

VIOLET HAMILTON; OR, THE TALENTED FAMILY.

(Continued from our October No.)

CHAPTER XV.

It was the opinion of Mr James Winkin—the respectable head-waiter of the Crown and Mitre, the principal inn in a certain ancient cathedral city on the great north road—that “the house” had not been so crowded since the irruption of the Highlanders in 1745, as during the passing season, and on the particular night the duties of which were awfully congregating before him. The memory of Joe Crabbe, the dowager-dowager Boots,—who still crept about the stable-yard, getting a bone from the scullion, or picking up a penny for pitching a chance carpet-bag on the top of the night heavy-coach, while the present incumbent snatched his fitful repose,—had no parallel to this season. It was Joe’s firm belief, that the world was going topsy-turvy, and old Jobson, the landlord, making a rapid fortune out of its madness. Not at the assizes, not at the convocation of the clergy, not even in that famous and well-remembered race-week, when the great match came off between Bobadil and the Bishop, had any thing ever before been known to equal every day and week of that season,—when company absolutely overflowed, and travellers, bent on endless quests, crossed, recrossed, and jostled each other; knocked-up the waiters, half-killed Boots, and fairly murdered five pairs of Jobson’s post-horses. Newly coupled doves were returning from Gretna, languidly and at leisure, secretly disappointed that there had been no hotter pursuit; Scotch M. P.’s were going down to keep their constituents in good-humour; and jovial sportsmen, bursting away from courts, counters, clubs, and counting-houses, with the glee of school-boys at a breaking-up, were thus far advanced on their annual progress towards the enjoyment of that saturnalia of fagged, worried, and bored gentlemen,—grouse-shooting on the Scottish moors. “Commercial gentlemen” were, as usual, in full activity, in their periodical transit from Glasgow to Manchester, and *vice versa*; and there was a handsome sprinkling of Liverpool Lakers, of both sexes and all denominations of Christians, pushing on for a glimpse of “Abbotsford,” and, subordinate to that rampant lion, “Scotland” and the “Highland lochs.” All this was only in the ordinary course of events; and several extraordinary were impending on Jem Winkin:—the yeomanry dinner annual, and the bachelors’ ball quinquennial. Besides this, the players were in the town; and though the saints had made considerable head on the sinners, since their last periodical visit, a “bumper house” was confidently expected for the Benefit of Mr Henry Adolphus Fitzwagram, who, though new on the Northern Circuit, had emerged at once, by the mere force of his transcendent and versatile talents, a star of the first magnitude! When young Mr Greenthwaite the draper, son of old Greenthwaite the Quaker, summoned courage to go behind the scenes, and directly put the ques-

tion to the manager, for the information of self and friends, all warm patrons of the theatre, who Mr Henry Adolphus really was, that functionary was not prepared either to affirm or to deny, directly, that Fitzwagram was not Charles Kean; though he fancied the other conjecture of Mr Greenthwaite as probable; and that Fitzwagram was quite as likely to be a young man of family and fashion, an amateur, whom fondness for the stage had led to assume an *alias* and the character which he sustained with such *éclat*.

“It must be so, sir. Why he knows every thing and every body. The palace, the cabinet, the greenroom, the clubs, the hells, the turf, the ring;—the three great worlds, of fashion, literature, and politics, are alike familiar to Fitzwagram,” said Mr Greenthwaite,—“a wonderful fellow, sir!”

“A wonderful fellow!” returned the manager, slightly elevating his eyebrows. “I only wish I could fix him for the circuit.”

“Don’t look for it;—a clear case of escapade, though I have fixed him. Our Shakspeare Club are to have the honour to entertain Fitzwagram to-night to a farewell supper . . . Fought shy; but I nailed him, on condition—you must not be affronted—that we were to be *rigidly* exclusive. Fitzwagram said, when pressed, ‘I cannot decline the invitation with which the rising spirits of this venerable city,—the juvenile patrons of literature and the drama, of whom you, sir, are the envoy,—have honoured me; but I must make a distinction:—no salary-payer, no man of properties, for the private society in which I unbend!’—Gad! he’s a high fellow; but we don’t think he can be Waterford after all:—he is too accomplished, too clever for that idea . . . Can he be a Berkeley or a Lennox, think ye? But you are not affronted by Fitzwagram compelling us to exclude you?”

“Not a whit,” replied the manager, “we poor strolling managers must not take amiss the airs of the *stars*. I am but too proud, Mr Greenthwaite, when I have the good fortune to engage an actor whose abilities come up to the ideas of my generous patrons in this venerable city and vicinage. Besides, I believe Mr Henry Adolphus Fitzwagram will indubitably open and unbend much more graciously when freed of the restraint of my society.”

“You are to be congratulated on your good fortune, sir: a decided hit.—A universal genius; and such accomplishments! fencing, dancing, singing, the piano,—farce, tragedy, comedy, all seem to come alike to Fitzwagram. And at Fenrith he gave, I am told, such a lecture on Phrenology! All the Quakers attended,—sly way of seeing and hearing Fitzwagram, eh? But come now: there’s a good man! who really is he? I shall be silent as the grave,—only one’s private satisfaction.” The manager smiled significantly, shook his head

mysteriously, and replied, "How can I, sir, tell what I have no right to know, whatever my private suspicions may be? But of this much I am convinced, Fitzwagram's name will be yet heard of in historic, or else in some other annals."

"I thought so," returned the gratified young draper.

The town was furiously divided on the respective merits of Mr Fitzwagram and Mr Edward Belville, the old favourite of the circuit, who had, for seven years, done tragedy and genteel comedy to every body's content, until had appeared the transcendent genius, the star, who shone more brilliantly off than on the boards, as those, like the fortunate draper, admitted to his private society affirmed. Greenthwaite was the furious leader of the Fitzwagramites; and was that night to preside at the supper, which he was to do the choice spirits of the town the honour of accepting, provided it was very, *very* select,—no one present save those he named and approved.

As Greenthwaite stood at the door of the Crown and Mitre, farther unfolding his ideas to Jem Winkin, as to the arrangements for the party, the proper distribution of the wax-lights ordered—for he had heard Fitzwagram pronounce gas-lamps "*intensely vulgar*"—and the icing of the champagne, and the lobster salad—a handsome equipage from the south drew up, to add to the crowding and confusion of the caravansary; and a handsome young man, with an air of distinction, not lost on the experienced Jem, assisted a fair slight girl to alight, with care and tenderness which at once told their history. Not for Gretna; for there was no haste nor perturbation as the lady was conducted in; Jem, meanwhile, leaving Mr Greenthwaite on the steps, and leading the way to his best parlour, in honour of the handsome couple and his own honeymoon ideas. A rapid glance at trunks, hat-boxes, and umbrellas, revealed nothing as to the name and condition of the new arrivals; and to interrogate either the postilion or footman required some little time and address: so Jem, in virtue of his unerring instinct, as a waiter of fifteen years' standing, while he summoned the principal chambermaid, whispered—"Honeymoon jaunt—no doubt of it—lovely young creature; you may give 'em one of your best chambers, Missus Hannah—pay handsomely at such times."

The sovereign princess of comfortable repose in the Crown and Mitre, under which hundreds of her majesty's fatigued subjects nightly disposed their wearied frames—the sole empress of sheets, towels, and wash-hand basins, was equally experienced, and less enthusiastic than Jem Winkin; and not to be as easily done out of a "best chamber," as he had out of his best parlour, without any thing like due cause shown.

"Own carriage?" inquired she coolly.

"Es—handsome landaulette—Long-acre built—stylish turn out: servants, harness, and every thing."

"Post-horses?" continued Miss Hannah.

"Own cattle—pair well-matched beautiful bays—blood to the ear-point."

This was so far satisfactory; yet, in spite of

the excessive over-crowding, Hannah had still a few secondary chambers to let for the night; and she continued—

"Lady's maid?"

"Not a bit of one."

"Humph! No. 159 may do. Boots!—the luggage to 159," cried the lady of the keys. The want of a lady's maid having lowered her ideas of the guests several degrees, and mentally exalted their sleeping apartment two stories.

"No, it won't; won't, I tell ye;" said Jem. "They're the right sort: that's their servant coming along the passage. . . . Letters—the Post-office—right opposite Sir . . . but Tom will go. Fly, Tom! letters—Charles Herbert, Esquire—Mrs Charles Herbert—Boo—oots!"

Boots did not fly: but he went at his own time; and found letters—a whole half-dozen of them—addressed, as if by men of business, simply to Charles Herbert, Esquire; and one, in a lady's hand, to Mrs Charles Herbert, Post-office, &c., &c. Jem—in taking a passing look of the envelope, before carrying them to the gentleman—was somewhat disappointed to find neither "Honourable," nor any patrimonial title;—not even the impress of a coronet, on any one seal; yet he persisted in his original belief, that the new-arrivals were "of the right sort"—and on their marriage tour; though he afterwards learned, from the servant, that that happy event had taken place some months since. The young people had been rambling about in Wales, in Derbyshire, and last, at the Westmoreland Lakes; and they expected to be here joined by the gentleman's mother, on their way to Scotland. The servant went to eat his dinner, while the luggage still lay about waiting the fiat of the landlady, to whom James appealed. Boots was often distracted by a divided allegiance to the rival potentates of the bar; though he generally obeyed the sovereign *de facto*—which, at present, seemed James—"the master" being away at Newcastle to purchase horses. James was an old and faithful servant of the establishment, who had perseveringly fought his way from ostler's *aide*, through all gradations of public service, until he had reached his present responsible office. His word went far. Although, in general, a very obliging person, and bound to universal civility by the threefold ties of natural disposition—the hope of immediate reward—and the expectation that old Jobson—rich, and gouty—would retire, some time soon, and leave him the goodwill—he had never been amicable with the head chambermaid—a late importation from the Bath Road—who now, tossing her head, repeated—

"A plain *Mister*, and no lady's maid! I say, 159: if I am to be interfered with in this way—dictated to in my own department—the sooner, ma'am, you look out for my successor in office " said the indignant lady of the bed-chamber.

"The gentleman's mother is expected in her own carriage to-night," said James. "They may stop some days with us, if made comfortable. She is a widow lady of large jointure, with a handsome house at the West End; and keeps" (her crown-

ing glory) "a full establishment of servants." The young lady is a niece of the Earl of Tarbert, and has a great fortin."

"Where are they last from, James?" inquired the portly landlady, as if his report were to settle the dispute; "from Lowther Castle, or Brougham Hall, or any where?"

"This morning from Keswick, ma'am—lunched at Penrith—a handsome supper ordered, to be in readiness when the other lady's carriage arrives."

The landlady, to whom Keswick was "no-where," was not quick in her response; and her jealous *oides* hung each on the lips which decided victory.

"I think they know the Bishop, and are perhaps to visit at Netherby," said James hesitatingly; and he muttered in an under voice, as if in atonement to his conscience, "At least the gentleman spoke of a bishop, and the lady inquired about the 'Netherby clan.'"

"The Bishop, James!" cried his mistress, "send cook to me. . . . Your best spare chamber directly, Mrs Hannah; game, blackcock—fresh—I mean fresh dressed—patties—apricot tartlets—jellies—stay—my own keys!" and the landlady, moving in quick time, repaired to those extra-stores preserved in her own sacred keeping places, for grand and rare occasions, repeating "The bishop!" while the chamber-maid, darting glances of detection of a lie and fiery indignation at her triumphant foe, also moved off to obey.

The supper ordered was hastened by the gentleman, with the addition of mulled wine and biscuits; for the young lady, on reading her letter, found that the expected friend, who was crossing the country from York, had been detained by an accident to her carriage, of no alarming nature to herself, but which would delay her for a day, till it could be repaired.

Meanwhile, the waiter having donned a white neck-cloth, brushed out his whiskers, and, according to the modern practice of fashionable English gentlemen before entering a room, combed out his hair with his fingers, in honour of the lady within and his own charms, assisted Mr Herbert's servant to lay the cloth; placing himself at supper, directly behind that gentleman's chair, and, consequently, opposite the imagined bride, in virtue of the ancient privilege which permits a cat to look at the king. Before quitting the room, but after snuffing the four wax lights, set in the best silver branches, and placing the decanters in parallelograms, James, looking at the lady, and respectfully addressing the gentleman, took the liberty to hope that "the lady would not be disturbed nor annoyed by the party assembling in the twin-parlour—all highly respectable young gentlemen of the town, who were that night to give a farewell supper to Mr Fitzwagram, the famous play-actor, who was a-going to America."

"I see there are only sliding-doors between us," said Mr Herbert,

"Yes, sir; sliding oak-panels—our large dining-room when we have the county gentry at the races, or their honours, the judges."

"And a very commodious and handsome one,"

replied Herbert, thinking more of the languor visible in the beautiful face on which he tenderly gazed, than of the splendid and convenient dining accommodations of the Crown and Mitre.

"There will be catches, and glees, and toasts, and speeches, sir; and all that sort o' thing—Beg pardon, sir—for the freedom, sir—by the young gentleman; and, if it would be any amusement, sir, to the lady, sir:—beg pardon! When we have such parties, ladies are often spectators, sir,—just here, sir, where the pannel fits into the map of Yorkshire, sir—the Miss Lowthers, sir, and Lady Brampton, sir, and the Honourable Missus Faskarlie—I've seen 'em all having a peep!"

"Thank you," said Herbert. "If the lady should not be curious, perhaps I may. . . . if the company are not private?"

"O Lord, sir!—most happy, I am sure, if you'd do 'em the honour to drink a glass of wine with them, when Fitzwagram gives 'em a benefit. It's quite a thing, sir, in this town to-night.—Ten thousand pardons, sir!—But I know, gentlemen travelling like to see what is a-going on, sir. . . . The negus is just a-coming, sir,—Missus Jobson mixing it herself."

"Thank you," said Herbert, as both attendants retired,—Mr Herbert's man utterly horrified at the assurance of the waiter, which he charitably attributed to vulgar north-country breeding.

The young strangers, who had caused such commotion in the house, were glad to find themselves alone.

"You are not well, Violet;—either you are cold, or you have taken cold," said Herbert, now leading his wife to the sofa, which he had drawn close to the fire he had ordered. "This rambling and boating have been too much for you. . . . My mother will scold me for not taking better care of you, dearest one,—and I deserve it."

"I wish she were here to do so," replied Violet, in a languid tone, yet with eyes brightly smiling her grateful thanks. "Then, you are tired of me already;—in one little three months, Violet, longing for a third in our social parties."

"Don't fancy I shall incur our mother's censure of spoiling you longer, Charles," said Violet, laughing. "A little wholesome contradiction, called the assertion of independent judgment, will now be a pleasant variety for us both."

"Saucy rebel against legitimate authority! Don't you deserve to be well punished for this?" And the gay young husband proceeded to inflict the gentle punishment which, hitherto, had not been very violently resented.

"Herbert! dearest Charles! don't, pray—let me alone. I am so frightened, nay, I shall be affronted with you."

"Don't what, little fool?" said Herbert, laughing. "Are you offended?"

"Gentlemen coming into the next room. . . . Only an oak board!—and, I am sure there are voices there that I know, too. Hark!"

"Nonsense!—So it is not kissing, but being caught, you fear?—Fie, Violet! Yet, the dews of heaven never fell softer on the rose-buds. Let us kiss and be friends, however!"

"Dear Charles, are you quite well?" cried his wife, who almost feared the champagne had taken speedy, if evanescent, effect on his brain.

"Perfectly well. But what is the matter?" And now indeed the alarmed Herbert had a delicate duty to perform, in kissing away the fast gathering tears. "Violet, my own love, have my spirits been too boisterous for you; you are surely ill,—nervous? I wish you would go to bed before the noise begin. I wish my mother were here to nurse you."

"I believe I am nervous; . . . but I like no nurse half so well as yourself, Charles." And the flattering preference was repaid by a repetition of the original offence, not this time resented, though more gentlemen might be overheard coming into "the twin-parlour."

"Not my mother?"

"No, indeed."

"How proud you make me;—not old Marion?"

"Nay, you love to tease."

"Then you do prefer her nursing to mine?"

"Oh no, no. . . . What a fool you make of me."

. . . But, Charles, there is one thing . . ."

"Well, love? But tell me, and never mind those gorgon-Gryphon letters, which seem basilisks to you."

"When our mother comes to-morrow, Charles . . ."

"What then, love? Why hesitate, why blush?"

"We must be sage, you know,—not giddy and indiscreet; remember we are old married people, now almost three months, and these raptures . . ."

"Almost three! fled like a bright short day. . . . And 'these raptures,' must they give place to lectures? and is this your first attempt in that line? Must I then try to seem to love you less?"

"I won't humour you by chiding. And there, I declare, is the man with his negus already." And Violet, like a guilty thing, started from her husband's clasping arm, and planted herself demurely, leaning on the mantel-piece, on the other side of the fire. The waiter,—it was not Jem Winkin,—quietly placed the rummer on the table, and went away. "Sit down, pray Mrs Charles, opposite me, to a quiet conjugal *tête-à-tête*. But first pledge me in this hot spicy liquor, to the waning of our honeymoon, since you warn me that it disappears to-night, with my mother's appearance."

"And another long era of happiness begins."

"So I fervently hope and believe; and not less bright, dear love."

"Not less sweet and serene; the sober certainty . . . But do keep your own side of the house, pray, or I shall certainly run away,—and, to spoil my quotation—fie! . . . And the gentlemen in the next room! There!"

"Hang the gentlemen in the next room!" said Herbert, laughing. "But you must sit down, and any where you please, at least till you have sipped your negus, my mother's old-fashioned remedy for chills taken on the water; or, Violet," and he looked earnestly in her eyes, "has your cold not come by *post*?"

There was some reason for the question, as, ever and anon, her eyes wandered, and pensively fixed

upon the unopened letters strewed upon the table, while her thoughts involuntarily glanced back to the last bright and fleeting period of her young life, and forward into a future, which already looked troubled and dark.

"Not for us," was her secret reflection, as she recalled the contents of Mrs Herbert's late confidential letters to herself,—“but for *her*, born and nursed in the bosom of affluence and refinement, to whom luxury has become absolute necessity:—loving, united, together we can brave any fortune, and extract purest happiness, dearest pleasure, from our affections, and the exercise of our faculties. But for *her*!”

In this depressed mood, arising from a cause which she was not yet permitted to reveal to her husband, Violet now allowed herself to regret every thing, save only her marriage. That alone, the source of her pride and happiness, was never to be repented by her; and Heaven avert that another might ever repent! As she mused, Herbert, having silently watched her for some minutes, approached, and, unhidden, sat down and drew her towards him, kindly trying to cheer her depressed spirits, which he now again affected to impute to fatigue, as his former hint had disturbed her.

"Can I leave you alone to vex yourself reading over all those ugly letters—Gryphon's, and that one from Lord Tarbert's agent, and that from Mr Cryppes' solicitor. What a dowry of trouble and vexation I have brought you, Charles."

"Hush, Violet, lest I be angry with you. I must begin to try if I can chide, if you will be unjust to yourself—unkind to us both. I am going to smoke a cigar; and—Hark, the bonny Christ-church bells! 'The gentlemen in the next room' do reasonable justice to what the Cryppeses did so masterly, you remember."

Violet could not attend to the singing. She was wrapped in her own agitating thoughts; and, pressing the hand that fondly clasped hers, she at length found utterance:—

"Do you remember one lovely evening, Charles, long, long since now, in Mrs Herbert's garden-alcove, in Regent's Park, that we were alone, talking of our marriage, and that I tried to talk *prudence*. It was but talk, I fear."

"And I, perhaps, was singing, or rather feeling what I durst not say—

'Ah, who could *prudence* think upon,
And sic a lassie by him!'

"But you were so often talking of *prudence* and delay, and I was so unwilling to listen, that I cannot precisely remember;—and, ah! these evenings they were all so lovely!"

"This was one in particular," faltered Violet, looking fondly in his eyes; "when you said . . ."

"Oh, tell me what, then?" urged he more earnestly.

"It was—'I could live upon your breath!'"

Herbert's face brightened. He well remembered the moment when he had first inhaled rapturous life from the sweet breath on which he hung. "Yes, dearest, I well remember—and I am not

ashamed; was it not a love-inspired sentiment? I feel its power now. What were life without you—?”

“But, Charles . . . ,” gently remonstrated the lady.

“But nothing, Violet, . . . Why torment yourself, and disturb our new-born bliss—for is not this but the birth-day of an eternal happiness?—with doubts and fears, for which there may be, can be, no just cause.”

“And leave you to bear alone what ought to be our mutual cares and anxieties, while I am only to be caressed and deceived for my good—the sharer of your joys only. Unkind Charles! this is to be but half a wife;—this imperfect confidence—this want of reliance, of entire sympathy distresses me more than could the worst ills my fancy paints:—were my only grievance redressed—if the heart that is my own gushed forth to me in pain and sorrow, as it overflows in happiness”

Herbert looked excited, yet pleasure glowed in his eyes, while he said—“If you would promise me not to be annoyed;—yet if such be your sovereign pleasure, I fancy I must not dare to resist your wish. . . . The delight of fretting over things seems to do ladies good.”

“Things that concern those we love. Yes, surely, the greatest imaginable to me—to share your whole heart, Charles—not one dark corner hid from me.”

“Well, slip your black draught, and let me see you safely to No. 159, or where is it? I mean to have a cigar, and a glee through the boards, from those merry souls, while you undress; and to-morrow you shall be bored to your content, with Gryphon’s legal despatches.”

Content, almost light-hearted, and smiling brightly at this arrangement, the happy young wife was led away.

If prudence had not urged the immediate union of Herbert and his bride, neither had wisdom—poverty in the back-ground, joining in chorus—lifted up her potential voice against it. The documents so singularly recovered, which established Miss Hamilton’s legal claim to a handsome, if not a large fortune, had satisfied the remaining scruples of Mrs Herbert, the only friend deeply interested, that if not rich as riches are reckoned by the standard of the English ancient nobility and gentry, or even by that of English commercial wealth, they would, with Violet’s good sense and simple tastes, have enough for the easy means of comfortable living, and for the real enjoyments of refined life. Mrs Herbert, besides, entertained a fond, proud, real mother’s flattering opinion of the capacity and attainments of her step-son; and the reasonable expectation, that a yet closer alliance with her friend, the Earl of Tarbert, through a marriage with his half-niece, would not narrow Charles’ prospects of—all that he required—an introduction into public life through the earl’s patronage. Spite of his early embarrassments, arising more from a generous imprudence than personal extravagance, when his affairs were finally adjusted, she was persuaded that a handsome reversion would remain from his own patri-

mony; and though her fortune was tied up, and for ever disposed away from the family, a circumstance of which she now thought with bitter self-reproach, her income was ample; and her generosity as boundless as her affection for “both her children.” Thus she now named them; and in her conduct, and even in her heart, she made no distinction between her son, and that sister-daughter, who, coming in the place of a hundred frivolous female acquaintances, had dignified her feelings, and doubled her enjoyment of life, by giving her one friend in whom her faith was perfect—one domestic companion, of her own sex, with whom her sympathies were entire; for they, without jealousy, worshipped the same fortunate man. The union of the lovers was, therefore, the seal of her own happiness; she gained a daughter, and kept her son.

But mortal pleasure, what are thou in sooth!
The torrent’s smoothness ere it dash below.—

The first intimation of danger came from Lady Laura Temple. It was not in her own power to make the restitution to Mrs Herbert which her pride and her sense of justice equally dictated. Nay, there were grave doubts, from the nature of the absurd settlement, whether Lady Laura could ever possess the right of disposing of money vested in several trustees, of whom her father was one and Sir George Lees another, for the behoof of her younger children, without respect to who the father of said children might be. Lady Laura was indeed clearly entitled to dispose of the income of this property when, on the death of Mrs Herbert, it should accrue to her. But this was a distant view, and she had perfectly comprehended the dilemma, when she made, as she imagined, that happy compromise with her father, which led to his conceding the claims of Miss Hamilton without opposition. But whatever might have been the real wishes of the earl respecting his half-niece, neither was he a free agent. It was found that he had people of business and also creditors, who must be consulted, and, in particular, one provincial broker, Mr Stokes, who, having advanced very large sums to rescue him from bad and dangerous hands, now claimed or assumed the sole direction of his affairs. It was not a fortnight after the joyful marriage of Herbert and Violet, ere Mrs Herbert, alarmed and vexed, apprized Lady Laura of the unexpected turn which the affair had taken, and that the earl’s people of business were prepared to resist to the utmost the claims of his niece—that, in short, a suit had been unavoidably commenced, in which Mr Charles Herbert, and his wife, were the prosecutors, and the defendant, the Right Honourable Dudley Temple earl of Tarbert. Nor was this the only vexatious affair; for the same prosecutors were also compelled to become defendants, in an action to recover damages, brought by “Professor Cryppes, Mus. Doc., against his late pupil, Violet Gabrielle Hamilton, otherwise Violet Gabrielle Herbert.” The parties were, in the meantime, in the height of their honeymoon bliss, travelling leisurely, as pleasure or inclination dictated, through some of the most beautiful scenery

in England. Their affectionate, anxious mother was most reluctant to disturb the joy of the young pair ; and, though she was at last obliged to forward letters of business to her son, Care could not long survive in the bright presence of Rapture, even had Charles been of a disposition to cherish the churlish guest.

Yet Herbert's communications with his solicitor, Mr Gryphon, gradually became direct and frequent ; and so much was involved in the issue of one of the suits—for he could not speak of the prosecution of Cryppes, without ridicule and contempt—that it was not possible to banish it wholly from his thoughts. If the lawyers of the earl—for that noble person constantly disclaimed all share in the affair himself—were able to set aside the claims of Violet, the young couple, left entirely dependent on Mrs Herbert, or nearly so, might, in case of her death, be involved in serious distress, which Herbert felt it was wise and manly to look at once in the face, and to provide against ;—and this was to be his first duty immediately on returning to town. Had he been aware of the apprehensions entertained by his mother, and her East India friends, for the solvency of a great house in Calcutta, in which the bulk of her fortune was placed—and which she had confided to Violet—he could better have appreciated those feelings of extreme uneasiness which his wife, as bidden by their mother, hid in her heart, though she could not believe that concealment was either well-judged or justifiable. And, now that her husband had promised to keep no painful secrets from her, she resolved to solicit Mrs Herbert to allow her to treat him with the same candour and confidence.

CHAPTER XVI.

In the meantime, Herbert having attended his wife through the long and labyrinthine passages and stairs of the Crown and Mitre,—with tenderness and gallantry which excited the lively admiration of all the peeping chamber-maids, and convinced the skipping young waiters that the “handsome couple” in No. 16, could not have been married above a week at the most,—returned to his cigar and the newspaper, to spend the permitted quarter of an hour. But several hours elapsed before he joined his sleepless and anxious partner, who, but for very shame, would long before have risen and alarmed the house, or have gone herself in search of him. It is now our purpose to account for Herbert's long absence, and that first transgression against domestic rule, to which there had been some temptation.

While Herbert smoked, mused, and scanned the London newspapers, he, at the same time, drank in the mellifluous sounds of the amateur gleesingers on the other side of the oaken pannels ; and learned, from the grumbling tones of some of the party, that they were still without the effulgence of the star of the night, and the more substantial comforts of supper ; which was now becoming a matter of some interest, as early dinners were the old-fashioned, frugal habit of the town.

“Fitzwagram has to wash the paint from his face, and throw off his stage-clothes. Don Felix

to night—and super-admirable ! though tragedy is his forte”—said Greenthwaite the chairman, anxious to preserve good humour. “But here he comes : quick—Glorious Apollo ! strike up !”

It was a false, if flattering, alarm ; and Greenthwaite's neighbour, Mr Sturt the ironmonger, a middle-aged citizen—a candidate for the dignity of alderman, and, of late, more of a politician than a dilettante—though he had seen the day—now growled exceedingly. He had come out rather against his will, and, moreover, had dined at one o'clock.

“Draw Fitzwagram out in the political line, Greenthwaite,” said Mr Copper the young watchmaker, and vice-chairman. “The fellow, sir”—addressing Sturt—“is up to every thing, and every body, in London—man, woman, and baby. That row, and pulling of caps, between the queen”—but here the discourse *minching* treason, died away into an unintelligible whisper ; though Herbert was left to conclude that the other belligerent was the queen-dowager. “Fact, sir,” continued Mr Copper, as the ironmonger growled unbelief. “Women, as Fitzwagram remarked at the time, are pretty much the same every where, when they get hold of each other's caps, and into a real passion—palace or fish-stall ‘all one.’”

The position of Herbert, with his cigar in his mouth, and his legs tilted, Anglo-American fashion, on each side of the stove, was too luxurious to permit curiosity to get the better of laziness ; so he was contented with what he could learn of palace anecdote without moving nearer. “No one must cross-question him,” continued Copper, “or he bolts at once—a high, fractious chap ; it must all come of his own side.”

“Humph !” said the ironmonger, speaking in the natural language, or, perhaps, in that of a people in the interior of Africa, named the *Sow-Sow* nation. “Sits up all night, and lies a-bed all day ; no one ever yet saw the face o' un on the pavement in sun-loight : a queer customer—squints like dinkins.”

“A common habit of men of genius,” said Greenthwaite, “to ‘consume the midnight oil.’ And that cast of the eyes—what effect it gives to his Shylock ! Then the expression of Fitzwagram's face is so decidedly intellectual ! What are mere physical advantages ?”

“Ay, ay,” grumbled the ironmonger drily, and measuring, with the tail of his sly eye, the sixty-five-inches length of his friend—

“Remember, sir, Garrick was a dwarf ; and the husky voice and stunted figure of Kean.”

“That creater had an eye in its head like a toa-ad,” said the ironmonger, excited by the remembrance of his own play-going days—“There was real stuff in yon little body.”

Passing whiffs of the savoury cookery, for which the Crown and Mitre was renowned, at least within its own precincts, now ascended the stairs, and whetted the impatience of the company. Mr Greenthwaite, on the principle by which a skilful manager propitiates the impatient and angry gods, called for more music ; for the abbey clock struck ten, and the ironmonger, rising in wrath, threw a crown on the

table, as his share of the bill, and swore he'd "be danged if he'd wait another minute for face of man." Greenthwaite and Copper interposed between him and the door, and ere the "Chough and Crow" had fairly taken wing, "Glorious Apollo" once more struck up, and loud and long-continued plaudits announced to Herbert the arrival of the illustrious guest. The bustle of the waiters, and the clanking of dishes drowned the explanations and apologies, save that Mr Fitzwagram had found London despatches at his lodgings which he was obliged to answer in course of post. "And, gentleman," he continued, in a hollow theatrical whisper, "you may look out for news!"

"By the gods of the Greeks!" ejaculated the solitary smoker, rising half laughing, "but I suspected as much! Jack's alive! Here is news for Violet and Marion!" and he advanced to the partition.

"News!" respectfully re-echoed Greenthwaite, who was now installed in the chair, Mr John Quintin Cryppes, *alias* Henry Adolphus Fitzwagram, on his right hand, the ironmonger on his left, and a large turkey smoking before him.—"What have we got here?" said Jack, clapping his glass to his eye, and looking round—"Turkey, goose, and bustard!" And Mr Copper the Vice, who at once apprehended the joke, was convulsed with laughter, as he explained to his neighbours who was goose and who was bustard.

"Foreign or domestic, sir," inquired the ironmonger, who had more self-assurance than the younger men, probably from his late experience of great ones in the town-council and in electioneering matters.

"Foreign *and* domestic," was the pithy and emphatic reply, which produced quite a sensation. However, supper was to be despatched, and Fitzwagram did ample honour to the entertainment; praised the cookery as wonderful for the provinces, and sent his compliments to Mrs Jobson and her cook. Greenthwaite was too evidently absorbed in the honourable but onerous duties which awaited him to attend to mere trencher-filling, in which the ironmonger officiated; and at length King, Queen, Duchess of Kent, Queen Adelaide, Duke of Sussex, Army, Navy, and "all the rest of the royal family," having been rapidly swallowed, Mr Greenthwaite rose, bumper in hand, to propose the toast of the night; and Mr Fitzwagram modestly veiled his face with his hand, allowing himself merely a vista, between the third and fourth finger, through which to survey the company, while the orator, on his legs—or rather see-sawing from leg to leg, like her majesty's government—with equal modesty and humility, first proclaimed "his entire and utter unfitness and unworthiness to discharge the great and important duty which had devolved upon the humble individual before that honourable company."

After several more of the same kind of deprecatory flourishes, which the ironmonger in a gruff *aside* called "all bam," he fairly launched out into a harangue which glanced from heaven to earth, and threw a sweep-net over the "Roman Roscius," Shakspeare, Garrick, the great Columbian lion-queller, to whom "he of the bean-stalk" was but as

a dwarf; and the "Centaur Ducrow." Mr Copper remarked, in a whisper, to the critics at the bottom of the table—the top being given up to the wealth and respectability—that this was inapt to the occasion, as Fitzwagram was devoted to the *legitimate* drama, and not to be classed with Ducrow and Van Amburgh. The orator, however, recovered this slip, if it was one; and having borrowed a certain work from the Town library, went through the whole bead-roll of eminent British actors, and wound up the peroration by placing Fitzwagram infinitely above them all, as, "him, gentlemen! who, to the classic purity and *statuesque** dignity and grandeur of a Kemble, the fire and passion of a Kean, the massive majesty of a Macready, added the cordial hilarious *brusqueness* of a Sheridan Knowles!"

Thunders of applause, in which Herbert joined gaily, followed this burst of eloquence; glasses were emptied and replenished, and down sunk Mr Greenthwaite, leaning back on his chair, and wiping the perspiration from his brow, and up rose Mr Fitzwagram, murmuring, indistinct, heavy-breathed, "overpowered," "the very humble individual before them," "so impressed," "so overwhelmed by the honour just conferred upon him, by the respectable, the enlightened, the intelligent, the accomplished assembly he had the delight to see around him; the *élite* of an ancient city, long distinguished for critical taste and acumen in matters relating to the drama; for audiences, whose approbation was at once a sure passport to that goal of every histrionic aspirant's ambition,—the London boards!" Loud applause!—the company were almost as proud of their town as of its citizens.

"Impudent dog!" thought Herbert, who now fairly dragged forward his chair to the slit in the partition, where the map of Derbyshire afforded a full view of the room and the company,—a circle of ruddy, beaming, hilarious John-Bull faces, all turned to the eloquent Fitzwagram, which it was really, to a man of social feelings, comfortable to look upon. Herbert had placed another chair to accommodate his legs, lighted a fresh cigar, and disposed himself so as to see and listen at his ease; as the chamber-maid entered the parlour,—the identical Mrs Hannah—an over-dressed good-looking woman, with the faintest tinge of rouge giving lustre to her black eyes, many strings of coral beads incrusting her white neck, and long cork-screw ringlets, through which gleamed longer gold earrings. The lady started, or affected to start; but stood her ground while offering to withdraw, until she had explained that, fancying the parlour unoccupied, she had stolen in for a peep of the *star* and the company. The gallantry of Herbert could not baulk so harmless a purpose. Nor did she remain long to tax his politeness. The glance of a minute, during which Herbert closely watched the changes of her face, so far as he could see it, satisfied her and him; and, curtsying, she withdrew in some haste, as if afraid of being detected in her peeping propensities.

Many more speeches were made, and toasts drank; but Herbert was more amused by the

* So afterwards printed in the Tory county paper.

green-room anecdotes, with which Fitzwagram crammed the chairman, and astonished the ironmonger; who sat with a face of strange perplexity, hearing of Taglioni's bust, which was not quite what it should be; and Madame Vestris' legs, which were absolute perfection; and the suspicious *liaisons* of Miss——, which made Mr Sturt shake his head,—and, for the sake of the morals of young Greenthwaite and Copper, beg rather for another comic song, as of better moral tendency than such perilous stuff. Fitzwagram's comic songs and comic imitations, fairly, in the ironmonger's opinion, eclipsed his tragedy—but this the younger men would not allow; yet the imitations of Charles Mathews were so good, that Herbert himself laughed aloud in his concealment, and the ironmonger was nearly choking. Most of the company had now dropped away, but a few stanch hands and choice spirits crowded the closer round the chairman and Fitzwagram; and Copper proposed “the health of Charles Mathews, Esquire, and the comic stage!” which at once called Fitzwagram to his feet to return thanks; which he did, according to the flat newspaper report, only, “in neat and pointed terms.”

“Ah! I ought to do my best for poor Charley,” said the eloquent actor, receiving the compliments of his audience, as he sat down, with a nonchalant yet gracious and patronizing air. “He is a good boy, Mathews.—Ay, many a time and oft have we together heard the chimes at midnight, since we first gave each other black eyes at Eton—ay, and at Ivy Cottage made up the quarrel over mince-pie, and the least tiny drop of champagne, that charming Mrs M—— thought good for boys—ay, ay; I grow an old man.”

“He was at Eton, you remark,” said Greenthwaite, aside to the ironmonger, eager to catch the slenderest cue that was likely to unravel the mystery of Fitzwagram's incognito. “Capital school, Eton,” continued Greenthwaite; “the first men in the country are bred there.”

“Eton, did I say!—what a blabbing blockhead I do become, when set down among choice friends. No such thing, I assure you—not Eton, nor yet Harrow:—I was bred nowhere, gentlemen; I am the Wandering Jew,—the Man in the Moon,—that mystery in an Iron Mask, found in the Bastille, egad.”

“In the brazen visor, Jack!” was said in a hollow voice, which seemed to proceed from a portrait of the late Lord-lieutenant that hung overhead; and which Jobson had got liberty for an itinerant artist to copy from that in the Town Hall, in part-payment of a long bill.

“Who speaks?” cried the chairman, firing at the insult offered to the distinguished guest, and rising to his feet; while Jack, *alias* Fitzwagram, also rose, looked round uneasily, and buttoned his coat, as if instinctively preparing to bolt, while his friends stared at each other.

“Dem'd impertinent jest,—some of those scamps of under-waiters for a trick, I fancy.”

“I'll put them to death without benefit of clergy,” cried Greenthwaite, seizing Fitzwagram's sword-cane.

“Bah! not worth while,” said the great man, recollecting himself, and resuming his chair; and matters of greater pith and moment soon made Herbert's boyish exercise in his old and boyish acquirements in ventriloquy be forgotten. From the interior of the Palace, Fitzwagram had got into the Cabinet Council; and his mute audience, now become small and select, appeared fully to appreciate his whispered, mysterious confidences,—not made, however, until each had vowed perpetual silence.

“Fitzwag knows all those high fellows,” Mr Greenthwaite was heard to remark.—As the night wore away, and familiarity increased, the draper had gradually dropped, first the ceremonious *Mister*; then the final syllable of the great man's surname; until, under the full pressure of two bottles, the appellation diminished to Fitzwag and Fitz. But he still appeared fully sensible of the value of the rare and sacred information confided to him,—even when it began to ooze out as the wine flowed in.

“'Pon my soul I saw the letter—addressed Burke Barker, Esq., Baker Street.—He gave me Barker's autograph,—show it you to-morrow; does all the dramatic criticism,—knows the thing and the actors so well that he does not care whether he sees the play performed or not. Has more freedom of style without:—But an awkward thing happened——”

“Why, Barker the famous editor! do you really know him, sir?” respectfully inquired the admiring Copper. “What a cutting up he gave the *blues* in his paper, at our last election. What a fellow that! what a pen he wields!”

“With help.” Was the sententious reply of Jack, delivered in a tone which made Herbert smile; though he was now becoming anxious that the party should break up, as he wished most particularly to say two words in private to their illustrious guest, and did not wish to draw the attention of the company, or even of the sage James Winkin or his myrmidons, to the circumstance, by a formal message.

“I wish you saw some of those London whelps of the press, gentlemen,” resumed Mr Cryppes, grandly. “No man is, you know, a hero to his valet.”

“Fitz knows all those dons,” hickuped Mr Greenthwaite, now considerably cut,—but more proud than ever of his great friend and himself.

“Familiar as my garter,” responded Jack, who now lighted a cigar, and lolled back in his chair with an air of ineffable enjoyment and superiority.

“I say, Fitz, my boy,” ventured the chairman, prompted by the importunity of the inordinately curious Copper, and rendered audacious by the condescension of the lion of the night, “do, pray, tell us—we are only friends here—that capital thing D'Orsay said to you about young D'Israeli, or something. It was a rum go, that.”

The President of the Shakspeare Club, it was to be feared, was becoming forward and vulgar. Mr Copper frowned upon him severely, while Fitzwagram, not in the least discomposed, replied:—

“Ah, poor dear D'Orsay!—*Mirabel*, you mean; we say *Mirabel*, now. I know no D'Orsay, save

the dentist. But Mirabel! the finest creature that breathes, though, alas! he ages apace:—

All that's bright must fade,
The brightest still the fleetest!

as the countess whispered to us one day in her yellow boudoir, when the count made his *accost*, after a whitebait dinner at Greenwich or Blackwall—I really forget where we had been,—which had somewhat deepened the incipient crow's-feet."

Copper and Greenthwaite exchanged admiring glances.

"But you shan't, Fitz, my boy, get off without that capital story," said the latter.

"It isn't fair, gentlemen, to tell tales out of school. I am mum. I shall get huffed with you, Greenthwaite, my good fellow, if you have either eye or tongue for what falls from a friend in confidence. I remember, now, it was neither at Lady B.'s—a great many Lady B.'s in the peerage, you know—nor yet at the Athenæum, Mirabel let drop that pearl of wit, but at one of the celebrated Professor Cryppes' famous musical parties, which turned the head of the town last season, and at which all nations were represented by their regular ambassadors."

—"Any thing to the family party in Newgate for running away with Stokes, the Warwickshire banker's daughter?" inquired Copper; but Fitzwagram did not hear.

"Bulwer and a few more men," he continued—But there was a cross fire from the ironmonger—"What came of that business?" he inquired; "anybody hanged for it yet?—sarve them right—"

—"Bulwer and a few more men came straight from dinner at the club; but Sir George Lees, who had been on an election committee, was obliged to go home to dress—"

"The member for Wolverton?" inquired the ironmonger.

"Ditto—he went home, as I was saying . . ."

"Which he won't long be," rudely interrupted the ironmonger. "A *rat*, and a fellow of bad morals."

"When was that found out, pray," asked Jack, sharply, and in a voice full of meaning,—“since he *ratted*, as you, sir, term the thing?"

"The Stokes' connexion have resolved to oust him, for the countenance he has given to the blackguards engaged in the abduction of Miss . . . (if Juliana could have heard herself called Miss!) I had that at the first hand—from the traveller of Stokes Brothers, wire manufacturers, in this very room, where he gave a few of us a supper on his last journey. They will spend ten thousand on it, but they will have Lees out, a Stokes in, and bring the vagabond Cryppes to justice."

"You are a politician, my good sir, I perceive," said Fitzwagram, squinting arrows and death at the fair round stomach, with good roast-beef lined, of the ironmonger; at least, as Jack's oblique glance appeared to people of ordinary vision.

"No, sir, I am no politician; I am here to enjoy good fellowship and discuss the drama and the fine arts, and—~~hang~~ politics—eh, Greeny?"

Mr Greenthwaite nodded and smiled entire approbation.

"Hang swindling vagabonds that would run away with a young girl, sir, against her own and her parents' will, for her cash, sir,—for her cash!" spluttered the ironmonger, who felt strongly. He had daughters himself, two of them,—one of whom, with a portion of £1500, he might have bestowed on Greenthwaite, had the dilettante draper been more steady; and he had eaten salt, if not with the Messrs Stokes, yet at their expense; he was, besides, a very honest man, barring that he was unable all at once to grant country customers the full benefit of those reduced prices of Birmingham and Sheffield wares, which filled him with horror and unfeigned alarm for the safety of the British Constitution!

Mr Cryppes, notwithstanding his philosophy, was not perfectly at ease under this unlooked for inflection. He merely took his cigar from his lips to attempt a diversion, and to repeat—"I detect politics save in the gallery of the house when a friend's motion is on; or, with the *Times* in my hand wet of a morning, over my *cafè chassé*. As O'Connell remarked to me one morning that Sheil and I went home with him,—after he had floored Stanley,—to partake of a noggin of smoked whisky-punch, screeching hot"——

"O'Connell, sir!" shouted the admiring ironmonger.

"Yes; I presume you have heard, in these northern parts, of such an individual?"

"Drink whisky punch with Mr O'Connell!"

"Why, ay, man; and yet the stars have not fallen on my head. What do you take me for, now?"

The ironmonger was past speech; yet in his eye there was shrewd questioning. The statement of Mr Fitzwagram might have been quite correct; and many a strange playfellow Mr O'Connell must have encountered in his long bustling day; yet our friend Jack was not perfectly easy; he, besides, hated cross-questioning; and he gave a new turn to the subject by repeating—

"Ay, whisky punch—punch of *poten*—darling little name! Whisky, gentlemen and friends," and he sung jollily,

'Which came from a *still*,
Snug under a hill,
Where eye of *guager* saw it not!"

Know Dan O'Connell? Perhaps I don't know him.—Ask him."

Jack looked prodigiously knowing; and, after a pause of mingled consternation and admiration, he proceeded more quietly.

"When I was, last season, at Darrynane Abbey—where a few rollicking boys of us made a run up from Killarney—ah, Greeny, my dear fellow! I see you are slyly taking notes: well, write *Darrynane*—not *Derry*nane, as the Cockneys have it: a trifle, to be sure; yet such things, as Croker says, mark the difference between bipeds;—when I was last with O'Connell at his seat—by the way, Greenthwaite, would you like a letter of introduction to O'Connell, when you next run up to town

for your winter fashions?—Pray, remind me of it to-morrow—”

“When you were last at Derrynane, sir?” said the now half-envious ironmonger, who saw no right that Greenthwaite, so much younger a man in years, and of lower standing in the corporation, had to get, before him, introductions to great men. He recalled the speaker to the question, “But ain’t that Croker a danged Tory? Tell us of O’Connell—Croker’s no go. . . . You would have lots of politics, of course?”

“Devil a bit of it;—hunting, like Nimrods, all the morning, and carousing all night; with interludes of the ladies, waltzing, and Irish melodies, for us young fellows. Dan and the priests generally stuck by the bottle. *Rint*-day was not come round; and in London and Dublin O’Connell gets a stomachful of political blarney. Besides, we differ in sentiment: Mr O’Connell is a good Catholic—all my eye!” and Jack touched not his eye, but his wry, or as he called it, *Italic* nose. “I am a devoted Churchman; we, therefore,—differ, but amicably.”

“You are against Repeal, I daresay?” said the ironmonger, earnestly.

“Repeal!—you shall hear. The morning I left Darrynane, O’Connell and Prince John—Bruen and I call him the Pretender—”

“Bruen?—ain’t he a Tory that fellow, sir?” said the ironmonger.

“Bruen! perhaps it was not Bruen. It might be O’Ferrall, or O’Callaghan, or Fitzmaurice, or ———. I can’t remember half their dem’d Milesian names; and when not absolutely certain, on points of fact, I am apt to be even superstitious in my scruples.”

“Right, sir, right,” said the earnest ironmonger. “Nothing like stark truth.”

“Nothing like it, sir. Tell truth and shame the devil. Said I right? An Englishman’s maxim.

. But where was I? O! on the road to Tralee. Emphasis on the last syllable—*Tralee*, Greenthwaite. The Saxons bamboozle Irish names exactly as they do Irish interests. We were at a turn of the road—‘Halt,’ cried Dan, drawing bridle opposite an old dilapidated farmhouse—‘There, Fitzwagram, my dear fellow,’ said he, addressing me, ‘there stands the humble home in which the Liberator was born; and in which my grandmother—blest be the place of her rest!—*rared* twenty-two childre.’ Bless his rich Munster brogue! for it flows from his lips like honey and oiled butter.”

“A bull! a bull!” shouted Greenthwaite. “How could O’Connell remember the rearing of his grandmother’s children?”

“Hold your gab, if you please, Dick, and let the gentleman tell out his story,” cried the ironmonger, who being a politician, was now really interested.

“Nay, if I am to be interrupted?” said the speaker, drawing up stately.

“A myriad of pardons, Mr Fitzwagram; my vivacity ran away with me—never can hold in a joke.”

“Keep a small check-string over your fancy,

Greenthwaite, my dear fellow; you are a good creature, but—*green*.” The ironmonger chuckled, and Jack went on:—“Daniel don’t want feeling I assure you, gentlemen. ’Tis said he is altogether a humbug; now, I don’t think it above half; his sentimental vein is not *altogether* affectation. We had allowed the party to outride us; O’Connell pretending to give his favourite garron Paddy, or Padroon, or something, a breathing, that we might, ere parting, have a private chat. My notion is he wished to win me; but never mind that. ‘When I look on that humble mansion,’ said Daniel, ‘on my brave boys cantering before us, think on all that has passed, and gaze on my own lovely green land, that shall yet be—

Great, glorious, and free,
First jim of the earth,
And first isle of the *say*!”

“Ay, ay! that’s him, sure enough!” cried the excited ironmonger, his eyes radiantly twinkling. “You may know O’Connell any where by that rhyme;” and Jack continued—“‘When I look out on those sparkling waves,’ said Dan, ‘yet to bear to our ports the rich commerce of every land; and on the shamrock-clad turf of my own Emerald valleys’—Soh, ho! King Dan,” interrupted I, “you old dog, you would have Ireland all your own then!”

“‘Cod, O’Connell must have been ’nation mad,” said the ironmonger, hitching on his chair, leaning his arms on the table, and, on them, the broad, beaming face turned admiringly to the speaker.

“Not a bit of it, sir,” continued Jack, coolly; “instead of flying into a passion, he began solemnly to protest—‘No, Fitzwagram! let me but see my lovely and beloved country free.’ . . . Sheer humbug! O’Connell ought to have known I was not quite so innocent. I stopped short at once, reined in my animal, and said, with some firmness—for, hang it, I *was* in earnest,—‘Mr O’Connell, you are an old man; and I am, though young in years, not quite a greenhorn. Know, then, sir, that in this Repeal humbug I *cannot* countenance you!’”

And Mr Henry Adolphus Fitzwagram knitted his brows, looked fierce, and slapped the table, till all the decanters and glass chimed in chorus with the truly British sentiment.

“To his face?” whispered the awestruck ironmonger.

“To his beard!” and the questioner looked up with an expression of face half-comic, half-sheepish, but so exquisitely ludicrous and John-Bullish, or *gullish*, while he said—“May I believe you, sir?” that Herbert involuntarily smiled.

Jack answered the singularly simple question by an awful frown; and the enthusiastic Greenthwaite, fancying his friend insulted, took up the subject.

“Believe! yes, sir, you may believe!” He seized his empty glass. “It is thus one man of great soul dares to speak to another . . . Waiter! Jem Winkin! a bottle of claret, and cha—arge it to me.”

Thus encouraged, the imaginative Cryppes

crowded sail, and told lie upon lie, "thick as the leaves in Vallombrosa." It became tiresome at last.

"The scapegrace will waste the whole night: not another ten minutes shall I dally here, if he should hang for it," thought Herbert; and, fortunately, the call for more wine raised the ironmonger, who was a staid family-man, and already much too far beyond good "shop hours." Cryppes seized him by the button.

"You must hear how Dan and I parted. . . . I took a firmer tone: 'There must be truce with the angry boy, O'Connell,' I said. 'Stanley, to be sure, is a sour crab, but a fellow with both pluck and bottom; ay, and of a good old stock, too. I like him!'—Now, what do you suppose, gentlemen, Dan answered?"

But no gentleman durst hazard even a guess of the reply which such audacity must have drawn forth from the insulted "Liberator;" though the ironmonger, coming to his wits, as he surveyed the "queer customer" before him, fancied it might have been kicking; and the simple and half tipsy Greenthwaite, gazed intently on those compressed lips, which alone could reveal the mystery, and fancied he had never before seen Fitzwagram so great; not even in Iago, in which he had backed him against the old favourite of the northern public, Mr Belville, and the entire county palatine.

A long pause followed, ere Fitzwagram, with a total change of expression, breathed, in a hollow sepulchral whisper, "Why, demn the word, as I am a gentleman!" and Herbert, from his lounge, burst into loud, uncontrollable laughter at the irresistible goose-looks of the astonished surrounding group. Fitzwagram, hearing the sound of laughter, started to his feet, suspecting some peeping, smiggering waiter, behind the sliding doors, and flourishing his sword-cane, exclaiming "A rat! a rat behind the arras! Dead for a ducat!"—he pushed aside the boards, and Herbert was scenically revealed, stretched on his substitute for a *chaise longue*. Mr Greenthwaite began to bluster; but Jack himself seemed quite taken aback; till Herbert, without moving a limb, coolly said, "When your friends are gone I have a word for you, sir,—nay, you don't stir from this;" for Jack moved away, then halted, and changed colour. It was but for an instant. Jack Cryppes, the intrepid, the undaunted, whose distinguishing quality, like that which Hazlitt attributes to his fat namesake, was in all circumstances, "a masterly self-possession," made a speech which told on both sides of the house:—"Mr Charles Herbert—an old *chum*," he whispered, drawing Greenthwaite aside, "Knows all my family,—*intimately*;—leave us, pray."

"I feared so," replied the sympathizing, yet curious Greenthwaite, "the grand-looking fellow I saw arrive with a lady to-night. Will he peach?—give you up to your friends! What can we do for you, my dear Mr Fitzwagram?"

"Nothing, nothing my dear fellow,—yet stay; keep out these dem'd police, or Mayor's beaks, if Herbert has informed on me. . . . Perhaps Jem Winkin might let me off by the back way

"I'll make him!" responded the loyal and enthusiastic Greenthwaite, going off.

"Cautious my dear friend. . . . I think you collected the bill just now. I fear I have forgot my purse in changing my stage clothes—a small *douceur* to Jem might be useful. Oh! a thousand thanks—just five pieces—not a stiver more; and be sure you put me in mind of them to-morrow. By the way, will you and Copper dine with me?" Jack bore a conscience; or rather he was on honour; for he might, at that moment, have had the whole twenty pounds collected to pay the Shakespearean supper.

Meanwhile the ironmonger also had learned, or partly guessed, how matters stood with the unfortunate gentleman. His yeoman blood rose, and though he could not approve of a young man's deserting his home, his duties, and his *estates*, to go about with vagrant players, no one, he swore, should be allowed to lay a hand on Fitzwagram against Fitzwagram's will. He would go to the Mayor—he was almost an alderman himself. He could put in bail—he could issue out a writ of *Habeas Corpus*;—no d——d aristocrat should seize O'Connell's friend, Fitzwagram, and force him to be a nobleman, or man of estate, against his inclination.

Mr Fitzwagram was highly gratified by these assurances; but he was not afraid. He had been playing truant, he confessed, but he would be forgiven; and his new friends at last agreed, on his entreaty, to leave him; but resolved to take a glass of beer in another room, and be at hand,—Copper, who was a boxer, swearing that no officer of the law should enter the Crown and Mitre that night save over his body! Our two old acquaintances were thus left alone, the sole occupants of that large and now opened dining-room.

"A glass of wine, Mr Herbert?" asked Jack, in a rather uncomfortable tone, and helping himself to Greenthwaite's untouched claret.

"I have taken my wine," replied Herbert coldly.

"Done the Cumbrian flats!" Jack whispered, putting on his most insinuating comic leer—his John-Wilkes' face; but Herbert, who had often admired that roguish leer, gave this time no token of approbation.

"I take it for granted, Mr Cripps—"

"Gad-a-mercy, my dear sir, no surnames in public rooms, I beseech you."

"I take it for granted, sir, that you are really going off to America, and by the Liverpool night-coach. It will be up within the hour."

"Perhaps you think I had better?" said Jack, anxiously, looking on an enemy, as he now feared. "I rather think I shall. . . . Heavens and earth, Mr Herbert, what can a poor sinner in my place do? Had my father bred me a draper, like that little pert Greenthwaite, or got me into holy orders—"

A slight smile, in spite of himself, wreathed Herbert's lip at so preposterous an idea; and on such faint encouragement Jack proceeded—

"If you could only figure the degradation and actual misery I have endured since I have been

exiled from London—cut off from my resources, banished from my friends. . . . There is some fatal disorganization in British society, Mr Herbert :—the false position into which men of talents and acquirements, formed to be the ornaments of society, are too often forced by untoward circumstances : the false medium, sir, which interposes between genius and its rewards— . . . ”

“ No nonsense, Cripps.—What cant is this you have been learning on your travels?—What has this philosophy to do with the villanous, unmanly scheme in which I found you engaged in Kent? By heaven, I can scarce forgive myself for conniving at your escape once already ! ”

“ Do you really think so, Mr Herbert? . . . Now, do you know that frolic never struck me in this light before. . . . I would rather have married the little girl myself, than have had such a racket about it—though, after the splendid creatures you have seen, and I have adored . . . ”

“ One of them in this house, I suspect,” interrupted Herbert. “ No fooling, Mr Cripps ; believe me, your affairs don’t admit of it—even if I had a taste for nonsense. There is a woman here whose presence bodes you no good. Do you remember the beautiful waiter-girl in ——’s chop-house, whom you admired some five years since.”

“ Hannah White ! You don’t say so ?—then, by Jove, I am sold ! But I did not ruin that girl—upon my soul, no, Herbert—Mr Herbert ;—and I offered to get her an engagement at the Surrey. But she was always a mercenary creature—would take no advice,—would go to service.”

“ I am not curious,” said Herbert, drily ; “ that woman has seen and recognised you, as I did her.”

“ Cursed ungrateful jade ! but what need I say ? my own sister has deserted me. The Barkers, sir, have conspired to keep me from London,—a brother’s poverty is a stain on their rank and fashion. Polly will not even answer my letters ; but by ——,” and Mr Cripps looked horribly malignant as he vowed destruction to his iron-hearted sister. “ If you could but guess what I have endured, Mr Herbert. You solemn or conceited asses here to-night,—they are absolutely men of refinement, compared with the coarse, brutal, bacchanal-bodders I have encountered,—rich knaves, who have wives and families, go regularly to meeting, and have their beef and pudding every day, while a man of talents and education— . . . I have, to be sure, seen something of life,—the social antipodes of the world, I may say.—But this cursed woman—what do you advise, Mr Herbert ? ”

“ Why, unless you wish to see the world also at its geographical antipodes, Jack, you will be off without delay. There is my cloak and cap,—the window is not high,—drop from it when you hear the horn, and climb the night-coach. I wish to

give you one more chance for repentance and amendment of life.”

Jack was somewhat touched. His voice softened, his eyes moistened, as he watched Herbert counting out ten sovereigns, neat ten—for Herbert no longer told his gold by handfuls—and he said, “ Its dem’d hard for a man to amend his life upon an empty pocket, Mr Herbert. I am not justifying all my youthful follies ; and in this lark,—this affair in Kent, that she-devil, my sister Polly,—fancy her refusing me a guinea in my utmost need, and her, as I see by the *Satirist*, dashing away at Epsom in ermine and jewels, like a duchess, with that blackguard Lees. She has behaved like a fiend to the fondest of fathers, and the most affectionate of brothers ;—let Barker look to it : she may next play him a trick.”

“ Shame, Cripps—hold your tongue—your own sister ! I never before fancied you malicious, with all your faults.”

“ Nor am I—but that woman—all those dem’d women—this unsettled life, it has changed my milk to gall ! ”

“ Vastly fine, Jack ! but to business,—that woman will give you up to-morrow to the authorities, as sure as she rises :—there is the pecuniary temptation,—and there is revenge.”

“ Save for the fear of betraying herself,” said Cripps, who in his own mind had already run over the charges for and against him, and he continued, “ But she will be ready to damn herself to ruin me, and get that wretched fifty pounds . . . I must off—Thanks for the *loan* of the cloak. Oh ! really I am ashamed, Mr Herbert. Ten pieces ; and I believe there was some trifle between us before. The horn ! hist,—softly with the window. God bless you, Herbert ! you are a noble, generous fellow, and will die a secretary of state,—I say it, I shall get up slyly behind, and look like a regular trader—. Good by ; my respectful compliments to your lady. Ah, you are a happy fellow, Herbert ! Do, when you go to town, drop in and let the poor old governor and my mother know something of their scapegrace. Let them try, above all, to get me back to London. I shall die out of London.”

Jack’s escape, owing to his own coolness, was managed with great ease : wrapped in Herbert’s cloak, and with Herbert’s travelling-cap pulled over his brows, he dropped from the window into the street, climbed the coach unseen, and was gone !

Herbert cautiously shut the window, lighted his chamber-light, and first bethought himself of what “ his lady ” must be thinking of his absence. “ But I will carry her Jack’s compliments ; ” was his thought, as, with a lightened heart, he ascended the stairs,—Jem Winkin rushing before him with a candle.

(To be continued.)