

VIOLET HAMILTON; OR, THE TALENTED FAMILY.

CHAPTER XIII.

WE took leave of our friend Mr John Quintin Cryppes, junior, in a somewhat unpleasant predicament, though, as all mortal ills are relative, one in which he had, upon the whole, some reason to congratulate himself. Contentment was, however, so far from being Jack's prevailing feeling, that, in answer to Mistress Marion's good night, now become quite desperate, he implored for release from the apartment she had so lauded; but Marion was inexorable; and calmly bolting, first her window, and then her shutters, she sat down to meditate on the terms of capitulation which it would be proper and safe to dictate to her captive. His tale of the fortune, or of a discovery worth a fortune, she would have considered of no value save for the pillaged trunk. Of having pillaged it, she gave the full credit to Monsieur Eustache; though she made no doubt that Mr John Quintin Cryppes was not ignorant of its contents.

The watchman, in passing, called "Half-past eleven!" not indeed that the words, if to be called articulate language at all, bore the remotest resemblance to what should have been the sound; but Marion, like the other inhabitants of London, from long custom, and the intimations of her own clock, knew what was meant by those gutturals; and also that the industrious tailor below, who rose with the lark, must have been asleep for an hour; and Mr and Mrs Herbert's solicitor, after his day's labour, tasting the sweet of the night in a certain tavern near his nightly rendezvous, Covent Garden Theatre. He was a gentleman of the old school; and so far true to his character as an old bachelor, an attorney, and a playgoer, as to be rigidly regular in what men of more modern times were pleased to call his irregularities.

"I could trust to my ain judgment in the matter," thought Marion; "but what is the soundest judgment, ay Solomon's itsel', to the quirks and wiles, and nonsense and clavers, o' the English law—common law or statute law—for they are baith alike clean contrar to common sense; so I'll e'en, Pussie, lock up my Jack-in-the-box, and take a step Mr Gryphon's length. I am no' a bairn; and I have been on Lon'on streets at a' hours, and ne'er saw waur than mysel' yet, an it be no' thae miserable waifs o' women, causey-paikers. Lord look on and help them!"

The old Scotswoman was not of a character to dally in any good purpose once fixed; and in her present errand great and pressing interests were involved.

Though the soberly carousing attorney could scarcely be made to understand her design, when his head was once fairly penetrated, and he found that Marion was resolute to tell no more than that she had young Cripps in "safe custody," and at her mercy, he formally wrote a document, in which father and son jointly gave up every right

to prosecute Miss Hamilton or her friends, for the recovery of the large damages laid for the loss alleged to have been incurred by the Professor from his pupil abandoning her engagements. Fain would Marion have admitted Mr Gryphon, whom she knew to be a humourist, into the delicious secret of her "Jack-in-the-box," but prudence and real kindness of heart restrained her.

"He's a funny gentleman, nae doubt, Mr Gryphon," was her rumination as she wended home, "and wad half kill himself at the joke of the first prisoner in my Tantallon; but will the sly cat let the silly mouse slip alive through her clutches, after having tossed it up and played with it? I trow no. Now I wadna scruple to let the shabby-genteel swindler rub shouters wi' the gentle gallows; but, save and bless us! it's an awful thought to see e'en a Jack Cripps dangling like a sea-tangle at the end of a tow; and as the bit lassie, Miss Stocks, has got skaithless out o' their fingers, the daring villains! else I wad have helped to hang them wi' my ain hands! and as Jack promises fair to our Miss Violet, his blood shall no be on my head; besides he placed himsel' in my mercy, under the shelter o' my roof, or at least o' my beef-stand, whilk was aye a plea for protection, even to an enemy fleeing wi' blood on his hand, in the gallant auld times of my ain country."

And thus, for reasons and considerations, personal, friendly, chivalrous, and patriotic, Marion resolved to be, on certain conditions, merciful in her future dealings with her prisoner. Her first care, on her return, was, therefore, to allay his fears for personal safety, by opening her ventilating pane, and giving assurance that her Safe would stand ten times his weight; and this done, after receiving his parole of honour for good behaviour, she supplied him, on a fire shovel, with a tumbler of negus, a biscuit, and a slice of cheese; all most gratefully welcomed, both for their own sakes and as a token of the friendly dispositions of the giver.

Yet long and weary passed those hours to poor Jack in his cage, in which, in spite of his confined position and the continuous caterwauling of the cats on the neighbouring roofs, strange to say, he dozed from time to time, until day fairly dawned, and the sparrows began to chirrup, and the tailor below arose, and, opening the window of his chamber, almost immediately under Jack's place of durance, for a breath of air, commenced talking to his wife as he dressed himself.

"The fellow never ventured back to the old nest all night: too good a thing to come our way—£100 by the young lady's papa, and another from the Home Office. Now, if you had had the sense, Ju., to tip him the wink ere he bolted, he would have drawn like a well-waxed thread, as soon as the coast was clear; but that would be too much to expect of you, Julia."

"To sell Cripps' blood d'ye mean, Snippy?"

No; thank Heaven, I am too much the lady for that. He is a clever, genteel young fellow, and paid handsomely when he had it; and where was the great to do about running off with a girl, as if such things were not done every day in the year?"

"D'ye think I'd touch blood-money, mum?" retorted the tailor. "But you may fancy it better the blood-hounds lick it than that it come to your family of small children, Mrs Snipson. . . . How the deuce, after all, could the fellow get off? the street door was watched—Gad, I suspect that cunning graunie above still. It was like her to pretend to be out, and leave her door open."

"How you do talk, Snippy dear. Do let me sleep, will ye? No doubt he ran down stairs into the back kitchen, and scrambled over the wall of the courtyard. Was there a place in Lady Linton's garret they did not poke into, even that great box which it is thought she has full of silver plate. Catch her shewing her keepings to any neighbour."

"Well, if you must sleep, lovey, I'll watch, and hope still. But do remember to lock the door after you when you come down stairs; and that Mrs Deputy Dubbin's cap for the *Day June à la for chat*, at Queenhithe, must be sent home with the Deputy's velvet vest, by ten o'clock at the farthest."

"Umph," growled the drowsy milliner.

"Egad! she is a jewel of a creature that bandy-legged tailor's wife; she deserves promotion," thought the unseen listener above. "Could I but venture to swing myself down with any chance of safely entering her room, generous creature! and so escaping by her connivance; for this old hag!"

"Shut the window will ye Snip; do ye mean that I should catch my death of cold?" came from below. "My compliments to Mrs Deputy Dubbins, and she may either wear her second best cap, or stay at home. If that don't please her, let her whet her beak and fly up," and with this respectful sentiment to her very best customer, and death to the newly-conceived hope of Jack Crippes, the tailor shut the window, and the saucy milliner committed herself for another two hours to the arms of Morpheus.

It was not until she had descended to adorn and despatch the head-gear of Mrs Deputy Dubbins, whom she was far from seriously intending to disappoint on so momentous an occasion, that Marion fairly opened parley with the prisoner, to whom at dawn she had handed her document for signature, with silent menaces against any attempt to escape. Jack would, by this time, readily have signed the warrant for his own execution to effect his release; and Marion, first sarcastically telling him that he had passed the night as snugly as if a passenger by the York mail, with only six insides, promised him the indulgence of jumping into the kitchen window, in which apartment he was to remain locked up until the treaty was fairly concluded and guarantees given.

"But if ye dare to stir a peg out of that till I give the signal *once, twice, thrice, and a jump*," I'll raise the house about ye; and ye are as sure to be in the gled's clutches as ever Gilderoy was. I am aware it would not, now that broad daylight is up, either suit your purpose or mine, to keep ye langer swinging out by there, so once, twice, *thrice!*" And while Marion, as nimbly as when at fifteen she had played at bogle about the stacks, during her first service at Branzholm Mains, ran out, and turned the key, she rewarded her own and Jack's feats of agility with another burst of laughter, while he stretched his limbs in her kitchen, and flew to her bit of looking-glass to see if it were indeed Jack Quintin Crippes who had passed so extraordinary a night, and now stood here in safety, but with the skin off his nose and a horridly long beard.

Mistress Marion had him still at vantage, and was not likely to lose an inch of ground, or abate in her demands one jot; so the parley was renewed, but now more safely through the key-hole of the kitchen-door.

Jack, for his own part, was quite ready to sign any paper she pleased; but the signature of his father—the Professor's surrender—was of ten times the importance, and by ten o'clock Marion sallied forth with Jack's letter to his father, specifying, quite to her satisfaction, the only conditions on which his freedom could be secured, and pathetically alluding to the peril in which he stood, unless the demands of Mistress Linton were instantly complied with. This Marion did not fail to expatiate upon to the father, though she absolutely refused to say where the fugitive son lay concealed, or, more than that, she would come bound for his safety, and to get him smuggled off for Leith in a Berwick smack, where he might lie bye for a while, if the Professor frankly and at once dropt the action against Miss Hamilton. She finally intimated, that she was not to be begging or praying longer: "It was their own affair."

"I must first consult my daughter, Mrs Burke Barker," said the perplexed father, with some hesitation.

"And I maun off to Bow Street," cried Marion, decidedly, and wrapping her shawl energetically round her. "I have neither leisure nor liking for this shilly-shally off-putting work. Mrs. Burke Barker, as ye ca' her, is as deep i' the plot as your son Jack, if no deeper, though not like to smart sae sair for her doings, which may darken her judgment o' his case."

"Where is my son, woman, my dear boy?" cried the mother, now entering. "My Edmund in a gaol and his brothers skulking! Was it for this, Crippes, that you left your respectable employment to set up for a fine gentleman in Lon'on, and ruin your family, sir; was it for this, sir?"

"Dinna let me stand in the way o' family matters," interrupted Marion, in a dry tone and going off; "I made ye a fair offer, sir and madam, and I have my mends."

"Stay, woman!" thundered the Professor, "Where is my son? I will apply to the Magi-

strates; I will issue out a habeas corpus! How dare you thus trifle with the feelings of a lady and a mother?"

"Ye'll no need to fash their honours the Magistrates," replied Marion; "for I'm just going their way myself. So ye have no answer to your dear son's letter? He may go to the gallows for you. Na, ye are a vera Roman Brutus."

"The gallows for my son, you impertinent, audacious woman!" exclaimed Mrs Cripps; "Mr John Quintin Cryppes!"

"Ay, just Mr John Quintin Cryppes, mem. I ken him weel enouch; mair by token he got a snug night's quarters in my good meat-safe last night, where a' the beagles in Lun'on could not have found him: but that's my thanks for my hospitality."

Passion had now betrayed Marion's prudence.

The astonishment and horror of the Professor and his lady at this intelligence were prodigious.

"My boy! my dear, unhappy boy! disgraced for ever!" cried the Professor, in violent emotion. "The abduction of an heiress—what is it?—'tis but a boyish trick, pardonable under the ardour and excitement of youthful passion; but, heavens and earth, in a—a meat!"

"A meat-safe!" added the stronger-hearted mother; "and very lucky it was too. And now, good woman, if you do get my Jack fairly off till this business blow over I don't care, Crippes, what becomes of that odious girl, who has been at the bottom of every mischief that has ever happened to my family. Give the letter Jack wishes for, Crippes—give it instantly, I say. Who shall dare touch a hair of his head?"

"The gallows-tree has small respect o' persons, mem," said Marion. "But let the Professor take his mind o' the matter. Only, understand this, and for the last time, this false action against the young lady, whose name ye profane, either drops, or Mr Stocks proceeds against my friend i' the place yonder, which shall be nameless, since it offends ye sae sair, sir."

"My friend, General Wickam, was saved, in the shipwreck of the *Penang*, by riding for five hours on a hencoop," said the Professor, half in soliloquy, and as if soothing his own wounded pride by the instance or precedent which lessened Jack's or the family's degradation. "Surely, my good woman, you can never be so cruel and inconsiderate as disgrace my family—a family of talent and distinction—by mentioning that awkward incident in the life of my eldest son? Ridicule, Mrs Crippes, my love; ridicule, ma'am," and he turned to his lady, "in a position like ours, is more fatal, much more ruinous to our prospects in a certain grade of society, than any youthful indiscretion chargeable upon our boys."

"Weel, this dings dinty!" thought Marion, indignantly and contemptuously. "The auld, vain, donnert, doited born-idiot, is more mortified at his good-for-nothing gett being saved in this queer fashion, than pleased that the scamp has escaped. I'll put up with this nonsense nae langer.—I'll give just one other half hour, Mr Crippes, mair for your runagate son's sake than your own, let

me tell you," she said, aloud, once more tendering Mr Gryphon's paper for signature.

"Crippes, I bid you do as the woman desires, I say! Is my Jack to be brought into trouble and disgrace for that girl? I don't believe Mrs Burke Barker or her high and mighty husband care one farden what becomes of my boys, if they were well out of the scraps themselves. Sign, I say, sir, this minute."

"Give up a just claim to £5,000, my love?" replied the embarrassed Professor.

"No such thing, Crippes. If she sell her shift, we shall have the damages off her yet; but let my Jack be saved," replied Mrs Crippes, whose reasoning was not at any time what is termed consecutive.

"What sacrifice is there which I am not prepared to make for my dear children," said the Professor, in his very grandest manner, as he affixed his signature to the paper, which Mistress Marion, who liked a reasonably good bargain, eagerly seized, thinking "Half the ransom is paid."

Bent on a high mission, Marion, with less than usual ceremony, demanded an audience of Mrs Herbert, who was both highly amused and delighted with the manner in which she and her son had been thus unexpectedly freed from their threatened entanglements and lawsuit with the Professor.

"Twas impossible that a claim so unjust and unreasonable could have been sustained in any Court," she said: "but I am, nevertheless, always glad to see the end of a lawsuit. I shall instantly write Charles of our mutual deliverance, and the amusing means by which it has been effected by Sergeant Linton."

"Oh, how can I ever thank you enough," said Violet, pressing the old woman's hard, hot hands, and loosing the strings of her bonnet, "You are indeed, Marion, my good angel."

"Your brownie, hinny—your faithful, industrious brownie. But had you seen me and pussie yestreen, Miss Violet, when our 'Jack-in-the-box' first cheepit! I thought I would have cracked my sides wi' even-down gaffawin'—ye might have bound me wi' a strae; I was just powerless wi' lauchin. But I'm no done wi' the rogue yet. When I have swallowed this dish o' chocolate—this is the right sort, Mrs Herbert, mem, a real cordial—ye maun shew me the bits of odds and ends o' papers left i' the kist; for I have a notion that I am on the right trail o' the plunderers; and, by my certy, if it be sae, I'll work them!"

Violet reddened all over, and became exceedingly agitated. She had by this time perused several disjointed fragments of the papers remaining in the double bottom of the trunk, which had whetted her curiosity to see more.

"They are chiefly written by my mother, whom I can scarcely remember," she said. "She died while we were in America, during the late war. After the peace, I was sent to a French convent, until we went to Scotland, and finally settled in Jersey. I believe my father never

had the courage to read these writings left by my mother; yet if I can believe their imperfect evidence, though it seems like dreaming, my mother must have been the sister, by the second marriage of his mother, of—you must think it very strange, ma'am?—of your friend the Earl of Tarbert."

"Good heavens, Violet! you the niece of the Earl of Tarbert! Laura Temple's cousin! How very extraordinary! But, my dear girl, had you no previous idea of this yourself?"

"I had a general idea that my mother was highly connected:—that much I understood, or perhaps divined, from my poor father's conversation. His pride resented, perhaps too strongly, the neglect shewn by my mother's noble brother, whoever he may have been; and he accordingly repaid coldness with haughty scorn. You must have heard of the family pride of the Scotch, ma'am," continued Violet, smiling. "If my mother was highly connected, my father, with few or no powerful living relatives, was far-descended, and had his share of the national failing."

"The blude o' kings ran in the veins o' Claude Hamilton," said Mistress Mariou, who was also deeply imbued with the national fantasy." And Violet, graciously, yet with an expression of comic humour, smiling to her, continued—"It might have been unwise in my father to hold so completely aloof from my mother's family; but they were rich and powerful, and he poor and proud, and morbidly sensible to the miseries to which, as a child and a boy, he had been subjected from poor relationship. While labouring to advance my education, as the only means of independence within my power, I have often overheard him say, to our good friend the Rector, that he would rather prefer for his little Violet the lot of a maid-servant in a humble Jersey farm, than that of the tolerated hanger-on in the saloons of great relations, although they had been willing to receive me. In these ideas was I educated, and I thank Heaven for it."

"It seems altogether so extraordinary," said Mrs Herbert, attending more to the facts than the philosophy of the case, "so romantic, almost—yet I cannot believe the Tarberts knowingly capable of ungenerous conduct to so near relatives. It must have been in ignorance."

"Nay, I do not accuse them. If it shall turn out that the Earl was really so nearly connected with my mother—for even that point, by the abstraction of these papers, is left in doubt—I am inclined to think that he may still be ignorant of the death of my father, and of my existence altogether. My mother's death was formally notified to him; but if he ever wrote in reply to her husband, or made any inquiry about us, such communications never reached my father."

"The Earl was long absent from England; for many years in Germany, and at one time at Constantinople," said Mrs Herbert, as if in palliation.

"Nay, we too were drifting about the world, and more likely to miss letters than a person in

the distinguished station of the Earl of Tarbert; though nothing could induce my father to make a second attempt at explanation, when he subsequently learned from the newspapers that my uncle was at Vienna. Children have quick ears, and, where their feelings are interested, quick wits: though no particular Earl was named in the conversations with the Rector, I learned that I had an uncle of that rank, and, perhaps unwittingly, to share in my father's prejudice against him; so far, at least, as to disdain dependence. The pecuniary claims my mother had, in right of her mother, he forbore to press, unwilling to risk our little all on the uncertainties of a Chancery suit."

"Had not Mr Gryphon better get a gliak o' your bits o' fragments o' papers, Miss Violet?" said Marion, pricking up her ears at pecuniary claims. "If any man in Lun'on can unravel sic mysteries of iniquity, its himeel'; though he has his weak side in hankering after plays and play-actors."

"Alas! I fear the case is more hopeless than ever;—the most important papers appear to be abstracted, if they ever existed."

"Hopeless, hinny! na, ne'er ye say that word. I have got you out o' one scrape the day, and, with the blessing o' the Almichty upon our poor endeavours for the orphan, we'se get ye out o' this too. I ken now what the vagabond meant by bragging o' what he had in his power. But I'll make little out of him, unless I can frighten him back into his Patmos, and compel him to surrender on my ain terms. Troth, it would be gude sport too," said Marion, chuckling at the amusing idea rising in her mind, and on which she speedily acted.

Bustling up her own stair, she began to talk aloud to the tailor's children, so as to be overheard by the impatient Jack:—"So the police have been back again after your mother's lodger—have they, bairns? Ye are playing there at *hide-and-seek*. little Jacky? or is it—*hey-ey!* Hide, Jack—hide, up there—

'Keep in, keep in, wherever ye be,
The greedy gied is seeking ye,'"

continued Marion, apparently addressing Jack minor on the stairs, while aiming to frighten Jack major, now above, earnestly listening. He had not been without strong suspicion that the protracted absence of his jailer was for the purpose of betraying him and securing the whole of the reward to herself. But, at present, she seemed to be playing fair to him; and in this opinion he was confirmed, when he heard her shout to the tailor who had come forth—"Watch my door! search my house again, the blackguards! do they dare to propose that? But let them! I make them welcome. Call them up from the tavern, where they are carousing, keeping watch on my notions, and if Mr Jack Cripps, or any other Jack, is found under my roof or on my floorhead I'll come bound to eat him. Watch me, indeed!"

The reply of the tailor was imperfectly heard, though it seemed a broken lament for so much

good money being lost to the house; but Jack's motions were quickened by Marion's distinct reply:—

"Certainly, come up yourself; seeing is believing." Jack pulled up the window. "Satisfy yourself." Jack wheeled round the safe. "But surely this is the wrong key?" and Marion fumbled about the lock, while her warned lodger once more snugly ensconced himself—though with a beating heart—secretly cursing the tailor, and not even sparing Marion, who he thought should have stood on the defensive, till actually compelled to give in.

When Marion concluded that her plan had taken effect, she found the right key of the outer and also of the kitchen-door, which she threw open widely; and ostentatiously invited the tailor in, while she quietly pulled down and secured the window, and drawing its muslin half-screen, took her seat by it, inviting the tailor to sit down by the fire.

"It is an awful business, to be sure; and hard to see £200 gang bye ourselves; for, I reckon, ye would have shared and shared the reward alike with me, had it been my luck to have secured the chap up here?"

"On honour, mum; to the last farden, Missis Linton. And as some un must get it, as well us, mum, as another."

"Certainly; but I'm mair like to lose than make by him. I bestowed a penny but e'en now, coming along the Strand, for his last dying speech and confession, pair fallow! No doubt, the hue-and-cry is hot after him; but I hope its no just come to the last speech yet; that is, if he does his best to make amends for a fault: ne'er ower late to repent, Mr Snipson. But wad ye like to take a look o' my apartments? Na, nae excuses; just open the doors, and look about yourself."

Mr Snipson protested entire disbelief of any one being concealed here, but, nevertheless, did as he seemed to be desired; all the while, as he opened one cupboard after another, declaring how utterly impossible it was that the culprit should be concealed there, or that a person of the known substance and respectability of Mrs Linton was capable of concealing him.

"And losin' the reward, too, ye ken, Mr Snipson," said Marion, in a sarcastic tone. "Deed twa hunder is not a soom I wad like to fling ower my shoulder; and I cannot but think that if so be the villain were ta'en by my means, and in my ain hoose, I would have a gude right to the maist feck, if not to the whole of it."

Mr Snipson seemed reluctant to surrender his claims to the shadowy substance, and in some doubt about how much sterling money the Scotch "maist feck," which Marion claimed, might amount to.

"Ye see, Mr Snipson, I would not only have a title as first intormer, but the rights of my own rooms, and of my easements and appurtenances, providing he were found here; and also my hypothec rights as landlady and overlord of the whole premises, down to the street and the sunk story."

"Hang her, old devil!" thought Jack; "she surely delights to torture me."

"You Scotch are such scholars, and so up to trap, Missis Linton; but I venture to think, that nothing could be claimed by either of us until conviction were certificated, mum, by the judge, nor, praps, till the hexecution were hover."

"D——n him!" groaned Jack, gnashing his teeth, "if ever I walk London streets again I'll victimize that low blackguard. A good part of my wardrobe remains in his beggarly lodgings, too; which, save to give a central rendezvous to Eustache, I had never entered."

"Indeed, its a reserved point for lawyers that same, Mr Snipson," said Marion; "but, at any rate, the time between sentence and hanging is never lang in your country; little time for a pair sinner to make his soul's peace; and this unhappy chield is but young, too; not much ower five-and-twenty, I should think."

"Thirty, I'll swear for him. Bless you, mum, Jack Cripps has been on the town, and spunging on the Trade this dozen years at least."

"It a lie, you rascal," muttered Jack, gnashing his teeth in his lair. "I have only been four seasons on town, and am not twenty-seven till St Crispin's day."

"Its lucky that ye will, after all, lose but little by him, Mr Snipson," said Marion, in her dry manner; "his bits o' dude—for he was aye fond of dirty bravery, come from where it would—will clear you, I reckon; especially as Mrs Snipson was sae prudent as aye to insist on a week's rent beforehand."

"Trash, mum; mere seedy trash; a Jew would not accept a gift of 'em. Dress shoes you might throw to the dustman; and a pair and a half of fancy silk socks, washed and worn to mummy; the top pulled down to the heel."

"Scoundrel! my olive surtout, lined with Lyons silk serge; my new, light-blue, brocaded waistcoat—bill not sent in yet—my, my"—— Jack sputtered with rage, and almost shook his airy asylum, while Marion laughed heartily at the tailor's *catalogue raisonné* of a decayed dandy's belongings.

"But there will be some other property?" she then said; "a bit daak, or a pickle books or papers; he was a great sawthor, ye ken, for the prents and the play house."

"A greasy, thumbed copy of *Life in London*, mum, with half the plates torn out, and some trash of old plays, which I mean to cut up into measures."

Marion was now all alive, and wary.

"Really, Mr Snipson, the funny way in which ye describe the dandy's duds, makes me long to see his kit:—were they locked up, the bits o' manuscript plays?"

This question seemed scarcely necessary, since, whether locked up or not, the property of the lodger had been subjected to scrutiny by his landlord; yet it rather puzzled the tailor, who, however, answered boldly—

"Not a bit of them—a filthy mess altogether:

a pink gingham shirt, never washed since first bought, and yellow kids, smelling. I made the girl throw the whole out this morning in the ash-box."

"All save the measures," said Marion. "Gae awa', for ony sake, and bring up an armfu' o' the plays, and we'se have a screed o' them. It will be gude sport; and ye'll take a snack o' luncheon at the same time. I have gotten a famous Bologna sausage, and hae a cold green goose out in the safe there—maybe ye wad prefer it devilled, and well peppered?"

"You are too good, mum: 'Bologna sassenger is Snipson's weakness,' as my Ju. remarks; but any way you prefer, mum; beggars must not be choosers; really I have no choice; you make my mouth water, Missis Linton; the Scotch are always so 'ospitable, mum—as I always say to my missis, after your little neighbourly treats—the Scotch are a most hobbligin', 'ospitable people."

"For our ain ends, it's sometimes alleged, Mr Snipson."

"O Lord, mum, never minchin it," replied the tailor, chuckling at this home truth, to which, in secret, he heartily subscribed.

"And there might be worse reasons, too; so, while I get the tray—na, I must put down one bottle o' my brown-stout; I ken ye likemy bottled porter, and a single bottle between two is surely no great deboah: but do bring up Jack's bits o' sangs."

"Plays, mum."

"Weel, be it plays, that will be the better diversion; but, gude sake, ye maun not let Mrs Snipson get jealous o' us."

And the tailor, laughing heartily at the joke, which, such as it was, had the merit of coming from his entertainer, went off.

Marion was aware that her tenant of the first and second floors, though a first-rate fashioner among the second-rates—for he was no Stultze, nor Doudney—was no great scholar, though it was probable that his lady might have made something of written papers. Indeed, Marion had an idea, that while she herself, in virtue of her Scotch schooling, could make out all manner of crank inventories submitted to her inspection, the tailor, though not wanting in ready address to cover his deficiencies, could not tell a B from a bull's foot. Before his return, Marion had placed her refexion on the table, and donned her spectacles, utterly regardless of the agonizing "Hist, hist!" which issued from the safe, save to cry, "Are ye mad? Be quiet there pussie." Mr Snipson speedily returned with his commission.

"Eat ye a bit, and as I have my nose ready saddled, I'll try my hand at Mr Crippes' nonsense. But such a scart o' a hand, Mr Snipson. It's liker a hen's scraping among dirt than a Christian's hand o' writ," said Marion, handing over a page, which Snipson, between mouthfuls, sagaciously surveyed, holding the top downmost, and remarking, "All hands come much alike to me, mum."

"I would like to pick out something very funny to divert us, since we are at it, said Marion, examining every separate paper. "But will ye win to the board," and, while warmly pressing him to eat, she secretly admired the style in which her Bologna sausage was being mowed down.

"Something funny, eh? to be sure; but, aloud, pray ma'am," for now Marion's attention was fairly riveted on the paper she examined.

"Surely, surely, I'll read aloud;" and she thought to herself, "Weel, no ane kens what they may need, or what may bestead them at a pinch in the weary journey o' life. When I learned these blethers of Allan Ramsay's, little did I think"—

"You can't make 'em out, ma'am? nay, I felt the hand deuced crabbed myself. Admirable sassenger this; your health, ma'am."

"Make him out? fine that! But will ye care to hear the nonsense; its a' poetry; now, the sassenger is gude, plain, savoury prose."

"Poetry! Missis Snipson quite doted on poetry before marriage, but marriage makes a difference with you ladies, mum." Marion now appeared so wrapped in her silent studies, that a strange feeling of suspicion crept into the tailor's mind.

"P'raps I'd better tie up Cripp's pot hooks, and not bother you, ma'am," said he, reaching over his arm to sweep away the papers.

"Bother me! I could read them were they a' black print; but, troth, I'm mair tempted to throw them in the fire, did ever mortal hear such downright clavers;" and Marion alternately read aloud and silently, or, as the Scotch say, "off her loof," with admirable presence of mind and precision. Thus the real phrase, "And to the said Gabrielle Violet, the reversionary disposition of £15,000, accruing to her by the death of her mother, the above named Sophia Amelia, widow of Charles, second Earl of Tarbert," was rapidly translated into—

This sunny morning, Roger, cheers my blood,
And puts all Nature in a joyful mood;
How wholesome 'tis to snuff the caller air,

Silently—"Secured upon the said Earl's estate of Coombe Flory, parish of Dundon, county of _____."

"Go on, mum," urged the munching tailor, "what a blasted rigmarole! What can the feller be after by 'caller hair?' I've heard of caller 'errings."

Sorely did Marion blame her traitorous memory, which, when she was alone, as she now thought, would be wickedly suggesting all manner of nonsense of old tales and ballads, but completely deserted her in this strait, though she boldly dashed into a very extraordinary medley or cross reading, depending a good deal for success upon the tailor's ignorance of the Scotch, and every other literature. She commenced, by drawing upon her earliest reminiscences, while seeming to read—

"Will ye go to the ewe-bughts Marion?"

"In London was young Bekie born,
And he longed strange countries for to see;
So he passed through many kingdoms great,

Until he came to great Turkie.
Oh, they rode on, and on they rode,
And by the light o' the moon,
Until they came to his mother's ha' door,
And there they lighted down.

"Get up, lady mother," he says"—

And here Marion fairly floundered, but bravely bolted into the tragedy of the "Laird of Wariston," after that the Douglas tragedy, and a few broken stanzas of "Johnnie Armstrong."

"Cussed rigmarole!" ejaculated the tailor, between a bite and a draught.

"Ye may say it," replied Marion, contemptuously throwing down the manuscript among the cushions of her easy chair. "The Last Speech will be better diversion than that poor stuff. Jack Cripps has but sma' ingine as an awuthor, I'm jalousing."

Marion having dexterously secreted the paper she considered of the greatest importance, trusted the remainder to their fate, though resolved, if possible, to secure the whole; and took up the '*Hue and Cry*,' in which, to the manifest delight of Mr Snipson, she, amidst peals of laughter, read the following description of the culprit:—

"Five feet seven inches in height"—

"Demmed lie," muttered Jack in his place; "I'm five feet eight and a quarter—I am."

"Sallow complexion; muddy, greasy skin," read Marion; "sandy-coloured, thin moustaches, but may probably have shaved them off."

"No, curse them!" thought Jack, with some difficulty drawing his hand fondly over the most cherished ornament of his face, and soothed by feeling that all was right there, "I have my moustaches still."

Marion continued:—"Very large red ears, placed low on the head."

"Na, faith, Mr Snipson, but the lang ears may be useful to him at this present creesis—ha! ha! ha! Weel, puir Jack comes out here nae beauty."

And she resumed:—"Swivel-eyed, and squints strongly with both eyes, as if looking to his nose."

"Demnition!" thought Jack; "and this atrocious libel is publicly hawked through the streets of London."

"I must have a read of this for my missis, mum," said Snipson. "Missis Snipson has a fancy that the chap is 'andsome, or 'as a genteel hair. I saw from the fust that he was a seedy scamp."

"Some leddies have odd tastes, Maister Snipson; but for one with a buirdly, personable, good-looking husband like you:—weel, weel, every one to their liking, though I'm sure ye're no aboon five or six inches shorter than the vagon-bond."

"Not an 'alf hinch, mum," cried the tailor, starting to his legs, and drawing himself on tip-toe up to, and beyond, his full height; while Marion dexterously secreted another document.

"Cursed shrimp!" muttered Jack. "Want but half an inch of my height! the Cockney

pigmy! By Jove, my first deed shall be to massacre that tailor and run off with his wife."

"Ye shall get a loan o' the speech—or is it a *Hue and Cry*?—for the special benefit of Mistress Snipson," said Marion. "For that matter, ye may keep it a'thegither for her behoof when I have finished perusing Jack's beauty marks." And Marion again read aloud:—"Very large nose, a little awry, and the skin at present off the bridge. Usually dresses in a shabby blue or olive-coloured surtout, with braid and frogs much worn; gay-coloured, dirty figured-silk waistcoat; and sky-blue satin cravat; tight plaid trowsers, and gaiters. Had on, when last seen, rather dirty linen; morocco boots, much too small for his feet, which makes him waddle or shuffle in his gait; a union shirt-pin, turquoise and mock diamond; and mosaic-gold watch-chain, but, it is believed, no watch. If any pawnbroker," &c. &c.

"Waddle in my gait! the libellous monsters!" thought the nearly distracted gentleman; at that very moment, as indeed all night long, writhing under the torture of the 'bootikins,' of which he had been unable to rid himself.

Jack, between torture of limb and irritation of mind, was wound up to the most desperate attempt; even to knock down Marion, assassinate the tailor, rob the house, and escape; when a loud ringing at Marion's door-bell, and an unusual bustle, at once changed his mood, and made him hastily draw back into his shell.

"Its Mrs Herbert and my young lady," said Marion.

"It's the police, p'raps, mum," added Mr Snipson, excited.

"Then never a foot o' them enters here," cried Marion. "My blood is up, and I'm on honour." And, much to the relief of Jack, she prepared for active resistance.

"Mr Gryphon, the solicitor, only, after all," said Snipson, who opened the door. "Could you," he whispered, "to serve a neighbour, be so hobbliging, mum, as get his idear of the law of the case as to the few rags, and hodsds and hends, Crippes left in the place below?"

"Mr Gryphon! and Maister Charles at his back! Welcome back again, air! I thought ye were ower the salt sea. This is a sight for sair eyne; and I ken of one fair lady, or maybe twa"—and Marion winked sagaciously with one eye, while she unconsciously placed chairs—"who will thank the wind that blew ye back this way. But, Lord sake! what am I about! ye must not sit down in my kitchen. The best of my house is no good enough for you.—Ye'll excuse me, Mr Snipson. Business will not brook delay, and I have business with these gentlemen," she said sharply, to the curious and impertinent tailor, who seemed strongly disposed to remain at the conference, which he somehow connected with the tempting reward of £200 for the discovery of Jack Cripps.

"Let me fust tie my papers in the 'ankercher, mum," he replied sullenly, and trying to collect

them; but Marlon, made bold by her fresh backing, now stood on high vantage ground.

"Take away the papers! I dare you to do that at your peril! Stolen goods, Mr Gryphon; family papers plundered from Miss Violet Hamilton's charter-kist, by some unkent villain thieves, and found in the custody of his lodger, Jack Cripps. Away! away Snipson! and think yourself lucky if ye be not called to strict account anent these documents. I am advising ye as a friend, and promise ye, to set your mind at ease, before these gentlemen, that if I make plack or bawbee by the wierdless wight's hanging, ye shall get the half o' it; will that content ye?"

The tailor, pale and trembling, on learning the awful predicament before the law in which he stood with the papers, and reading his doom in the stern brows of Mr Gryphon, the well-known lawyer, sneaked off, in his heart cursing the Scotchwoman, who always, he alleged, got the better of him in the long run.

And now the distant voices and loud laughter of the three who sat in Marion's parlour in counsel on very momentous affairs, however merrily they were discussed, fell diamally on the "large red ears" of the hungry listener.

"Will the witch starve me alive in her hole," thought Jack. "That bloated imp regaling on bottled brown stout, and a full half yard of Bologna sausage, and I"—And, with this, Jack made a desperate clutch at some eatables lying near the window: a tremendous rumbling noise and smash of glass was heard; the cat squeaked; and Marion, followed by the two gentlemen, rushed back into the kitchen, where stood the fugitive in much worse plight than he appeared even in the *Hue and Cry*.

Housebreakers was the first idea that presented itself to Mr Gryphon, the only individual present who did not at once understand how matters stood; though, after a moment's observation and reflection, he affected acquiescence in Mistress Marion's dry announcement of "a friend of mine, Mr Gryphon; a stranger to you, gentlemen, who wishes to be private. Pussie, ye misleard limmer!" continued she, affecting to beat the cat, "was it you made this stramash, and broke the window? Be so kind as accompany Mr Gryphon back to my bit parlour, Mr Charles, and I'll attend ye there presently."

Charles took the hint; and he gave no direct token of recognition when Jack squinted towards him and then at Gryphon, in a very agony of terror; but kindly drew off the lawyer, leaving Marion to deal alone with her guest.

"I see how the land lies with our hostess and her lodger," said Gryphon, not choosing to shew his sagacity and quickness of apprehension at fault. "But such affairs are not my province. Let the law make its own of Mr Crippes, when it gets its claws over him: I shall make my own of him while time serves. The fellow, if he have not Miss Violet Hamilton's papers, must at least shew us where they may be found, or it shall fare worse with him."

"I do not affect to deny that yonder queer-

looking customer is the veritable Jack Crippes, after whom the pursuit of justice is hot," replied Charles Herbert; "yet, to connive at his escape—almost to compound a felony—to gain a private object,"—

"Make yourself perfectly easy, Maister Charles," said Marion, advancing into the parlour, after a short and sharp, but most satisfactory parley, with her prisoner in the kitchen. "Ye are both gentlemen"—and she looked fixedly at the lawyer—"and did not come of your own free will under my roof-tree, to interfere with my guests; or, to speak it plainly, to hear or to see aught that it was not intended you should see and hear. I'm on honour with him, gentlemen, and so are ye; reckoning, however, on a reasonable satisfaction."

"Unquestionably," replied the lawyer, with a significant smile, "otherwise we were most unreasonable persons: so now, ma'am, for your satisfaction. I confess that the scraps of certain writings which have been so singularly recovered, whet my curiosity exceedingly for what is behind or missing. Unless I am greatly mistaken, this young lady is heiress to at least as pretty and promising a Chancery suit as I ever happened to advise withal, were there but funds to prosecute it with spirit; for I make no doubt but that resistance, aided by a long purse, may be anticipated."

"A promising plea!—and you really think so," said Marion, earnestly; her head giving the little nervous shake, which, with her, denoted intense interest, while she fixed her eyes keenly on the lawyer. "Ye have a good opinion o' the case, which is a sure sign, sir; and, if an orra hunder pounds, or, what though we should say twa, could help it on, it'll no be ill spent. It may not become the like o' me to interfere in affairs so far aboon my commission; though, in anither sense, and that a better ane, it weel becomes me, in fauts o' grander freends, to step forward in behalf o' an orphan gentlewoman, my countrywoman and my auld maister's bairn. So, wi' you to back us, sir, we'll venture to bell-the-cat e'en with that proud yearl, and try whose pures stands langest out, when justice, and nothing more, is the commodity sought for."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the lawyer, laughing heartily. "This is frank. You volunteer to supply the sinews of war; and I shall be answerable for the results, if the missing documents—most important links in the chain of our evidence—still exist."

"Exist!" exclaimed Marion. "There's a half peck o' them; o' auld papers—I mean writs and evidents—stowed, at this blessed moment, under my easy chair." And, to the best of her memory and ability, Marion described the nature of the documents which she had secreted; while the solicitor rubbed his hands, as if chuckling in prospect over a gained case.

"Fetch them, ma'am—fetch them into court. I begin to fear I shall have no work. The case is so clear that the enemy won't shew fight. That £15,000, left at the disposal of the Earl of

Tarbert's mother, and which she very naturally devised to her daughter by her second marriage—the mother of the young lady I saw last day with Mrs Herbert—must now, by accumulated interest, be more than doubled. The Earl's niece, or half-niece, will, eventually, be a more considerable heiress than his daughter; and a charming young creature she is too." Here Marion ventured a sly look of congratulation and intelligence at Charles Herbert, while the lawyer proceeded:—"Is Miss Hamilton, my fair client that is to be, related to Mrs Herbert, Mr Charles, or merely her friend through the Tarbert family?"

"Miss Hamilton is my mother's friend and present guest, but on a quite different footing from what you suppose," answered Charles. "You forget that she is, probably, still entirely unknown to the Tarberts. But, excuse me for a moment: since law is to be given to the vermin in the next apartment, I may at least satisfy my conscience, by trying to make him impeach his rascally foreign confederates."

"Let them hang as high as Haman," said Marion; and while Charles was admitted by her into the locked kitchen to confer with Jack, she returned to take what she fancied the right course with Mr Gryphon.

"I think ye have, as well as professional regard, a fatherly likin' to that young gentleman, sir," said she; "and that ye will not be a bit less zealous in this cause when I make bold to spare his modesty, and tell ye how matters really stand with him. The plain fact is, that, heiress or penniless, he is troth-plighted to Miss Violet Hamilton, and to wish him the husband of Lady Laura Temple is to wish him nae good. And this is really a remarkable dealin' o' Providence, that, after his step-mother had been so ill-advised as, in spite of your opinion, sir, to will away to Lady Laura the fortune which, as I have heard, was, in spite of your sound and judicious advice, left in Mrs Herbert's power by her husband, it should as good as come a' back, by another righteous dispensation, to the right owners; and that is just Mr and likewise Mrs Charles Herbert that is to be, otherwise Miss Violet Hamilton that now is."

"O ho! I perceive," returned the lawyer, gratified by the implied compliment paid to his judgment in the opinion which he had, on both occasions, most disinterestedly given to his clients, indifferent to the effect which his advice might have upon Mrs Herbert. She, however, had been so just or high-minded as not to resent his interference; resting, in the proud consciousness that, whatever the world might say, she had, in making the extraordinary settlement of her fortune, been guided by the single-minded motive of advancing the prospects and securing the happiness of her husband's son. She had, moreover, until within the last few days, never doubted that what she had intended for the best was really the best; but the devoted attachment of the youthful lovers, when brought more immediately under her notice, assumed a higher and

more sacred character than she had been disposed to assign to what she wished to consider as the violent, but boyish and fickle admiration of a young man for a pretty new face; and the disposition and manners of her guest, at once gentle and lofty, sweet, modest, and ingratiating, confirmed the conquest of a naturally affectionate heart. The first indication of her change of opinion, or imperceptible yielding to the genuine feelings of her kindly nature, and the innocent fascinations of Violet, was seen in her delight to find the latter so nearly connected with the noble house which had awakened that worldly ambition, which was saved from being unworthy because it was principally felt for another; and in her avowed delight that Violet had a fair chance of being handsomely provided for. A feeling of heartfelt satisfaction mingled with a secret tingling of shame at her own rashness, while she half owned to herself—"If such is to be the destiny of Charles, ought I not to rejoice that the effects of my precipitance may be atoned for in so singular a manner, though not atoned for by me." Other recollections unwillingly forced themselves upon her. Though the proud, high-minded Lady Laura had openly and strenuously opposed the inconsiderate pecuniary arrangement, the Earl, affecting the same reluctance, had, in reality, shewn a very different disposition, thinly veiled by the assumption of generosity, and, finally, by the repeated declaration of—"Well, well, my dear madam; since you will have it so, to your determination we must submit. Do as you will about Lady Laura Herbert's pin-money, and the additional provision of her younger children; it certainly, as you remark, comes to the same thing in the end for our young folks."

The remembrance of these and similar expressions, and also of the occasional, and certainly unconscious, aristocratic hauteur of Lady Laura, were also not without their effect; and yet, so complicated are the feelings of this poor human nature, even in the best characters, that some taint of bitterness mingled with the mortification which Mrs Herbert experienced, when, a few days afterwards, Mr Gryphon, at a sort of family conference, laid before her the opinions of a celebrated counsel whom he had consulted on the claims of her protégée. She checked the unworthy feeling; and, though her pride shrank from confession before the keen and, perhaps, triumphant man of business, whose warnings she remembered, when alone with Charles and Violet, she said, with tearful eyes, and that warmth and candour of manner which to her son atoned for all her sins against himself—sins incurred by true if mistaken affection—

"Charles, don't wholly despise me, while you saucily fancy you have obtained a well-born and well-dowered charming wife, in spite of my small intrigue for your advancement."

"How can you, dearest mother, do such injustice to yourself—to me," replied Charles, respectfully and tenderly kissing his mother's hand. "Fortune as it may be; but you have

learned to appreciate Violet, and my feelings for her—that is enough.”

Mrs Herbert was deeply affected. Turning abruptly to Violet, in a strange mood of self-reproach and confiding fondness, she said—

“You are aware of the injury I have done or attempted to do you? But yet I bid you heap coals of fire upon my head; repay mistrust and dislike—which, however, after knowing you, I have found it impossible to entertain—by generous kindness. I have, I begin to fear, rashly made our Charles poor: dearest Violet, you must, for my sake, make him rich. I am now convinced that you alone can make him happy: for his sake, I need not ask that of you.”

Violet hastened to seat herself on a low stool by the sofa on which Mrs Herbert sat; burying her proud and happy blushing face in the lap of the lady, whose hand she covered with kisses of love and gratitude for the thrice-welcome if oddly-expressed consent. Mrs Herbert clasped her in a silent embrace; and, after a moment, as if half disconcerted at having given so far way to her feelings, and of being involved in that horror of English people, a *scene*, she rose, whispering, as she withdrew—“We understand each other now.”

Charles detained her to explain why, finding himself so near London, when he restored Miss Juliana Stocks to her school, he had stolen a day for “more last words.”

While the lovers were thus left to their own concerns, Mrs Herbert assumed the delicate and, to her, in the peculiar circumstances, difficult task of preparing Lady Laura Temple for impending events. She secretly accused herself of having formerly represented or insinuated to this young lady that the attentions and gallantry of Charles were already of the serious character, which she hoped they might take rather than what his feelings really were—namely, respectful admiration for a handsome and highly accomplished woman, into whose society he had been intimately thrown, while no other young man was present to pay her those little attentions which it was grateful to himself to shew, and which were always well received. The long epistle, which it cost Mrs Herbert infinite pains to concoct, so as to announce the engagement of her son and not wound the pride of Lady Laura, went by the same mail which carried the formal announcement, made by Mr Gryphon to her father, of Miss Violet Hamilton’s various claims.

Lady Laura, who had been disposed to look favourably upon the implied suit of Charles Herbert, was more alarmed and agitated by the mysterious letter she received, than she had believed possible; but it was not until her father informed her of the strange communication which had reached himself, that she understood the full bearing of the case, or began to suspect that she had been misled, if not betrayed, by the ambition of her *parvenue* friend. Her pride, her sense of personal dignity, and those gentler affections which lurked under a cold and lofty

bearing, were outraged and wounded; but whatever were her secret sufferings, no visible sign of them was permitted to appear. Urged, probably by her pride, she at once wrote to her rival, frankly acknowledging the relationship, courteously offering her friendship, and regretting that the absence of her father from England, for probably a long period, must withhold from her the happiness of being known to so near and amiable a kinswoman, whom she gaily congratulated on the joyful event at which her friend Mrs Herbert—to whom she begged to be remembered—had delicately hinted. The Earl of Tarbert, to whom, before sealing it, she handed her letter to her new-found cousin, secretly admired the strength of mind, and also the female *diplomacy* of his daughter; but he was too much absorbed in his own concerns to have much time to bestow upon hers, until, with the greatest apparent calmness, she informed him that the gentleman to whom their new-found cousin was engaged was Charles Herbert. The surprise of the Earl could not have been greater, though the previous secure disposition of Mrs Herbert’s fortune in his daughter’s behalf probably made his chagrin much less at this intelligence than otherwise it might have been at losing a desirable match for a daughter now almost thirty years of age.

“I fancied, Laura—so indeed did my friend Mrs Herbert—that you were, at one time, disposed to shew the young man some small degree of favour,” said the Earl.

“All the case required,” replied Lady Laura, carelessly. “But now that the lady you mention has had her freak out, and finds her grand project frustrated, I presume she may have back her money; which, if we had not saved it for her, might have been thrown away in some other matrimonial scheme for her stepson, which would have yielded even less return.”

“I have no reason to suppose that Mrs Herbert regrets the settlements which she pressed upon you, Lady Laura; forced upon us, indeed. To return that money—even if you had the power, which is placed in your trustees, Sir George Lees and myself—would look as if you had trepanned the silly woman into the arrangement, and were now ashamed of yourself”——

“Which, perhaps, I am,” replied Lady Laura, coldly. “In those settlements I unwillingly acquiesced when my prospects or my ideas were somewhat different from what they now are. May I now beg to know what you have learned of my cousin? Are her claims just?”

“Just or unjust, I am afraid they will be pertinaciously maintained: that fellow Gryphon made himself exceedingly troublesome and disagreeable on a former occasion.”

“When he wished to prevent Mrs Herbert from committing a folly into which he probably fancied that the Earl of Tarbert’s artful daughter had betrayed her. . . . The matter, altogether, has become exceedingly unpleasant, and the sooner we are rid of it the better. I shall not lose a moment in doing my part.”

"Stay, Laura," cried the Earl, stopping his daughter, who moved to leave the room. "This must be left to those who better understand business than we can pretend to do."

"Oh! surely, sir: we give the orders; they properly execute them."

The Earl became peremptory and even harsh, until, after a protracted discussion, he forbade his daughter's interference, and dutifully expatiated on the folly of his own mother, who not only made a second marriage, but settled, or attempted to settle, at accumulating interest, a sum, nearly equal in amount to the half of his yearly rents, upon the daughter born of that marriage, and his own only sister.

"When my grandmother bequeathed this money to her child, your Lordship's sister, I conclude she had the power to do so?"

"That remains to be tried; at all events the affair must be thoroughly investigated by the big wigs. Are you aware, Laura, that, with my growing embarrassments, this girl's claim, if sustained, would involve me in difficulties probably for the whole brief remainder of my life? Have I not double reason to rejoice that, whatever may occur, you at least, through the just partiality of Mrs Herbert, are independent and wealthy, and able, as I know you are willing, to be generous to your father."

"At the expense of *those* Herberts?—of injustice to the son, and now, I doubt not, of regret and remorse to the foolish mother? No, dear father; we may be poor together; but we shall not be mean, nay, *dishonest*."

The Earl made a peevish ejaculation about women's romance, and ignorance of the world and of business; and his daughter, accustomed to think and, by his indulgence, to act for herself, at once wrote to Mrs Herbert, warmly congratulating her upon her son's approaching marriage, and informing her that the fortune, which she affected to consider as a toy, placed by the caprice of a spoiled child in the keeping of a favourite, and then pettishly reclaimed or desired back, was now at her service.

Mrs Herbert was both gratified and deeply mortified by this letter. It proved Lady Laura the noble creature which she had always believed and maintained, in the face of the suspicious lawyer, Gryphon; and also, that her confidence had not been misplaced. In the vacillation of the moment, and charmed with the sentiments of Lady Laura, she almost sighed that the choice of Charles had not been fixed before he had seen one possessed of much greater feminine attraction, softness, and gentleness, though not of a more elevated mind. Nay, she even boasted to Violet of the conduct of Laura, when the former ran in, full of delight, to shew Mrs Herbert the letter from Laura to herself, to which we have already alluded.

"Noble, indeed, she is, as people of the world may think," said Violet; "though only what one might expect in a right-hearted woman. But how happy I am that she does not love Charles so much as you supposed, else she never could write me

thus. I can bear Juliana Stocks to be in love with him, but not Lady Laura, who, if she had loved Charles as I do—and, I am sure, seeing him so much, I wonder how she escaped it—could never speak thus of him, so kindly; and so handsomely congratulate me on my prospects."

Yet Violet was a little discomposed when Mrs Herbert, in the enthusiasm of the moment, boasted to Charles of her magnanimous and admirable friend; and she was also a little surprised, in her simplicity, at Mrs Herbert shewing no hesitation at taking Lady Laura at her word in returning the fortune. A consultation of lawyers followed, and then one of the lovers; each of the pair alike disposed to do homage to the exalted virtue of Lady Laura, and anxious to make the sacrifice as light as possible.

Ten days later, the Lady Laura, who had been at open feud with her father, entered his apartment as he was about to proceed to Court, having just received important despatches from England. Letters had come to his daughter by the same opportunity.

"Well, Laura, is it peace or war?" asked the Earl, attempting to be gay.

"Peace, if you choose it, sir," replied his daughter; "and I am now in a condition to offer you advantageous terms. My cousin, Violet, though the youngest, is the ablest diplomatist among us." Lady Laura pointed to the open letter which she held in her hand. It was written by Charles, in the name of his affianced wife, and, as he stated, at her suggestion. The scheme of adjustment proposed was hers. "You cannot, even by the admission of your own lawyers, who are anxious to see the affair in the most favourable light, hope much longer to ward off the claims of my cousin," said Laura, "although you wished it."

"Have you come to congratulate me on that score?" returned the Earl, sharply.

"No, my Lord; but to announce that, during your lifetime and mine, we shall have no trouble, on condition"—

"Ay, the condition?" demanded the Earl, eagerly; the letters which he had just received disposing him strongly to any measure by which the repayment of nearly £50,000, to which his mother's original bequests had now mounted, might be evaded or deferred.

"On condition that justice is done by us to my cousin's future husband," said Laura, with the forced emphasis and slightly tremulous tone of voice which betrayed her feelings. "That Mr Charles Herbert receives back from us the smaller fortune of which the world thinks we have deprived him, by working on the facility or vanity of his father's widow."

This was said with bitterness; for Laura Temple could no more forgive her own weakness, than the conduct of Mrs Herbert which had encouraged it.

"Hang his father's widow!" cried the Earl, yet somewhat relieved. "Shew me the letter, La. What will Gryphon say to it? 'Tis quite impossible that the Lord Chancellor would have

saddled me with that monstrous amount of interest, where I was perfectly unconscious of any existing claim. You give up £40,000, Laura. The claims of this girl would, in all likelihood, be extinguished by £30,000. Are you aware of what you surrender?"

"Perfectly: a burthen and a disgrace I surrender, for incurring which I shall never forgive myself. The generosity of these young persons shames us, papa."

"Not quite so generous or disinterested as you may suppose, Laura. After my apotheosis—when the title and estates have gone—to the devil—by the law of entail, Herbert's and his wife's claim will still, I imagine, hold good against the said estate of Coombe Flory, on which my sensible mother's money was secured. Much good may it then do them! My pretty niece is surely as near and dear to me as that sneaking black rascal down at Glo'ster, who will inherit the honours of the Tarberts; because my great-grandfather's younger brother, being half-witted, chose to marry the gamekeeper's daughter."

"Both nearer and dearer, certainly, papa. Then this is fixed. I may write to—to Charles Herbert. I conclude that he now surrenders his appointment in your suite."

"That I leave to his discretion. Herbert has now another claim on me: and his pretty little wife would make a charming addition to your society, Laura."

"Leave it rather to my discretion, father," said Laura, with a sigh, which the father felt; "and write Charles that his appointment is otherwise filled up. You are going to court?"

"To the Minister; to solicit, among a hundred and fifty things, for the arrest of some blackguard travelling Count or other, who has been coming it rather strong over honest John Bull, and even going the bold length of running away with his heiresses. If my excellent countrymen insist upon being gulled by these gentry, I cannot see why they should be balked in their fancy. But the girl's father has some parliamentary, or, I ought rather, now-a-days, to say *constituentary* influence; and he insists on having a Count Rodolph Zanderschloss hanged, for the protection of English heiresses. What idiots the admiration of titles makes the half-caste British gentry. Any man, not of our nation, must have known that a person with so preposterous a title must be an impostor—never could be a German noble. My Count, I find, was originally a barber, and afterwards an itinerant dealer in spurious Eau de Cologne, and other quackeries, about the watering-places of his own country; but, in mine, he emerged a magnate of the first grade."

"And where is the unfortunate young lady?"

"Ah, there is the beauty of it. He did not even get her; nor, what is worse, a stiver from her papa's money-bags: and yet papa must have his revenge. It has been altogether a losing bargain to the Count, who has, moreover, been

blown and driven from England before he had fully reaped his harvest."

Lady Laura smiled, as she remarked:—"Yet the vanity or credulous folly of the one, cannot excuse the villany of the other party; nor, though the scheme of this person has failed, is his guilt the less. I do hope your application for his arrest will be successful. I presume this is the case to which Mr Charles Herbert referred, where he rescued the young lady, when lately following you through Kent?"

"The very same distressed damsel and *proseur chevalier*. But now, Laura, I insist upon your getting rid of your three days' *migraine*, and appearing in the circle to-night. He is, though a travelled and accomplished Hungarian, no mock Count who would glory in placing you in the van of the march of improvement in his semi-barbarous principality."

The Lady Laura turned away with an expression of pain on her countenance, which warned her father not then to press the topic farther; but her appearance at court that evening proved that she was not indifferent to what gave him pleasure.

CHAPTER XIV.

We have, as is not unfrequent with the members of our craft, dropped a stitch in our knitting, which it is now necessary to pick up. In plainer terms, we left Mr John Quintin Cryppes safe in the custody of Mistress Marion, who, on many accounts, was desirous to be handsomely rid of him; though Jack, now tolerably reassured by her hospitable treatment, began to fancy that he might be in much worse quarters, and to hint that he could pass the night with great comfort in her leathern arm-chair. This Marion would not understand; and a plainer intimation of Jack's desire drew forth a point blank order to tramp.

"I have done my part by you," said Marion; "that you cannot deny: and I am ready and willing to fulfil the conditions of my paction, and get you smuggled to Leith along with my meal ark, which goes doon once a-year to be filled; and on it, or in it, ye may go and lie as snug as a thief in a mill."

"To Scotland; cut off from my London resources!" said Jack; "my wardrobe in so bad a condition, and my finances exhausted."

"Your resources! My certy, they are to brag of!" returned Marion; and Mr Jack, who seldom lost anything, for want of bold attempt to obtain it, changed his tactics.

"Without some small temporary supply, your goodness to me—that noble dealing with a fee, which distinguishes your ancient and gallant nation—were worse than lost."

"So ye would butter us up, would ye?" returned Marion, scornfully; but either her heart was somewhat mollified, or else the kindness which, for excellent causes and reasons, she had already shewn, naturally disposed her towards the farther benevolence which might render it available to its object; and she said—"It's no

to be thought that I will supply your profligate extravagance, even for an hour; but as I have, thanks to mysel, made my own of you, I would not grudge a trifle to put you in a way of winning honest bread, by industry, and of forsaking the wicked courses that must lead you to the gallows. Ye are but a young chield yet; and, they tell me, no altogether without tawlents and capacity, if ye had steadiness. As a dancin'-master, now; or, say that ye united singin' wi' dancin'; and the tunin' o' pianofortes, and cleaning cloaks and mending broken china, the like o' you might make a shift from dale to dale among the store farmers that have families to educate, and are far from market towns, and respectable instructors of youth: though, I'm sure, I ken not how I durst venture to recommend you."

There was much that appeared to Jack so exquisitely ludicrous in such a scheme, as connected with a person of his own importance and pretensions, that his pride was not offended; and, in his present pinch, anything was better than remaining lurking where he was, so thoroughly well-known to the police; and, besides, the idea diverted him. After a moment of hesitation, he replied—

"Egad, it might be an amusing lark enough: see something of life—eh, old lady? As good as a tour with the tinkers, or a campaign with strollers. And then I could write my Travels in Scotland, with Illustrations:—perhaps induce some of my keen-scented friends in the Row to advance a few pieces on the spec. Were you, ma'am, frankly to advance me twenty, or say twenty-five pieces, now, I should at once give you an order upon my publisher for thirty or forty, a month hence, which I consider a handsome profit."

"Greatly obleeged," replied Marion, in her driest tones; "but I could not think of robbing you. Ye must surely consider us Scotch clean Jews and usurers, that we would take such advantage of a gentleman in distress. Besides, I am no money-changer, young man: what I give I give."

Jack found that he was on the wrong lay.

"Hearty that, egad! I like it. Well, ma'am, a lady of your penetration and sagacity can easily comprehend my present pinch. I should, as matters stand, be most happy to embrace the romantic scheme you have suggested of making a raid into Scotland, if furnished with a trifle and a *carte du pays*."

"I may not object to pay whatever I consider needful to your frugal and sober, but decent, maintenance between this and Berwick or Newcastle, and a cast beyond; and if ye make a bonfire of these Rag-Market duds, that would make the very craws in my country tak' ye for a potato-bogle, I maybe have a couple of shirts and a suit of second-hand blacks in my drawers, to make ye a thought more respectable, and liker a dominie."

Jack laughed outright. The very absurdity of the scheme, its imaginary monstrous incon-

gruity in relation to himself, served to recommend it. He had also heard of young men of title and rank (whether real or pretended) travelling as wandering pipers, and faring luxuriously under the assumed character. Nay, heiresses had been honestly, or, at least, safely, achieved by gallant gentlemen thus disguised. He became even impatient to embark; and less from apprehension of the danger which really menaced him than anxiety to commence his adventures as a chevallier-errant in the north.

The munificence of Mistress Linton fairly exceeded his expectations, though displayed in a manner quite characteristic of the caution of her country. To the most comfortable stock of linen and under-clothing which Jack had possessed for some years, she added another and another pair of her own substantial, knit woollen hose, and silk handkerchiefs; and drew forth another and another half-crown, that he might not, she said, require to change one of his five sovereigns until fairly landed, and advancing on his inland march.

"After ye get up among the hill-farmers, ye will need for nothing," said Marion, "and be in the way of makin' instead o' spendin'. I have kenned a well-behaved man, who could give instruction both in psalmody, and foursome reels and high dances, carry off a matter of five-and-twenty or thirty shillings from a clachan, after a sojourn of six weeks, or two months, in a winter."

This to the accomplished son of Professor Cryppes, who, for a musical lesson of twenty minutes, had lately received five guineas, and might have had ten! But Jack, clinging to the idea of a lark into Scotland, and, at least, two volumes of illustrated travels, was not dismayed.

"Hang money!" cried Jack; "I have a soul above pelf—always had. I shall have shooting and fishing, romantic and magnificent scenery to sketch, ay, and pretty Scotch lasses to court—eh, old lady?" And Jack leeringly squinted in-expressible meanings.

"Forgie me for lettin' loose such a swindlin' profligate on my native land!" thought Marion: and she said aloud—"An' it had not been, Mr Cripps, that I have ta'en my ain out o' you, and that I consider your bonny tittle, Mrs Burke Barker, a greater loon in the matter of stealing the heiress than your worshipful self, who were likely to suffer the hail penalty and dirdum, it should have been long ere I had sent such a roving blade among my young countrywomen, though I consider the muircocks in no great danger frae cockney shots."

Jack, under the first implied accusation, smiled most complacently; which, provoking Marion, she added—

"Howsoever, those who see you London dandies in daylight, will not be ower ready to rin off wi' you in the dark, Mr Jack; and to make ye less killin' and more safe, I must have aff these pussie really envies you o' them;—but they are beauties!"

"My moustaches, ma'am?" cried Jack, petrified, and fondly drawing the forefinger and thumb of the left hand over the cherished appendages. "Be assured I shall not part with my moustaches."

"Not part wi' them!" cried Marion, rising, and flourishing her scissors; "then, be ye assured, the police will no part wi' you. If ye did not hear me read that description of your beautiful person which the tailor's lady below has gotten to keep for a love-token, ye might have heard it. Come, come, no nonsense. This is as much as your neck is worth."

"If it were necessary to disfigure my face in this horrible style, I would require an expert *fraiseur*; or, at any rate, a razor to perform so delicate an operation myself."

"There's no razor here, were it wanted to sned your weasand," cried Marion; while Jack warded off the threatened assault of her sharp instrument. "Ye surely do not mean to insinuate that I have a beard? And, as for shaving, I have clipped a twated sheep mony a time ere now, and may surely perform on you. But if ye should prefer to perform the task yoursel, I'll just owerlook ye."

Finally, Jack's hairy honours—such was his hard fate—fell beneath his own hands, Marion looking exultingly on.

"There now, ye are no altogether so like a monkey and a mountebank as before. If the half of the whiskers were sent to the fire in company, there might be some kything of a human face about ye still."

"So you really think, old lady, I look handsomer?" said Jack, complacently regarding his denuded upper lip in Marion's small looking-glass. "Gad a' mercy on the poor Scotch girls!" Marion's temper could scarcely stand this, diverted as she had been by the infliction of the late awful punishment.

"Get along with you," she cried. "The tailor's gaylady is sleeping by this time; and, Adonis as ye are, might think a good £200 better than your bulk; and, I have reason to be thankfu', I am ower auld to fall in love with you, though I maun convoy ye safe as far as the wharf. It will be a sight for sair eyne to see auld Marion Linton linking east Fleet Street arm-in-arm wi' a fashionable dandy."

Though Marion's stomach rose at the degradation of the public exhibition, she submitted, the better to elude the suspicions of the watchmen and police; and Jack, also overwhelmed with confusion at being so accompanied, consoled himself with the recollection that the hour was late, and the quarter unfashionable.

"No one can detect me," said Jack, aloud.

"It's no that like," returned Marion, as they turned off from the street door. "With me by your side, a clean shirt on your back, and the hair off your mouth, forbye that pair of stout shoon on your feet—they cost me nett 5s. 6d.—you are mair decently disguised, I dare say, than since the day ye were first breeched. But ye'll

keep quiet now. The skipper expects ye. Ye sail wi' the tide. And, whatever he may jalouse, he will be canny wi' ye for my sake, or—for reasons as substantial."

They proceeded quickly and quietly along the nearly deserted streets, not without that sense of danger which, for the moment, established a feeling of common sympathy in bosoms so discordant.

"My poor mother," whispered Jack, in a natural and softened voice, as they drew near the appointed spot, and found a man like a sailor or porter waiting to receive them. "The old lady is so fond of me," he continued, in a whisper to Marion, "I wish I could have sent her or the governor some token of my dutiful remembrance of them."

"No doubt ye are her bairn, whatever else she or you be," returned Marion, somewhat melted. "And now the Lord pardon and guide ye, and forgie me, if sae be it is sin to try to save your young blude frae the gallows, and gie ye time for repentance and amendment of life; especially as ye has tried to make some small reparation to Miss Violet. Stay: there's a bit Glasgow pound-note in my hussey-case. It's no easy getting silver for them in this toon without losin' a shillin' or a sixpence by the job. Take it wi' ye, and be a wiser and better man. It's ne'er ower late to repent. I'll maybe see your parents the morn, and set them at ease about you."

"Thank you, old lady. Remember me to Miss Violet and my friend Charles.—Gad, I might, in an hour or two more, have wheedled her out of another five pounds," thought Jack, going on with his guide. "What the deuce can all the women, old and young, see in me! There's that tailor's handsome wife, too: devilish hard to be shipped off so critically. Thanks to my charming sister, Poll, who would have stored the harvest, and left me the stubble for my share, like a goose as I am. And now for beggarly Scotland, ho!—where I cannot have worse fortune than the cursed hag chalked out for me." And Jack continued—"Stay,—I might be a Polish refugee noble, or an Italian picture-dealer, or twenty characters. None, however, to start with, fairer than a young nobleman travelling incognito, and tuning pianos, for a frolic, to gain access to the pretty performers upon them. If the vulgar Rodolpho, with his ugly phiz and broken English, humbugged the Warwickshire folks in style, why may not I charm the Scotch. London, though, as my sage governor was wont to say, is, and ever will be, the grand mart for talents. Adieu, Alma Mater! If I prosper, it shall not be long till we meet again."

And with this the good old Smack, the *Eydent*, began to drop down the Thames, bearing to Scotland a cargo of bones, empty oat-meal bags, and Russian bristles, together with Jack Cryppes and his fortunes.

(To be continued.)