

Hume? None of these things does this man, calling himself a Christian, do. He fumes and frets, blusters and bravadoes, damns and denounces, with all the blind furious hate of the old Adam, and eggs on the mercenary minions of the law to bind, with thousandfold packthread, (happily only *packthread*,) the strong (or at least imagined strong) limbs of his adversary. He not only cannot forgive, but he takes vengeance sevenfold, yea, and seventy times sevenfold. Because Mr Haalam has an unchastened tongue, not only shall that tongue be compelled to speak more politely in future, but it shall be gagged altogether; yea, and every other tongue that shall dare to gainsay the infallibility of the apostolical Bishop of Exeter. We entreat our readers to consider this matter seriously. These are sad times indeed for Christianity, if the Bible, to please the old Adam of a bilious priest, must be made to descend from the lofty position in which it was placed by the blessed founder of Christianity, and have its cause pled in the Central Criminal Court, London, by some quibbling barrister, quoting obsolete statutes of cold, green, lichen-crust ed bigotry from Blackstone. "I SPEAK AS UNTO WISE MEN; JUDGE YE WHAT I SAY," was the argument of St Paul. I SPEAK AS UNTO SLAVES; BELIEVE OR BE PROSECUTED, is the argument of Henry Exeter!—But shall we tolerate open blasphemy? Nay, fellow-citizen, if you stumble on a man who is *really* a blasphemer, and who, with brazen front, dares to look denial in the face of him who alone *IS*, weep a tear over the direful earthquake-desolation of a brain, where the poles of crazy humanity have been turned, and lodge the victim kindly in some comfortable asylum, not in a gaol. But truly, what men, or intolerant bishops, call blasphemy, is not always, perhaps *never* was, that thing. Blasphemy, as it stands a crime in our statute-books, is an offence against the presumptuous claim of infallibility, set up by an intolerant sect dominant; not against the majesty of the God that reigns in heaven. If it were an offence against HIM, mad indeed is that boy's ambition, who boasts himself

able to launch with wisdom the thunder of the Omnipotent. And so monstrous a thing in fact is the crime called blasphemy, that, according to our law, (as, on looking into Blackstone, you will find,) if God were to send a prophet into the world to-morrow to reconcile the jarring differences of Christian sects, that prophet, in the present temper of churchmen, might reasonably expect to be tried, fined, and imprisoned, not in despot Prussia only, but in free Britain. Meanwhile, the Britons, who in this Protestant "REVIVAL" of Dominican principles, may be called upon to sit in judgment on fellow-sinners accused of writing or vending blasphemous libels, should bear in mind before God, that not their own feelings, however just and however strong, are the matter under trial, but the rights of their brother-men. And the most transcendental heretic that, with the galliard spur of the seven-league boots of German mysticism, ever kicked asidesome "Marrow of Modern Divinity," inherits the right of free thought and free speech from God, as much as John Knox. If the Puseyites are not prosecuted for metamorphosing the inward elastic vitality of the gospel of Christ into a mere mechanical mould, in the hands of presumptuous priests; as little ought Robert Owen to be prosecuted, because he wants the bump of veneration. Nonsense will be spoken in the world, if men (like the Trappists) make not silence imperative by a vow. The human heart is a fountain out of which, when you open the sluice, bitter waters and sweet gush mingled. Prosecutions for blasphemy, so called, stop up the flow of laic thought altogether, while they give a free vent to the bitterness of Episcopal denunciation. Let us hope piously that God, who makes his sun to shine on the just and on the unjust, gives license to certain errant spirits to speculate overboldly, as wisely as he permits the souls of some churchmen to ossify themselves into the skeleton frame-work of an intolerant and persecuting creed. If God preaches a gospel of salvation, and the Bishop of Exeter a gospel of damnation, what man will hesitate to select?

## VIOLET HAMILTON; OR, THE TALENTED FAMILY.

### CHAPTER XII.

Charles Herbert, having lost the Dover mail, in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain another parting interview with Violet, was posting after the Earl of Tarbert, when the pole of his chaise broke, a few miles beyond Feversham; and he walked forward to procure help for the postboy, and, if possible, a fresh vehicle for himself, as he was afraid that the Earl, his daughter, and retinue would embark that night. Pushing on up a slight ascent, a carriage was heard behind rapidly approaching. "If here should be only a single gentleman, I might, save for English reserve, tell my plight and beg help; or even offer myself as

an agreeable companion in a post chaise, if our road lie the same way." He had not well ended these ruminations, when, stopping to survey the vehicle, the screams of a female suddenly issued from it, while an outrider, who struck Herbert as monstrously like Professor Cryppes' celebrated valet Eustache, seized the reins and urged on the horses. "Mr Herbert! Mr Herbert! save me! save me!" was again screamed forth, and then the voice was stifled as if by violence.

Herbert, surprised and excited, commanded the postboy to stop, and leapt down from the high footway where he stood, in order to seize the horses; but on they dashed, and he found himself,

in five minutes, alone, and a full half mile behind the vehicle, which he endeavoured to keep in sight. It took a cross road near a farm-house, whither Herbert immediately repaired to prevail with the country people to join him in the pursuit; but so much time was lost, before he was mounted, himself on one of the horses of his own chaise, and the post-boy on the other, that the carriage and the suspicious party were fairly out of sight.

That his own name had been called, Herbert was perfectly certain. The lady, whoever she might be, then knew him and claimed his protection. For a moment he thought of Violet, but that idea was dismissed as utterly absurd. The unknown was, however, a woman, in distress, and in the power of a person whom he believed capable of any roguery, if not of black villainy.

On he rode, frequently obtaining contradictory tidings from the country people, until, several miles off the great road, in a narrow lane, where the trees met overhead, his postboy recognised, hanging to a branch, a signal of distress; a cambric pocket handkerchief wet with tears, and having in one corner, delicately marked in hair, JULIANA STROCKS, No. 18. The case was now plain; and Herbert, on learning that the Rector, whose snug parsonage, seen through embowering elms, was basking in the warm beams of the setting sun, was a Justice of the Peace, at once demanded an audience, and told his adventure, mentioning, at the same time, his own name and the purpose of his present journey. He obtained the most prompt and efficient assistance; and the Rector, as soon as he heard that the abductors were foreigners, anticipating violent resistance, made one of the constable's followers take pistols.

The precaution was wholly needless. Never was damsel surrendered so ingloriously as poor Juliana. They had not followed the track above a mile, when the forlorn girl was found sitting on a carpet-bag by the roadside, bitterly weeping. The ardour with which Juliana flung her arms round Herbert's neck, and clung, sobbing to his bosom; the vehemence with which she afterwards, laughing and crying by turns when attempting to speak, clasped her united hands through his arm lest he might escape and leave her again alone, or in the power of the villains who had fled, might, at another time, have brought a smile to his face. Despatching his attendants in pursuit, he could only soothe her with the assurance of her safety, and beg to know how she came here. Juliana was a comely, good-natured, and pleasant girl; and, moreover, a person of some consequence in society; as the presumed heiress of very great wealth; Herbert, besides, remembered her as the admirer of their *Fair Lily*, when she thus began,

"O, Mr Herbert, had Miss Violet come to be my governess, this never would have happened. Mamma brought me last month to a grand school, a very grand and a very strict school, at Blackheath; quite a fine place—high walls, gardens, green-houses, carriages, and everything—where

the young ladies were so watched that we called it The Convent, and the mistress our Lady Abbess; but it was no joke to me.

"That Mrs Barker, that wicked, detestable Polly Cripps—they say she is married, but I don't believe any one would marry so bold and wicked a creature—came, the day before yesterday, I suppose—for it looks like an age—in a chaise and four, in violent haste, saying my papa, my dear papa! was taken suddenly ill, and was dying, and that I must instantly go with her to see him. Mrs Benson—she is properly the Honourable Mrs Benson, mamma says, but the Honourable is sunk for family reasons—hesitated, and would not let me go home; but I cried and screamed so to go to my father; and Polly Cripps produced mamma's letter; but it was all forgery and lies, Mr Herbert. And when I got away at last, and into the chaise, there was Noddy Cripps, my father's clerk-boy, who was dying in love with me, forsooth! as Polly said; and we must be married! It was all a joke, she owned, about papa's illness; but Edmund was dying in love with me, and would shoot himself through the temples if I were cruel to him. I thought I should have gone mad, and I screamed so. And, when we came to a large inn, where was that odious Jack Cripps, whom I remember before he went to London; and an ugly foreigner, with four stars on him; and that other foreign fellow with the hook nose, you saw on horseback; I was afraid of my life: but when they left me with Edmund; to pay his addresses to me, I think I soon frightened Noddy."

And Juliana, now safe, laughed heartily at the recollection of her spirit and prowess.

"I told him I was an heiress; and that, if any one dared to marry me, whom I did not like, papa would have him hung. He is a poor sneak, Edmund! Polly then tried to frighten me, and to coax me; but I would neither be frightened nor coaxed; and, when Ned came near me, I kicked and screamed till he got afraid, I fancy; for I overheard Polly say to Jack, 'Nothing can be done with that spooney;' and, after some time, she said, if I would only be quiet, and not scream so, she would take me back to Mrs Benson's, and tell that we had met an express on the road, saying papa was much better, and that I need not proceed home. What a fool I was to trust her; for, Oh, dear Mr Herbert! the worst was not come yet. Oh, you are my guardian angel! indeed you are; and I would rather have had you to save me than any one else in the whole world. Well, it was too late to return to Blackheath that night, and so we had a gay supper at the inn, with that foreigner who, Polly said, was a man of high rank, and a Count—the same hobleman my friends had entertained at W——; and who knew me, for he had fallen in love with my picture in mamma's drawing-room; that thing in crayons, you remember, Mr Herbert. I was not in love with him, any way. O, the ugly fellow! But I tried to be cunning with them all; and at night bolted myself well in my room. Next morning we were to be off for Blackheath;

at five in the morning. 'Are you awake, my love, the chaise waits to convey you,' said Polly Cripps. They called her Mrs B. B. I was quite ready; for, indeed, I had never undressed. I have never undressed yet; and such a figure I am! and my eyes are so dim, I daresay, with crying!

I went down stairs at once, and into the chaise; and in after me jumps the abominable Count and the other ugly fellow; and off they drove at once without Polly or any of the Cripps, while I screamed like mad, and dashed my hands through the glass, and cut them."

"Horrible!" said Herbert, compassionately, pressing the fair hands, affectionately and confidently clasped on his arm.

"You are sorry for me, dear Mr Herbert? O, how very kind and good you are! You are my guardian angel; and I shall bless you and pray for you while I live. I fell into fits from terror and passion. They stopped at a house to get some water for me, and then I shouted so wildly for help, that the people really believed I was mad, and a foreigner, as the wretches said. Mrs Benson had all her pupils dressed like French girls, too, which confirmed it. Then the ugliest fellow—but they are both so ugly—went outside, and the other tried to quiet and coax me: but always came on the other fit; and I heard them consulting—fit? I understand French pretty well—about how they were to get me across the Channel, if I screamed so. They agreed to go to some village on the coast, where French smugglers came. I thought I was for ever lost! and my dear father and mother! But just then, dear Mr Herbert, you appeared! Heaven sent you to deliver me! Was it not odd that it was you I met; and neither of us ever in this part of Kent before? But Heaven ordained it."

"I shall ever rejoice at the accident which broke down my chaise and delayed my journey, Miss Juliana."

"And you, though in such haste, would not abandon me," said the grateful and tearful Juliana; "and came so far out of your way for me! O, dear Mr Herbert! I am sure you will take me, yourself, to papa; I can never part with you again, till I am at home; I shall die or go mad, if you leave me; and I am such a fright; and my eyes and face so spoiled; and my hair all so disordered. I shall be ashamed to be seen by the young ladies at the rectory."

The young ladies at the rectory did their best to comfort and soothe the rescued damsel, and even attended personally to her dress and her hair; so that the poor girl was able to appear with more propriety before his Reverence, who lost no time in issuing warrants for the apprehension of the persons that Herbert described as Count Rodolpho Zanderschloss and his emissary Bustache Latude, regretting exceedingly that his power, as a magistrate, did not extend to Sussex and Middlesex; though he thought it his duty to acquaint the proper authorities in London with the abduction of Miss Stocks, and the share which the Cripps family had had in the conspiracy.

Herbert immediately wrote a particular account of the adventure to Mr Somers Stocks, and also to Mrs Benson; and, to both epistles, Juliana added a postscript, expressive of her life-long obligations to her dear deliverer, to Mr Herbert, "her guardian angel, who had come to her aid in extremity, just like a hero in a story-book." It was not until Juliana had taken his promise for the fourth time, that he would not leave her till she was with her parents; that poor Juliana, whose head was half-turned with what she had suffered, dreaded, and escaped, consented to go to bed.

The three laughing daughters of the Rectory, Caroline, Helen, and Isabel, then held a chapter on the marvellous adventure, not forgetting the handsome person, and delightful and elegant manners of the knight-deliverer, who, the eldest ventured to foretell, had found an heiress as surely as the Count Rodolpho had lost one. Six weeks later, and the dressing-cases of these young ladies sparkled with brighter gems than had ever before been seen in the Rectory of Swanstoun; and the small side-board there shone and groaned beneath the set of rich salvers commemorative of the rescue of the heiress of the wealthy provincial banker, and of the kindness of the family who had so hospitably received her and her deliverer. Nay, as one good deed is often parent to another, next year, the three young ladies, lost in that sweet but isolated parsonage, having gone on a long visit to Mrs Stocks, the elder was, next season, married to Miss Cripps' *ex-avant* admirer, Mr Benjamin, with the entire approbation of his wealthy parents, and to the great contentment of her own family, who offered no objection to her younger and prettier sister marrying into the same manufacturing connexion, and, in the meanwhile, being the well-salaried governess of Juliana Stocks.

"So odd," Mrs Somers Stocks remarked, "a baronet's grandchild my daughter's governess, and all owing to the Hungarian Count, sad, wicked man, falling in love with my Juliana's picture in crayons, and bribing Polly Cripps with two thousand sovereigns and the brilliants of his order of the Golden Fleece, to let him run off with her." For Mrs Somers Stocks persisted in believing the Count, whom she had entertained, and who had run away with her daughter, a true and genuine Count; in spite of whatever evidence could be produced to his being a very different character. She, however, did not say as much when her husband was in company; for the prejudices of Mr Stocks against the Count were quite as invincible as the dislike of his daughter to that noble person.

Very different, indeed, were the feelings of Mr Somers Stocks, who—in the first heat of his resentment at the audacious and wicked conspirators, aggravated probably by a pecuniary loss to which he had previously been subjected by his own vanity and the address of the German Count—would, without remorse, have seen each and all of them punished with the utmost severity which the law visits on that black and dangerous, and,

in England, rare, crime, the abduction of an heiress.

Before Mr Charles Herbert had returned to Blackheath, to place his charge under the protection of her governess, the officers of justice had arrested Edmund Cripps; were hot on the track of his brother, Jack, and looking sharply after the foreigners; though it was not until Juliana had again been examined by a magistrate, on coming to London, that a warrant was issued against Mrs Burke Barker, the lady of "the celebrated and talented theatrical critic and political writer," and also against himself, though nothing had transpired, directly or indirectly, to implicate Barker. He was, in reality, perfectly ignorant of the daring scheme, which he knew the world much too well to sanction openly, whatever might have been his private opinion of its moral quality if successful. The surprize and indignation of Barker—a proud, ambitious, and sensitive, if an unprincipled man—at finding his newly-made wife involved in an abortive attempt of this sort, may, therefore, be imagined. In vain did Polly deprecate his wrath, and protest that ardent affection for her brother, who idolized the banker's heiress, who returned his love, had alone induced her to lend her assistance to promote the union upon which the happiness, nay, the very existence of the lovers depended. Mr Barker, though but a six weeks' husband, was not to be so duped. In vain did she protest that, to the subsequent adventures of Juliana Stocks with Count Rodolpho, she was a total stranger. Even on this point Mr Barker was incredulous; but shame and pride here aided the weeping wife, and, having established his own innocence to the satisfaction of the magistrate, recognisances were accepted for the future appearance of his lady.

At this pinch, Mrs Barker had not scrupled to make a scapegoat of her brother Jack, which she did with the less remorse, that she believed he had been warned by the arrest of Edmund, and was safe from the pursuit of justice; and she was the less apprehensive, on her own account, as Jack was not likely to confront her, or contradict her specious tale. That tale which, if delivered by a poor, old, ill-dressed woman, might have totally failed to impress the worshipful Bench, when gracefully narrated by the handsome, insinuating Mrs Burke Barker, whose pathetic tones and melting tears spoke the tender and sympathizing friend of the young lovers, ignorant of the legal consequences of her conduct, and only alive to their distress, produced a very marked effect; and, save for the admonitory whispers of a cross-looking, legal assistant of the magistrate, probably much less susceptible to the softening influence of beauty's tears, Polly would have been triumphantly dismissed without farther trouble. Yet, at the moment when the recognisances of Sir George Lees, the family friend, summoned in haste in this emergency, and her husband, were accepted, she knew not whether being sent off to Bridewell, or ascending the hackney-coach

waiting to convey herself and her gloomy-browed lord to their home, were the direst sentence. It was a respite when Sir George accepted her earnestly-pressed set-down at a certain specified corner, not in sight of the windows of the club.

In the meanwhile, our heroine, ignorant of these transactions, was beginning to feel returning tranquillity under the roof of Mrs Herbert. This lady, though prudently resolving to wean the thoughts of her protégée, as far as possible, from her lover, had, somehow, from the hour of his departure, talked of nothing else than the subject that filled her heart. Anecdotes of the boyhood and youth of Charles; traits of his spirit and generosity, his frankness and cordiality, intermingled with fond conjectures as to how far the traveller might, from time to time, be advanced on his journey; or how the wind stood for the little voyage across the Channel; matters "fond and trivial," yet full of kindly interest to the speaker and the listener, occupied and beguiled their social hours.

Those trunks, belonging to Violet, about which Mike Twig had shewn such sympathetic concern, and which had helped to bring her into suspicion with her hostess, had not yet been unpacked; and while Mrs Herbert indulged her customary hour of quiet, or "beauty-sleep," as her maid Jenkins called it, after her coffee, Miss Hamilton, with the assistance of her friend, Mistress Marion, who timed her visits most judiciously, set about arranging the wardrobe and other belongings in the drawers of the chamber allotted to her,—or in "Mr Charles' room," as it was familiarly named in the household.

Mistress Marion, upon her knees before a large sea-chest, in which her arms were plunged up to the elbows, remarked, in reply to Violet's observation that she had not come to see her for two long days—

"I mustna encroach on Mrs Herbert's rights, hinny, now that you are her ain; but, this day, I just took a longing to see ye, though I had trailed ower this muckle town on business, frae the screech o' day till noontide. I'm sure if I have scraped two or three pennies thegither amang the heathen Englishers, it's not without doing service for it. So, after I had looked ower my inve'tors, comparing them wi' my bits o' jottings when I made the rounds o' my houses the day, and gotten the dish o' bohea, and was a wee thing refreshed—for I can do no good without it, more shame to me! for never as ounce of it was in ower my father's door—says I to pussie, What would ye think, mawkin, if I should step to the Regent's Park, and see how our young leddy is coming on? and the cretur *miaw-ed* and waved her tail, ye'll no believe me, as if she would have spoken out like a Christian—'Even do sae, mistress mine.'"

"Your cat is, indeed, wonderfully sagacious, and also very kind to me," returned Violet, smiling.

"Ye think me a fool about pussie, Miss Violet; but I have an ill brow o' them she sets up her back at. Noo, there is Jenkins she ca-

not thole, that's *endure*, hinny; for I must interpret our gude Scots tongue even to you; but as for Jack Cripps, when he came to my door this day, I thought she would have torn the house down, and floun at the hairy face o' him."

"Jack Cripps at your door again, Marion?" returned Violet, reddening, as she remembered his former impertinent visit.

"Ay, ye may wonder what the fallow wanted with me! I fancy pussie thought he was coming to court us!—he! he! he! for it was snug quarters he wanted in a strait."

"To lodge with you?"

"Ye may say that! but Maister Jack's impudence is up to and beyont my garret story. . . . But, hinny, this kist has been through hands ere new: it's double bottomed, too; d'ye hear how it rings to my knock? There's been harriers here, Miss Violet. Have ye an inve'tor o' the contents, hinny?" And Marion, by main force, raised the lid of the double bottom, and gave to sight a confused mass of papers and writings, tied up in lawyer style. "Preserve and guide us! but here is a sight. What if there should be a Last Will and Testament among these musty bundles and muckle broad seals; though I misdoubt if we have had the first overhauling o' this kist."

"It was my dear father's, from the time he entered the army; and, I have heard his old servant tell, had been with him in every quarter of the globe."

"To my brother, the Right Honourable John Earl of Tarbert," read Marion, on taking up an empty envelope, to which a broken seal was still attached. "How could this deaf nut come here, hinny? and in a leddy's handwriting; but I'll take my Bible oath this chest has been spulyied. When had ye it last open?"

"Never. It was sent to me very lately from Jersey; and I never felt sufficiently at home with Mr Cripps to unpack or even look into it."

"Then some one has done that for you, my dear; and, its no unlike, the very rogue that plundered ye o' the twenty-pound note."

"It is indeed inexplicable; perhaps the disappointed persons who looked here for my property may have deposited these papers by accident, or merely to be rid of them."

"Violet, my love—Miss Hamilton," was said in the sweet voice of Mrs Herbert, who softly tapped at the door, "leave your business to Mrs Linton, pray, and come to me—I have had so singular an adventure just now in the shrubbery."

Violet hastily opened the door; and there stood the lady, the corner of her large India shawl filled with written papers.

"I was making a survey of the shrubs that I wished to have pruned to-morrow, when the gardener comes; and, see! Hid they were in the thickest of the wilderness, as we are pleased to call my morsel of greenery. I do believe I have found a whole manuscript romance, or a play in five acts."

"The very papers Major Hamilton's chest has

been plundered of!" exclaimed Marion. "I could swear it; and I am far up to the tricks of this wicked big tonn."

When the affair was explained, Mrs Herbert allowed that the conjecture was probable; and she at once gave up her spoils to Violet for more leisurely private examination.

"Can we not go over them together," asked Violet, simply.

"Na, hinny, the Major's auld papers are not *our* business, but *your* business," said Marion, quickly; "that is, if anybody's business. So we'll neither make nor meddle, till ye please to report, or communicate your loss to the magistrates. For an auld wife like me to take an advantage, and pry into the matters of an innocent young lady whose heart is in her mouth, would be far from right; so ye must not affront Mrs Herbert with any such proposal, Miss Violet. See there, now, I have locked up your papers; and keep your key yoursel', hinny. All is safe under this honourable roof."

Mrs Herbert looked rather blank when Marion, as a matter of course, disburdened her of her load; yet it was impossible to offer any objection; and Violet, aware of her worthy nurse's warm attachment, shrewd sense, and knowledge of her early history, at once acquiesced, so far as to receive the key, while, smiling with melancholy sweetness, she said—

"I fear my poor father's keepings must have sadly disappointed the pillagers, whoever they may be. His was an old soldier's legacy—a sword which had done some service in the field, a pair of tarnished epaulets, a first commission, a few worn gazettes, and flattering letters from superior officers. This was the amount, I believe; and I shall deeply regret the loss, yet I do not feel justified in saying more about it."

"Ye'll see and judge at leisure, after ye have looked into your affairs; but it is, if not a sin, surely next door till't, to let vagabonds off in a hail skin who prey upon the public, and, what is worse, on the orphan and the fatherless."

"I quite agree with Mistress Marion," said Mrs Herbert, "and I assure you, Miss Hamilton, if we had but the least clew to detection, I should have no scruple, but the very reverse, in letting justice take its course."

"But I have a clew," returned Marion briskly. "I needed but a hair to make a tether o', and I have a full crop o' them, or I'm mistaken. I'm no sayin Maister Skip-Jack broke open the kist with his ain hands; but he is, I make no doubt, concerned, 'airt and pairt,' as our lawyers at hame say, with the foreignder, and guilty after the fact."

Upon this, Mistress Marion took her leave, volunteering future services of all kinds, and making a particular request that Miss Violet would next day visit her at her own house, as she believed that she had still in her possession, among her endless variety of inventories, one belonging to Major Hamilton, which might help to identify some of the imagined missing property. Mrs Herbert agreed to set the young

lady down, on her way to visit a valetudinarian friend, and take her up on her return.

"And if you should invite me to step up stairs," said Mrs Herbert, gaily, "I should feel delighted. Miss Hamilton has so excited my curiosity with the beauties and wonders of the light-house you inhabit in Fleet Street."

"It is me would be honoured!" returned Marion, cordially, and they parted thus; Marion pursuing her way home to her cat, which advanced purring to her call by the open casement, from the top of a meat-safe, or hanging larder, on the top of which, when alone, pussie often basked herself in the sun, and watched the martins and sparrows sporting about the chimney pots and the eaves.

"Ay, come away ye sly lummer; ay, ay, pussie; ye are just like a' the world; a great wark ye'll hold about folk when ye're sin end is to serve; I'm sure ye got ye're tea no that lang syne; but it will be your supper ye are far now. Let's see what is in the safe!—I am sure, ye jade, ye fancy it was alienary for your use it was put up, that it might keep your dainty morsel fresh, and let ye beak yourself in the sun, and watch the bits o' birds on the tap o' it, among the wall-flowers and mignonette o' our Babylonian hanging garden."

Thus maundered Marion, addressing her favourite, while vainly attempting to re-kindle her fire, which, though generally preserved like the vestal fires, had for once fairly expired. Blaming her want of providence in having neither flint nor Lucifer-matches at hand, and in her jealous and even unneighbourly independence, disdaining to be indebted for light to the tailor's family, who had incurred her displeasure and suspicion by letting a room to Jack Crippa, she left her door on the latch, and descended, with her little lantern, to procure a light two doors off. At the street door, Marion met with two persons whom her practised eye at once recognised as policemen or sheriff-officers, though they were at this time distinguished by no peculiar garb. With promptitude, and even a certain vindictive pleasure, she gave them the information they required about the tailor's lodger, and somewhat more. Great, however, was Marion's astonishment and anger, on her return, to find her own door open, and that the same men, and two or three more persons, were searching her apartments for the supposed criminal. Loudly and vehemently vociferating against those who had ventured "to dare to break open her door!" and vowing that her countryman, Sir Peter, in whom Marion had great faith, should "make them smart for their impudence," she advanced.

"Your door stood open, Missus," returned the man who seemed the leader; "and though it had not, I should have felt warranted to break it open, in search of a thief concealed from justice."

"Me skug a thief, ye misleared loon!" retorted Marion; "there never yet was thief or liar kenned o' my kin'; and the Lintons are no

just of yesterday: but, if so be the thief is here, take him wi' ye in gude's name. Is he i' the garde-de-vin, think ye?" cried Marion, tramping forward; "or has he crept up the lum? whereabouts is he, man? Has ye looked below the bed, or in the coal scuttle?—ha! ha! ha! but ye are cleyer chields, you London police. The very cat is laughin' at ye," continued she, in bitter derision.

"Wherever he be, I'll swear I saw the swallow tail of his pea-green coat whiak in through your door, Missus; and so had a warrant to follow him," replied the officer.

"Ye saw! Ou, man, there's been glamour in your eyne. If he whisked up here through my keyhole, where did he whiak to next?"

"Nay, the Devil knows," returned another of the baffled men; "for he certainly is not here, Dobbs."

"Na, ye'll better examine my thimble and my nutmeg-grater, gentlemen, before ye take your departure, since ye are here; or keek into the mustard-pot," continued the aggravating Scotswoman, in a taunting tone. "And let me tell you, sirs, that yours is the first visit o' the sort my house has ever honoured wi'; and there will be news o't.—Break open my door, indeed! And this is the law o' England, where ilka poor man's house is his castle, wi' their tale."

The man who had led the idle chase again protested that Mistress Marion's door, which she had left on the latch, was found wide open; and that, however the aforesaid John Crippa or Crippa had escaped, he had undoubtedly been seen to enter her dwelling.

"Ye'll threep it down my throat, will ye?" retorted the indignant matron, more and more provoked. "If he entered, he must have gone out again; and how? There is not, were it but a mousehole, open to that roof," pointing upwards, "that is not grated and bolted. I ken you Lon'oners' tricks ower weal, not to have up my fences."

"Nay, the woman is in the right, Dobbs; the fellow could not have come up here," said the hawk-eyed, hook-nosed person, who, in the midst of the wordy tumult, had quietly taken note of every hole and crevice. "Sorry for troubling you, Missus, but our duty. The chap is concerned in a very serious offence; for far less many a better fellow has swung."

"Na, it will surely be only a fourteen years' transportation business," returned Marion, a little shocked. "The gallows is an awful ending, even for a hand-wailed blackguard like Jack Crippa."

"Less will not serve the turn," replied the man. "In my country, now, ould Ireland, we make less of the matter of stealing a pretty girl, though she has a fortune; but here"—

"Stealt an heiress! the unhang'd villain!" screamed Marion. "He is waur than Rob Roy, the Highland reiver. But wha might she be?"

And the officers, as a propitiation for their precipitance, gratified Marion's curiosity to the utmost of their power; concluding with solemnly

assuring her, as persons well qualified to judge, that if the sister happily got off with a long imprisonment, the brother could not fail to suffer death for the capital crime.

"It is no joke in England, Mistress, where money is everything," said the bailiff, "meddling with girls that have cash. Had Miss Stocks been a poor, pretty Irish lass, the chap, if she would not marry him, might have got off with a seven years in the hulks, or so; but, as it is, he must hang by the neck until he is dead, dead, dead; and the Lord have mercy upon his soul!"

"Amen!" ejaculated Marion; and started at what seemed the echo of her words,—while the police-sergeant at once looked on the alert.

"By the Lord Harry! he is harboured here still," cried the man who had first alleged that Jack had entered the house, springing to his feet. "Look to the door, men."

The door was made fast; and one of the men placed his back against it, while the others resumed the search.

"What do you mean, sirs?" cried the indignant mistress of the house. "Will ye, as I said before, break open a lone woman's door, and then threep down her throat that the vagabond ye are after is harboured under her honest roof, which is worse insult? Pack off with you, or it may be the worse for ye. I'm no without friends, nor a'thegether unken to your masters. Ye have searched every corner o' my dwelling, without saying wi' your leave or by your leave. Will not that content ye? Surely ye must be but ill up to your thief-taking trade, or ye would have found the rogue, had he been here. But look into the bird's cage, gentlemen, ye have forgotten that hidle-hole; it would be hard to miss the blood-money for lack of pains."

"Keep a civil tongue, mistress," replied the chief of the band; but he added the order for retreat, saying—"He can't have got out on the roof; even the old woman's chimney is grated. It is impossible that a child of two years old could be concealed here."

Offering these apologies to Mistress Marion which she disdained to receive, the men retired; and, locking her door, she set about lighting her fire, while addressing her cat, she alternately vented her indignation at the mysmidons of justice, and speculated upon the probability of Jack Cripps being hanged, and his sister sent to the treadmill for a couple of years.

The shades of evening fall; Marion's little fire beamed brightly and easily; her neat crystal oil-lamp shed its beams on the large-print Bible, over a chapter of which Marion's eyes habitually travelled, night and morning, wherever her wandering thoughts might be; and Pussie purred and blinked in that delicious mood—that real *dolce far niente*—which, in busy England, sick-nurses, watchmen, and cats, alone, truly enjoy. The evening lecture, which breathed of mercy, or, perhaps, "the weeping blood in woman's breast," the milk of human kindness, which, if in the lapse of time grown somewhat acrid, still lingered in Marion's bosom, disposed her, at this hour of self-commu-

nion, to thoughts of mercy even towards Jack Cripps; and she said aloud, as if continuing a train of rumination—

"I'm glad, mawkin, the beagles didna rin down the bit o' carrion within our bounds. Slave us, sirs! but the black gallows-tree is a fall growth o' timmer for a Christian land. E'en that idle, dandy vagabond, if he be unfit to live, is surely far less fit to die."

The cat, to whom this was apparently addressed, at this moment sprung up on a high table or dresser, by the window, mewing frightfully, and betraying the most violent alarm; and then threw herself down, and ran bickering across and around the kitchen floor, as if going mad.

"What de'il ails the brute," cried Marion, throwing her shoe at the cat. "This is like nane o' her fits o' daffin when she was a daft kitlin langsyne. She has surely gane gyte, or seen the hangit man's ghaist. . . . Na, she will dash hersel' through the window glass. There is something the matter by ordinar wi' pussie this night." In vain the caressing "*pussie, pussie,*" and "*cheet, cheet,*" of Marion wooed her favourite to her lap. The cat, violently excited, sprung at the window, spitting and swearing, as angry cat-language is interpreted by the Cockneys. "It's some cat-concert on the solaites ye're after, ye cauterwauling limmer:—ye maun be out, maun ye?" and as Marion angrily lifted the window, out went pussie with a tiger-spring, and lighted on the roof of the meat-safe, where she scratched, screamed, and tore worse than ever. The night was now quite dark, but a slanting ray of Marion's lamp streamed on the safe, which, by some strange internal impulse, swayed round on its hinges to the window sill. "Gude be about us! the de'il's i' the safe!" screamed Marion, dashing it back, and fixing it to its moorings by the iron rod adapted for this purpose.

"Gad, I shall be dashed in-pieces!" whispered a familiar voice, neither of earth nor air, but somewhere suspended between them; and stout-hearted and ready-witted as Marion was, she yet screamed aloud when poor Jack Cripps, venturing his head a little way out of the meat-safe, in which he lay snugly coiled up, repeated—"Dashed in pieces on the pavement, by gad. For Heaven's sake, old woman, let me into the house, and I'll make it well worth your while. Are the hinge-halts strong?"

"There's twa words to a bargain, my man, a' the world over," replied Marion, suddenly closing and bolting her window, and, after a moment of pause, hursting into a long and irrepressible fit of laughter at the ludicrous nature of the adventure. "Jack i' the box, pussie!" she exclaimed, between the peals of laughter, "Jack i' the box. That's what ye were see diverted wi', my bonny leddy, and me to mindoubt ye;" and Marion again cautiously drew up a bit of the ash, holding it ready however to be closed in a twinkling.

"For God's sake, woman, if ye have any mercy,"

was whispered from the Safe, "let me out of this demmed hole: my life is in danger every moment: I will be choked."

"I'll no say your airy, roomy bower is just the securest of chaumers, though called a Safe. But speak laigh. Od, if your landlord, the tailor's lang lugs hear ye?—and little passes in this hoose that crew gets no an inkling of. . . . And to twist yourself up there, a grand dandy beau, like the reel in the bottle, and cheat the beagle's keen scent, and the widdie too!—na, ye are a clever chield, Mr Cripps; I never had half so high an opinion o' ye before. Pussie, pussie, jump in, lass; its a freend after all that has frightened ye, and nae ghaist yet."

"Assist me, then, for mercy's sake," whispered the gentleman in duress. "I have it in my power to requite you. I am momentarily in peril of being precipitated headlong to the ground; and I have information at this moment in my possession for which Miss Hamilton and Charles Herbert, or any friend of their's, would give a fortune. It is worth one to them; it is; 'pon my honour it is! I counted on making something handsome by their gratitude—you shall have all—thousands. For Heaven's sake, open the window, and give me something to hold by, in case of the worst, while you pull the Safe round."

"Hooly, freend!—hooly! Fair and softly gaes far. I'll no uphold that your present domicile is just so secure or grand as Mr Shuffleton's best or even second drawing-room; but it has its advantages; and it was o' your ain choosing. I'm sure I ne'er boded it on you. As safe it is as the end of a tenpenny tow, ony way; and as hearkeners seldom hear a good tale o' themselves, I reckon ye heard, short syne, of your likelihood to succeed right speedily to that heirship."

Whatever might be the real feelings of the tortured prisoner, he durst not give them vent. He was indeed in the most unpleasant though original dilemma in which an unfortunate gentleman has probably ever been placed.

"Will you keep me here all night?" groaned Jack piteously, who durst not move, lest motion had loosened the fastenings of his eyry.

"Why, 'deed I cannot say," returned Marion, gravely and deliberately. She had perfect confidence in the strength of her roomy meat-safe, and its capacity of sustaining many more stones than Jack weighed; and she also felt a strange delight in tormenting him, besides entertaining a vague scheme of compelling him to pay a handsome ransom in justice to Violet for his liberty.

"But for any sake keep still," she continued, persisting in the same strain, "and no' try the hooks ower muckle. I hope it will no' be a very windy night; for I have kenned your airy cabin rook in a storm like a boat in a rough sea."

"If I could get hold of the wretch's demmed cat," thought Jack, considering of a hostage, and putting forth his long fingers towards the roof of his cage, where pussie still sat, though now more quietly.

"Ye villain, keep hands off pussie, or I'll be the death o' ye! Next to Miss Violet hersel', I like poor pussie; and she's, now-a-days, about a' I hae to like."

"I would not harm a hair of her whiskers, chawming creature," whispered Jack, cordially wishing both mistress and pet at the deuce.

"I'm fully sensible o' your great regard and respect for my cat, myself, and my country," returned Marion, in a low, ironical tone. "So, as a preliminary to our farther treaty, ye'll just lie quiet till she jump in; or, by my forebears' soul! I will put a sneck before your nose, till I can make ye ower to them that has the best right to ye! But pussie in fairly, I shall hear what you have to say anent the matters of a certain young leddy; and, if ye play fair, ye shall not rue it."

Willingly would Jack have seized the furred hostage in the spring to which her mistress, cautiously and fully opening the window, invited her; but he exercised a wise forbearance; the cat bounded in, and Marion as nimbly drew down and bolted her sash, and opened an upper pane, which was fitted as a ventilator to her attic abode.

"Now we are in a condition to parley," said Marion, through this new medium; "and your neck, remember, young man, is in the one scale, and Miss Violet or Mr Charles Herbert's relief from that villanous law-process raised by you and your father in the other. That, in the first place, must be ended, under hand and seal, before another word is said of your deliverance."

"Good God, ma'am, how can I do aught while here," groaned Jack.

"Whisht! Your landlord, the tailor, below, who sleeps wi' his lugs open, will hear ye; and see, then, what ye have to expect from him; while Mr Stocks, on a' the walls o' Lun'on, offers a round £100 for your apprehension, and the Government another. 'Deed they are aye lavish eneuch o' ither folk's siller. But ye can scribble bravely where ye are all that is needed. Daylight will soon be in. I'll hand ye ower an inkhorn and a bit paper on the end of a fire-shovel, and ye'll write it a' fairly down. Nothing like black and white in business."

"Surely you will not keep me here all night!" wailed Jack, pathetically. "I'll suffocate."

"Ye'll choke?—never a fear o' ye; there's plenty o' good free air about ye. I have keepit a pig or a Christmas goose there fresh an' caller for three weeks at a time ere noo."

And Marion was seized with another fit of provoking laughter at Jack's plaintive tones and her own wit, ere she resumed,

"Keep ye all nicht! My certy! I see little to hinder ye from being my boarder for a month to come. Some folk never ken when they are in gude quarters. But say your prayers, and take a nap; I see uphold nothing comes ower ye, if ye dinna kick and flog about. But make up your mind to make a clean breast o't, and redeem your captivity; for, as I'm a living sinner, out o' that ye'll no come till I get justice o' ye, and maybe a thought mair."

(To be continued.)