Miss Cripps—to put such interpretations on trifles; of what consequence can Mr Herbert’s calling or not calling be to me? . . . I meant to go out whether you went or not, to make a few trifling purchases.”

Violet having first deposited the Professor's money in her little desk, to be all, or nearly all, restored to him, took her way with Miss Cripps, attended by Mike Twig.

The kindness with which Violet sometimes looked at, and, at others, interposed to save this provincial importation from a round rating, for his provoking and incorrigible stupidity, had touched Mike's heart; and rendered him, to her at least, a most devoted squire; but London sights had, at the same time, turned his head; and, long before they had reached their destination, Mike and the young ladies had parted company. Early as it was, the streets were somewhat full of loungers, who gave themselves full liberty of staring at the pedestrian damsels.

"If you wished to avoid Charles Herbert, you had better have stayed at home, Mademoiselle," cried Miss Polly, as they defiled into St James' Street. "There he is. A handsome man enough, certainly, at a distance;—there, with an officer—a guardman, I dare say—no; the colonel, though, who honoured me with such a broad stare yesterday. I fancy he will know me again, that gentleman. How you drag one, Violet—that's not the shop we want."

Mr Herbert bowed as he advanced; seemed for an instant to hesitate; and then moved, as if to pass on with his military friend, whom Violet fancied the most bold, disagreeable-looking Ogre she had ever seen. Miss Cripps was disposed for farther parley.

"Sure you were created for the express benefit of forlorn damsels, Mr Herbert! . . . Here we are again completely astray. That gaping booby, our country servant, whom we were silly enough to bring out instead of Eustache," (the last-named gentleman a mystery to Violet,) "has contrived to lose sight of us in staring about him."

"Can I be of any use," said Herbert, looking earnestly at Violet, to whose side he unconsciously passed; while his friend, seeing nothing in the aspect of the other lady particularly to alarm him with ideas of intrusion, wheeled round also, and mounted guard on the left flank. Whatever might be the cause, Violet was seriously distressed. She stopt short.

"There is not the smallest need for your turning back, Mr Herbert," she said, for once speaking for her party. "I noted every turning. Pray, do resume your walk. We can get a coach at the next stand; we are merely about some small shopping."

Mr Herbert was too well-bred to press his services where they were so evidently distressing. He lifted his hat respectfully, almost deferentially, and took his friend's arm, as if to turn him also; when, all at once, with a little girlish start of alarm, Violet shrunk back at the apparition of Jack Crippes! Jack, fortunately, did not notice even his sister, so deeply was he engaged in watching a lady on the opposite side of the street, ere he dived into a cross lane. Miss Cripps looked back, and nodded gaily to Violet at Jack's absence of mind and gallant oc-

cupation; and the gentlemen tacitly resumed their former positions—the Colonel and his companion stepping out to give way to the passers by. It was not difficult to keep Miss Cripps in play in a scene like this. Charles Herbert was less fortunate with his lady. He tried several topics before he hit upon Mistress Marion Linton.

"The old lady is a warm admirer of yours, Miss Hamilton. She is, in her own way—and a very good way it is—a noble-spirited and highly-estimable person. With all her worldly sagacity and shrewdness, there is a spice of romance about her too."

"Indeed!" said Violet, smiling, "'like is an ill mark,' as she was wont to say to me long since."

"I don't know how my mother, with whom she is a favourite, obtained the delicate confidence, but that hard-featured, cross, old woman was a lover once, and beloved; and 'he she loved proved false,' and sought a richer bride than poor Marion; though I have heard her boast, with not the mildest Christian charity—'I could now buy out their beggarly generation—ay, twice ower!' Between the affront and the disappointment, the spirited young woman left her native place, and travelled on foot to London, without a single friend before her. It was long believed that she had taken the lover's leap, over some of the *lincs* of her valley, till she finally emerged a woman of property, and still a spinster, who has had offers, as I have occasion to know."

Violet made no reply.

"Is it not strange, Miss Hamilton, to fancy that the same emotions which have thrilled the heart of the noble, the young, the beautiful, and the refined, should linger in the memory of that poor old body?"

"And you laugh at her?"

"On my soul, no!" replied the young man, with earnestness. "There are true loves which appear abundantly ludicrous: but Mrs Marion's smouldering flame is not one of them.—But all this, remember, is a dead secret, which, I am sure, you will not betray."

Violet smiled—"You may rely upon my discretion."

They walked on for a minute or two in silence, ere Herbert, with some hesitation, remarked—

"The public business of your profession seemed distasteful to you, madam. You must pardon me for having played the eaves-dropper, on the night of Cripps' concert; indeed, I could not well avoid hearing what you said to Mrs Somers Stocks, although it had not been so peculiarly interesting to me. May I now inquire if your opinions have undergone any change?"

Violet was about to reply, when the same apparition of Jack Cripps, who again suddenly emerged before them, made her once more recoil. Jack was, this morning, more the exaggeration of low, and even dirty dandyism than ever. A pink check shirt, which was decorated with some

glittering fixtures, although, apparently, it had not called on the washerwoman for some days, was a new feature in his morning toilet; and he looked, altogether, like a rake who had not been in bed. The involuntary backward movement of Violet, and her almost ludicrous horror of the recognition, were not lost upon Herbert, who now first respectfully offered his arm, which was silently and gratefully accepted; while the Colonel, also apparently afraid of Jack, at once recollected an engagement. Miss Cripps lost not a moment in introducing to Herbert—

“Mr Quintin Cripps—my brother the barber.”

And Jack salaamed his “friend, Charles Herbert,” whom, to say truth, he had known by sight for some months; since Burke Barker had pointed him out one day entering Brookes’.

“You were asking about a cake shop, Miss Cripps,” said Herbert, anxious to lead Violet into the retirement she seemed to desire, and also to escape himself. “This is one Mrs Herbert *uses*. The good, civil lady who keeps it was the housekeeper of a friend of ours.”

“Most happy to patronise any protegés of Mrs Herbert. Pray, Mademoiselle, remind me of this—we are just looking out for all sorts of tradespeople.”

Herbert led the way, and the party entered, the confectioner’s, and chatted, and ate; Jack, in particular, playing, in both sorts, a swingeing jaw.

“Ta’rnation clever chaps those Yankees, with their mint juleps and cock-tails,” said Jack. “Here, in London, it is ever munch, munch. The French themselves like a taste of *summat, chassé*. A sip of cherry-bounce, now, ladies, let me recommend; or”——

“Fie for shame, Quintin,” interrupted Miss Cripps, laughing. “Quintin is the oddest *harum-scarum* creature, Mr Herbert; but, indeed, you must not mind him.”

“I sha’n’t, ma’am,” said Herbert, drily.

“Papa says it is excess, an absolute overflow, of imagination which makes Jack so droll and playful. . . . Oh! here is the Highland woman again, Gabrielle. I am surprised you don’t wear a *plad* petticoat, or a *boddice*, Missis What-is-your-name? I hope you have got the house in high order for our reception to-night. Mamma is very particular about domestic matters, I assure you—*very*.”

It was, indeed, Mrs Marion; who first stared with some surprise and sternness, gradually relaxing as Violet came eagerly forward.

“I am so happy to have met you again,” she said. “Yesterday, I had not sufficient presence of mind to arrange about another meeting, and I feared it might be long ere I should see you.”

“It can matter little meeting an auld stourie carlin like me, Miss Vilet, while sae mony braw young gallants are fluttering about ye.” And the speaker scowled on the preposterous dandy, her strongly-marked features varying in their expression from contemptuous scorn to ludicrous contempt. Violet reddened, and appeared disconcerted by these free remarks; and Marion

added in a kindlier tone:—“But I am happy, at any rate, to see your father’s bairn; and, I dare say, you may be pleased to see me too—ye may hae newer, fairer-fashioned friends, but ye are no likely to hae mony truer to ye than his were.”

“Alas! I have none other, and none that I can so dearly prize.”

They talked apart, in a low voice, and in Gaelic, as Miss Cripps opined; she being one of many aware of no distinction between the Scotch and the Erse languages. While the brother and sister were again ardently engaged in the business of eating, with interludes of laughter and talk, Jack, dragging hither and thither his elf-locks, and curling his mustachios with the tip of his little finger, and Polly setting her bonnet to a smarter or more *degagee* curve, Herbert saw a letter which he believed was the same which he had, two days before, picked up and restored to Miss Hamilton, slid, after some earnest whispering and demur on the part of the receiver, into the hand of the old woman, who said,—

“If it must be so, far better that I seek out the young ne’er-do-weel in these sort of waff houffs, than you, hinny. . . . But when am I to see ye? Ye wouldna like me to come to you, ye say, as we couldna have a free crack before strangers. Now, then, can ye come to me? There’s the Sabbath. Surely, ye dinna play your music on the Lord’s Day, Miss Vilet? and, O, my dear young leddy, ye are surely no sae far left as to bring shame on your country and your name by turning a singing play-actor?”

Violet, a pang at her heart, made a feeble effort to smile, and replied,

“I hope I will never do anything that you shall disapprove.”

“In proof of the young lady’s docility, try if she will obey you by taking my mother’s carriage home. I see it returning from setting her down at the Earl of Tarbert’s new place. Here it comes;” and Herbert telegraphed the footman. “It threatens rain too.”

“I see no sign of wet, Mr Charles; but if Miss Vilet and you gree about it, her bit weight can do little scathe to the coach.”

Violet would have declined the courteous offer; but the earnest whisper of Herbert made her little heart throb.

“I cannot endure,” he said, “to see you in company with that hirsute monster:—it is intolerable—it is degrading; and it is impossible to get rid of him. Do, pray, oblige me by accepting, with Miss Cripps, of the carriage.”

The soft moist eyes were gratefully raised in thanks and sweet consent.

“I wish I had that head between my knees, and a pair of gude het tings,” said Mrs Marion, grinning disdainfully at Jack, who was still playing antics before the looking-glass with his hair and mustachios.

“What does the old lady say, Mademoiselle, about hot tongs?” asked Jack, looking rather fierce.

"Telling how cleverly they sing a sheep's head in our country," grinned Marion, answering for herself, "when there is more hair than horns about it."

Jack's response was lost, for the carriage drew up; and the delighted Miss Cripps, with a bagful of cakes in her hand, scarce needed invitation or help to jump in.

"What an enchanting carriage," cried she, throwing herself languishingly and luxuriously back in the place of honour. "Claret-bodied; and the hammercloth so magnificent! These fellows drove off, though, before I could say good bye to my brother. Charles Herbert had employed him to pay the cakes; but I fancied Charles coming with us?"

"How delicious an odour of flowers," said Violet, taking up a small volume lying open upon a cushion, which turned out to be "Roche-foucault's Maxims" in the original, which Violet had always thought a very disagreeable *wise* book.

"Our elegant future neighbour has been carrying flowers, I da' say, to the house she is getting ready for her friends the Tarberts."

"They are expected to dinner, Mistress Confectioner mentioned," said Polly; "but Mr Charles Herbert is not to know. There is to be a surprise."

Violet was thinking what silly things surprises are, while Polly began vehemently kissing her hand, smiling, and bowing repeatedly to Mr Benjamin, her W—— admirer, who, just dropped from a north country coach, was hurrying along, followed by a porter, as if looking out for an omnibus to transport him to the city. He seemed turned to stone by the sight of his beautiful flame in a splendid private carriage, with at least one tall footman behind it.

"So much for the native," said Polly, laughing aloud, conscious that, save to draw the attention of the young manufacturer to the equipage, she would not have noticed him in London in any shape. "Fancy, Gabrielle, the comfort of having such a carriage of our own after our *debut*:—you, at least, who, papa swears, must succeed triumphantly in your peculiar line; though talents suited to a more general line of business may prove as useful in the long run. The voice is liable to so many accidents and chances."

"For which reason, it cannot be very wise to trust much to it. Don't, pray, Miss Cripps, talk any more about my coming out on the stage, or being a public singer; it never can be,—and it so vexes me."

"Nonsense, Mademoiselle; no use, you know, for airs when nobody is by—mind, I don't say Charles Herbert; I say *nobody*. But, of course, you would not wish to make your fortune, and keep your carriage—not you! nor to marry high—perhaps a lord—either?"

"I do not care at all about it," said Violet, answering to the last count only. Miss Cripps laughed jeeringly, and drew the check-string; and, to the horror of Violet, in a decided manner, ordered the carriage "to Mrs Herbert's milliner's."

The servant appeared disconcerted. By the direction of his eyes, he seemed to Violet to be consulting the looks of the coachman, an older man, and one of more trust with their lady. The telegraph had probably given an ambiguous response.

"Mrs Herbert employs different persons in that capacity, ma'am," said the footman, mechanically touching his hat, though his manner was not very deferential.

"Madame Ramsden, I mean," persisted Polly; and it happened that this did not take the carriage an inch out of the direct way home.

"How you vex me, Maria," said Violet, repenting having accepted Herbert's courtesy. "We are taking a very great liberty, indeed, with a lady who is, and probably desires to remain, a total stranger to us; for any sake, since we are here, let us go home as fast as we can; or dismiss the carriage and walk home—that would be better."

"You are so tiresome, Mademoiselle," returned Polly. "A mighty obligation truly, to be set down by a returning empty carriage. Mrs Herbert and her people have more sense, although her son had not pressed the thing upon us."

Violet refused to enter the house, (not shop of the milliner,) and her absence left a freer field, in which Miss Cripps, who, if a rustic, was scarce a novice, might display the manners and the Arts which melt a milliner's soul. If Polly was not altogether a novice, neither was Madame; who, herself, gave audience; the hour being still too early for the press of aristocratic or noble "clients," as she termed her customers. At one glance, the practised eye of Madame detected something wrong; and seeming, all the while, to obey the heats of her equivocal customer, she contrived to advance to a window of the saloon, which, in military language, commanded the door. The carriage which had last stopped, was, beyond a doubt, Mrs Herbert's. Madame made a fresh *reconnaissance* of her customer, and with more impartial eyes. The new client might be a great provincial heiress, and not, after all, as she had suspected, a friend of the lady's maid and the footman on a lark; for Madame had known of such audacious proceedings in great families.

"I have seen such lovely things from your house, Madame, with my friend, Mrs Somers Stocks of the Grove. You display exquisite taste! But French *artistes*!"

It might be inferred, from the tone in which this was said, that duly to paint the transcendent abilities of French milliners, and especially those of "Madame," exceeded even the eloquence of Miss Cripps.

Madame, who, by the way, had been born above forty years before, and within the sound of Bow-Bell, was not to be done by a compliment to her works, conscious as she was of their superiority: but she perfectly remembered the pretty little bride, the country friend of Mrs Herbert, skipping about in her Temple of Fashion, and issuing her orders with the liberality of a Russian princess; and the fond old

gentleman, chuckling with delight, as he hobbled after his animated latest purchase, with his purse in his hand, calling out—"What's to pay, darling?—what's to pay, Cary?" Thus intimating his thorough understanding of the tacit conditions of the marriage contract.

The man was barbarous, horrible, vulgar; and Madame Ramsden generally liked "to hook" her safe "clients," though the practice of the provincial banker had its recommendations. His lady soon came to book, in spite of the injunctions of her husband. These reminiscences had their effect; and, though Polly Cripps had no rich old husband to follow her about crying "What's to pay, my angel?" yet, as Mrs Herbert's friend, she was almost as well received as if she had. Her head swam in giddy exultation, though she did not wholly lose her self-possession.

A full half-hour elapsed; and Violet, overhearing the gorgeous coachman make some guttural observation to the footman about a draught round the corner, and his "hosses;" and being, in spite of herself, exposed to the gaze of the loungers, who uniformly turned their eyes from her face to the arms on the carriage, she could almost have jumped out and run away, when three very small human hybrids, each a finer gentleman than Jack Cripps, almost as fine indeed as the pretty fellows one sees in the perfumer's windows, and smelling overcomingly of musk, tripped out, holding each something jauntily between the forefinger and thumb, which, kneeling on the steps of the carriage, was presented, with bland whispers, to the divinity within. The lace, the flowers, the stockings—"finest quality," "latest styles"—had been ordered out "by the lady whom Madame had the honour of attending within." Violet had too much sweetness of nature to be capable of an incivility to any one; and the very existence of each of the dainty small gentlemen appeared to depend on her fiat touching the said lace, stockings, and flowers; and they whisked out and tripped in so nimbly, and brought more and more, and pleaded with such gentle insinuating pertinacity, as if for life from her hands, that the poor girl, abashed and confused, let them construe her wishes just as they pleased, and was even rejoiced to have the power of making the doll-like creatures so happy. And then Miss Cripps appeared, enacting the majestic, and they drove off.

"As you would neither descend nor condescend, Mademoiselle, I ventured to order a few things for you, along with my own, after papa has been so generous to you, Gabrielle; and he detests so, as you know, to see the ladies of his family dowdy or ordinary. His respectability, at this time depends not a little, let me tell you, upon the appearance of his family; and I am determined that my toilet shall be no reproach to him."

With all her simplicity, Violet had no doubt whatever about this. She mentioned that she had requested the little civil gentlemen to send her own bill immediately; a proceeding which had not raised their ideas of her condition,

though, on the whole, their report of her to Madame was favourable.

Professor Cripps, as he ate the soup ordered for his refreshment, after a morning of hard work, had the felicity to see his pupil and his daughter descend from a handsome private carriage.

"There is blood in that girl," was his proud, paternal thought; and Polly, a stranger being present, explained the circumstance to her papa in "very good taste," as if it were the slightest and most natural thing in the world, to have taken advantage of Mrs Herbert's carriage. The ambiguous stranger stood apart, and Violet and Miss Cripps soon comprehended that Monsieur Eustache Latude, though evidently a foreigner, was not a foreign visitor, but merely the intended *maitre d'hotel*, of whom the latter had heard. This accomplished person, who told that he had nine times made the tour of Europe, with noblemen and gentlemen of distinction, and been three times in Turkey and Greece, twice at the Upper Cataracts,—but not that he had once had an imminent chance of visiting the Australian colonies,—had been, like so many hundred-thousands of his countrymen, an officer in Napoleon's Guard.

"Fortune of war, sare! Mon He-re—my Empereur, perish on de rock. I perjure my contrée—I rone—I fly—I seek de ass-all-lhum in de fræe gin-ruse Brestain. I tromy!"

"Ah! well," interrupted the Professor, "no doubt, no doubt; but the people here can recommend you?"

"Sare," cried the Frenchman, whipping out a soiled pocketbook, and taking from thence sundry scraps of worn papers.

The Professor talked apart with his daughter.

"And you engage to procure to-night, the proper assistants: a female cook, merely, and a housemaid, to begin with."

There was no possible undertaking less than finishing the Thames Tunnel next day, for which Monsieur Eustache would not, at this moment, have readily promised. From the state of his wardrobe, it must have been a very long time since Napoleon's Guards were disbanded; and the prospect of even a female and English cook was better than having no connexion with any cook, which had too long been his case.

With a five-minutes' character from the principal waiter, glad to be rid of the talented Eustache, five pounds of ready cash for trifles, and large discretionary powers, Eustache, a man of parts, who knew "the town," and indeed, all towns, as they are known by such characters, protested largely, and, for this day, kept his word. His cabriolet flew from the splendid door of the wine-merchant to the museums of the fishmonger, poulterer, and fruiterer; from the den of the coal-dealer to the baker and pastry-cook who had last opened, at the true and ultimate West End. His first orders were judiciously but boldly given, gladdening the heart of each tradesman with the hope of a good

new country family. There are few ruminating animals so credulous as a young tradesman just commencing business in London, and amidst great competition. If suspicion occasionally half-opens one eye, influences not less potent oftener, for a time, seal both. In a few weeks, Professor Cripps might have obtained unbounded credit, every dealer striving who should first have the honour of placing him on their books.

His final orders to M. Eustache, before going to the theatre with the ladies, were—

“See all the luggage properly conveyed to my house. Let the people there send their bill to the Regent’s Park. Mademoiselle, your things are, I presume, in readiness? See, Monsieur, that the apartments are properly warmed:—the old Scotchwoman has kept up fires.” By the way, Marion never afterwards forgot to mention, as often as his name occurred between her and Violet, that “the scrubby schoolmaister body, had never said thanks to ye, nor shewed the colour of his coin, either for coals or kindlin.”

“Let the house be lighted up in proper time, and see that the piano is placed where I directed. And, look ye, keep the females out of sight, and hire in any extra male assistance that you may require. At small select parties I throw etiquette overboard, and study only the ease and pleasure of my friends; the supper and the wines; but, above all, their condition, their *condition*, remember, Monsieur, I leave to you. At the *petit souper*, in a word, I am more French than English—always was, Mademoiselle.”

The national pride of Monsieur Eustache was

touched. He bowed low, striking his right hand upon his left side, more, perhaps, in the style of the valet of the old regime than that of an officer of Napoleon’s Guard, and as if overcome with the proud consciousness of high responsibilities; and describing with his right leg some segment of a circle of about two feet diameter, recovered the erect position with the prouder consciousness that the confidence of “Monsieur le Professeur” was not misplaced.

The latter was not altogether satisfied with his new domestic, but allowance was to be made for foreign manners.

“Your dress, of course, Monsieur,” he gently hinted. “You are to wear plain clothes.”

Whatever were the half-admitted thoughts of Violet, on witnessing the absurdities and incongruities around her, she tried to look at the bright side of things.

She especially regretted that she had not been able to explain to Herbert that her non-professional views were not changed, but confirmed; for had he not said that he could not endure to see her in an awkward or degrading position, and that her conversation with Mrs Somers Stocks had deeply interested him?—That surely was very kind in a stranger. Then she had arranged for an interview with Mistress Marion on the first Sunday, and she might have the pleasure of sending some sort of intelligence of the lost one—perhaps consolatory intelligence—to poor Susan. With such pleasant thoughts she entered Convent Garden Theatre.

(To be continued.)

LITERARY REGISTER.

The Statesmen of the Commonwealth of England.

By John Forster of the Inner Temple. Five Volumes, with Portraits.

This work, or one of similar character and equal excellence, we consider indispensable, at the present time, to every intelligent British citizen. If he cannot afford to purchase, he should hire or borrow, and diligently peruse, the memoirs of those English worthies, who are models and exemplars, not slavishly to be followed, but, where found worthy, manfully to be emulated, by every succeeding generation of public men. After a masterly preliminary view of POPULAR PROGRESS from the Norman Invasion, but more particularly from the accession of the Tudors, the specific object of the work commences with the memoirs of Sir John Eliot, the elder of as bright a constellation of great men as the world ever beheld, and terminates with those of Cromwell, thus including the most glorious epoch of English history.

Justly does Mr Forster remark—“It is a grave reproach to English political biography, that the attention so richly due to the statesmen who opposed Charles I., in themselves the most remarkable men of any age or nation, should have been suffered to be borne away by the poorer imitators of their memorable deeds, the authors of the imperfect settlement of 1688.” This was, we think, impossible, while there was a printing press or a thinking man in England; but had it been so, Mr Forster has done much to wipe away the national reproach.

The statesmen, in whose memoirs we read the history of England in its most glorious period, are Sir John Eliot; Wentworth, Earl of Stafford, (without whom the work would have been incomplete and one-sided;) Pym, Hampden, Vane, Henry Martin, and Cromwell.

The brief extracts, which we take wholly from the preliminary essay, as specimens of a style not very decided, may not be the best to be found, but they subserve another purpose, they bear on the present times.

RISE OF PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE.

It had been found that the privilege left by the commons to the judges, to clothe in the formal terms of legal language, at the close of each session, the various bills and petitions passed in its course, had opened many opportunities to fraud on the part of the lawyers. The usage had originally risen from the desire of the house, in those days of imperfect education, to achieve, as far as possible, brevity and precision in the language of their statutes. In very many cases, however, the judges were discovered to have deliberately arrested [wrested?] the purpose of the commons to their own ends or those of the sovereign, and to have substituted for popular protection a popular snare. Therefore it was that an act was now introduced and passed, providing that, “from this time forward, by complaint of the commons asking remedy for any mischief, there be no law made thereupon, which should change the meaning by addition or diminution, or by any manner of term or terms.”

Authority, without the means for its sharp and decisive enforcement, is the most dangerous weakness known to a state. The commons claimed, therefore, in the name and for the protection of the people, certain exclu-