

PELHAM - VOLUME 6.

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON*

VOLUME VI.

CHAPTER LXVI.

And now I'm the world alone,
.....
But why for others should I groan,
When none will sigh for me?
—Byron.

The whole country was in confusion at the news of the murder. All the myrmidons of justice were employed in the most active research for the murderers. Some few persons were taken up on suspicion, but were as instantly discharged. Thornton and Dawson underwent a long and rigorous examination; but no single tittle of evidence against them appeared: they were consequently dismissed. The only suspicious circumstance against them, was their delay on the road; but the cause given, the same as Thornton had at first assigned to me, was probable and natural. The shed was indicated, and, as if to confirm Thornton's account, a glove belonging to that person was found there. To crown all, my own evidence, in which I was constrained to mention the circumstance of the muffled horseman having passed me on the road, and being found by me on the spot itself, threw the whole weight of suspicion upon that man, whoever he might be.

All attempts, however, to discover him were in vain. It was ascertained that a man, muffled in a cloak, was seen at Newmarket, but not remarkably observed; it was also discovered, that a person so habited had put up a grey horse to bait in one of the inns at Newmarket; but in the throng of strangers, neither the horse nor its owner had drawn down any particular remark.

On further inquiry, testimony differed; four or five men, in cloaks, had left their horses at the stables; one ostler changed the colour of the steed to brown, a second to black, a third deposed that the gentleman was remarkably tall, and the waite swore solemnly he had given a glass of brandy and water to an unked looking gentleman, in a cloak, who was remarkably short. In fine, no material point could be proved, and though the officers were still employed in active search, they could trace

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nothing that promised a speedy discovery.

As for myself, as soon as I decently could, I left Chester Park, with a most satisfactory dispatch in my pocket, from its possessor to Lord Dawton, and found myself once more on the road to London!

Alas! how different were my thoughts! How changed the temper of my mind, since I had last travelled that road. Then I was full of hope, energy, ambition—of interest for Reginald Glanville—of adoration for his sister; and now, I leaned back listless and dispirited, without a single feeling to gladden the restless and feverish despair which, ever since that night, had possessed me. What was ambition henceforth to me? The most selfish amongst us must have some human being to whom to refer—with whom to connect—to associate—to treasure the triumphs and gratifications of self. Where now was such a being to me? My earliest friend, for whom my esteem was the greater for his sorrows, my interest the keener for his mystery, Reginald Glanville, was a murderer! a dastardly, a barbarous felon, whom the chance of an instant might convict!—and she—she, the only woman in the world I had ever really loved—who had ever pierced the thousand folds of my ambitious and scheming heart—she was the sister of the assassin!

Then came over my mind the savage and exulting eye of Thornton, when it read the damning record of Glanville's guilt; and in spite of my horror at the crime of my former friend, I trembled for his safety: nor was I satisfied with myself at my prevarication as a witness. It is true, that I had told the truth, but I had concealed all the truth; and my heart swelled proudly and bitterly against the miniature which I still concealed in my bosom.

Light as I may seem to the reader, bent upon the pleasures and the honours of the great world, as I really was, there had never, since I had recognized and formed a decided code of principles, been a single moment in which I had transgressed it; and perhaps I was sterner and more inflexible in the tenets of my morality, such as they were, than even the most zealous worshipper of the letter, as well as the spirit of the law and the prophets, would require. Certainly there were many pangs within me, when I reflected, that to save a criminal, in whose safety I was selfishly concerned, I had tampered with my honour, paltered with the truth, and broken what I felt to be a peremptory and inviolable duty. Let it be for ever remembered, that once acknowledge and ascertain that a principle is publicly good, and no possible private motive should ever induce you to depart from it.

It was with a heightened pulse, and a burning cheek, that I entered London; before midnight I was in a high fever; they sent for the vultures of physic—I was bled copiously—I was kept quiet in bed for six days, at the end of that time, my constitution and youth restored me. I took up one of the newspapers listlessly: Glanville's name struck me; I read the paragraph which contained it—it was a high-flown and fustian panegyric

on his genius and promise. I turned to another column, it contained a long speech he had the night before made in the House of Commons.

"Can such things be?" thought I; yea, and thereby hangs a secret and an anomaly in the human heart. A man may commit the greatest of crimes, and (if no other succeed to it,) it changes not the current of his being—to all the world—to all intents—for all objects, he may be the same. He may equally serve his country—equally benefit his friends—be generous—brave—benevolent, all that he was before. One crime, however heinous, makes no revolution in the system—it is only the perpetual course of sins, vices, follies, however insignificant they may seem, which alters the nature and hardens the heart.

My mother was out of town when I returned there. They had written to her during my illness, and while I was yet musing over the day's journal, a letter from her was put into my hand. I transcribe it.

"My Dearest Henry,

"How dreadfully uneasy I am about you: write to me directly. I would come to town myself, but am staying with dear Lady Dawton, who wont hear of my going; and I cannot offend her for your sake. By the by, why have you not called upon Lord Dawton? but, I forgot, you have been ill. My dear, dear child, I am wretched about you, and now pale your illness will make you look! just too, as the best part of the season is coming on. How unlucky! Pray, don't wear a black cravat when you next call on Lady Roseville; but choose a very fine baptiste one—it will make you look rather delicate than ill. What physician do you have? I hope, in God, that it is Sir Henry Halford. I shall be too miserable if it is not. I am sure no one can conceive the anguish I suffer. Your father, too, poor man, has been laid up with the gout for the last three days. Keep up your spirits, my dearest child, and get some light books to entertain you; but, pray, as soon as you are well, do go to Lord Dawton's—he is dying to see you; but be sure not to catch cold. How did you like Lady Chester? Pray take the greatest care of yourself, and write soon to

"Your wretched, and most

"Affectionate Mother,

"F. P.

"P.S. How dreadfully shocking about that poor Sir John Tyrrell!"

I tossed the letter from me. Heaven pardon me if the misanthropy of my mood made me less grateful for the maternal solicitude than I should otherwise have been.

I took up one of the numerous books with which my table was covered; it was a worldly work of one of the French reasoners; it gave a new turn to

my thoughts—my mind reverted to its former projects of ambition. Who does not know what active citizens private misfortune makes us? The public is like the pools of Bethesda—we all hasten there, to plunge in and rid ourselves of our afflictions.

I drew my portefeuille to me, and wrote to Lord Dawton. Three hours after I had sent the note, he called upon me. I gave him Lord Chester's letter, but he had already received from that nobleman a notification of my success. He was profuse in his compliments and thanks.

"And, do you know," added the statesman, "that you have quite made a conquest of Lord Guloaseton? He speaks of you publicly in the highest terms: I wish we could get him and his votes. We must be strengthened, my dear Pelham; every thing depends on the crisis."

"Are you certain of the cabinet?" I asked.

"Yes; it is not yet publicly announced, but it is fully known amongst us, who comes in, and who stays out. I am to have the place of—"

"I congratulate your lordship from my heart. What post do you design for me?"

Lord Dawton changed countenance. "Why—really—Pelham, we have not yet filled up the lesser appointments, but you shall be well remembered—well, my dear Pelham, be sure of it."

I looked at the noble speaker with a glance which, I flatter myself, is peculiar to me. If, thought I, the embryo minister is playing upon me as upon one of his dependant characters; if he dares forget what he owes to my birth and zeal, I will grind myself to powder but I will shake him out of his seat. The anger of the moment passed away.

"Lord Dawton," said I, "one word, and I have done discussing my claims for the present. Do you mean to place me in Parliament as soon as you are in the cabinet? What else you intend for me, I question not."

"Yes, assuredly, Pelham. How can you doubt it?"

"Enough!—and now read this letter from France."

Two days after my interview with Lord Dawton, as I was riding leisurely through the Green Park, in no very bright and social mood, one of the favoured carriages, whose owners are permitted to say, "Hic iter est nobis," overtook me. A sweet voice ordered the coachman to stop, and then addressed itself to me.

"What, the hero of Chester Park returned, without having once narrated his adventures tome?"

"Beautiful Lady Roseville," said I, "I plead guilty of negligence—not treason. I forgot, it is true, to appear before you, but I forget not the devotion of my duty now that I behold you. Command, and I obey."

"See, Ellen," said Lady Roseville, turning to a bending and blushing countenance beside her, which I then first perceived—"See what it is to be a knight errant; even his language, is worthy of Amadis of Gaul—but—(again addressing me) your adventures are really too shocking a subject to treat lightly. We lay our serious orders on you to come to our castle this night: we shall be alone."

"Willingly shall I repair to your bower, fayre ladie; but tell me, I beseech you, how many persons are signified in the world 'alone?'"

"Why," answered Lady Roseville, "I fear we may have two or three people with us; but I think, Ellen, we may promise our chevalier, that the number shall not exceed twelve."

I bowed and rode on. What worlds would I not have given to have touched the hand of the countess's companion, though only for an instant. But—and that fearful but, chilled me, like an ice-bolt. I put spurs to my horse, and dashed fiercely onwards. There was rather a high wind stirring, and I bent my face from it, so as scarcely to see the course of my spirited and impatient horse.

"What ho, Sir!—what ho!" cried a shrill voice—"for God's sake, don't ride over me before dinner, whatever you do after it!"

I pulled up. "Ah, Lord Gulo-ton! how happy I am to see you; pray forgive my blindness, and my horse's stupidity."

"'Tis an ill wind," answered the noble gourmand, "which blows nobody good. An excellent proverb, the veracity of which is daily attested; for, however unpleasant a keen wind may be, there is no doubt of its being a marvellous whetter of that greatest of Heaven's blessings—an appetite. Little, however, did I expect, that besides blowing me a relish for my saute de foie gras, it would also blow me one who might, probably, be a partaker of my enjoyment. Honour me with your company at dinner to-day."

"What saloon will you dine in, my Lord Lucullus?" said I, in allusion to the custom of the epicure, by whose name I addressed him.

"The saloon of Diana," replied Gulo-ton—"for she must certainly have shot the fine buck of which Lord H. sent me the haunch that we shall have to-day. It is the true old Meynell breed. I ask you not to meet Mr. So-and-so, and Lord What-dye-call-him: I ask you to meet a saute de foie gras, and a haunch of venison."

"I will most certainly pay them my respects. Never did I know before how far things were better company than persons. Your lordship has taught me

that great truth.”

”God bless me,” cried Guloseton, with an air of vexation, ”here comes the Duke of Stilton, a horrid person, who told me the other day, at my petit diner, when I apologized to him for some strange error of my artiste’s, by which common vinegar had been substituted for Chili—who told me—what think you he told me? You cannot guess; he told me, forsooth, that he did not care what he eat; and, for his part, he could make a very good dinner off a beef-steak! Why the deuce, then, did he come and dine with me? Could he have said any thing more cutting? Imagine my indignation, when I looked round my table and saw so many good things thrown away upon such an idiot.”

Scarcely was the last word out of the gourmand’s mouth before the noble personage so designated, joined us. It amused me to see Guloseton’s contempt (which he scarcely took the pains to suppress) of a person whom all Europe honoured, and his evident weariness of a companion, whose society every one else would have coveted as the summum bonum of worldly distinction. As for me, feeling any thing but social, I soon left the ill-matched pair, and rode into the other park.

Just as I entered it, I perceived, on a dull, yet cross-looking pony, Mr. Wormwood, of bitter memory. Although we had not met since our mutual sojourn at Sir Lionel Garratt’s, and were then upon very cool terms of acquaintance, he seemed resolved to recognize and claim me.

”My dear Sir,” said he, with a ghastly smile, ”I am rejoiced once more to see you; bless me, how pale you look. I heard you had been very ill. Pray have you been yet to that man who professes to cure consumption in the worst stages?”

”Yes,” said I, ”he read me two or three letters of reference from the patients he had cured. His last, he said, was a gentleman very far gone; a Mr. Wormwood.”

”Oh, you are pleased to be facetious,” said the cynic, coldly—”but pray do tell me about that horrid affair at Chester Park. How disagreeable it must have been to you to be taken up on suspicion of the murder.”

”Sir,” said I, haughtily, ”what do you mean?”

”Oh, you were not—wern’t you? Well, I always thought it unlikely; but every one says so—”

”My dear Sir,” I rejoined, ”how long is it since you have minded what every body says? If I were so foolish, I should not be riding with you now; but I have always said, in contradiction to every body, and even in spite of being universally laughed at for my singular opinion, that you, my dear Mr. Wormwood, were by no means silly, nor ignorant, nor insolent, nor intrusive; that you were, on the contrary, a very decent author, and

a very good sort of man; and that you were so benevolent, that you daily granted to some one or other, the greatest happiness in your power: it is a happiness I am now about to enjoy, and it consists in wishing you 'good bye!'" And without waiting for Mr. Wormwood's answer, I gave the rein to my horse, and was soon lost among the crowd, which had now began to assemble.

Hyde Park is a stupid place; the English make business an enjoyment, and enjoyment a business—they are born without a smile—they rove about public places like so many easterly winds—cold, sharp, and cutting; or like a group of fogs on a frosty day, sent out of his hall by Boreas for the express purpose of looking black at one another. When they ask you, "how you do," you would think they were measuring the length of your coffin. They are ever, it is true, labouring to be agreeable; but they are like Sisyphus, the stone they roll up the hill with so much toil, runs down again, and hits you a thump on the legs. They are sometimes polite, but invariably uncivil; their warmth is always artificial—their cold never, they are stiff without dignity, and cringing without manners. They offer you an affront, and call it "plain truth;" they wound your feelings, and tell you it is manly "to speak their minds;" at the same time, while they have neglected all the graces and charities of artifice, they have adopted all its falsehood and deceit. While they profess to abhor servility, they adulate the peerage—while they tell you they care not a rush for the minister, they move heaven and earth for an invitation from the minister's wife. There is not another court in Europe where such systematized meanness is carried on,—where they will even believe you, when you assert that it exists. Abroad, you can smile at the vanity of one class, and the flattery of another: the first, is too well bred to affront, the latter, too graceful to disgust; but here, the pride of a noblesse, (by the way, the most mushroom in Europe,) knocks you down in a hail-storm, and the fawning of the bourgeois makes you sick with hot water. Then their amusements—the heat—the dust—the sameness—the slowness of that odious park in the morning; and the same exquisite scene repeated in the evening, on the condensed stage of a rout-room, where one has more heat, with less air, and a narrower dungeon, with diminished possibility of escape!—we wander about like the damned in the story of Vathek, and we pass our lives, like the royal philosopher of Prussia, in conjugating the verb, *Je m'ennuie*.

CHAPTER LXVII.

In solo vivendi causa palato est.
—Juvenal.

They would talk of nothing but high life, and high-lived company; with other fashionable topics, such as pictures, taste, Shakspeare, and the musical glasses.
—Vicar of Wakefield.

The reflections which closed the last chapter, will serve to show that I

was in no very amiable or convivial temper, when I drove to Lord Guloseton's dinner. However, in the world, it matters little what may be our real mood, the mask hides the bent brow and the writhing lip.

Guloseton was stretched on his sofa, gazing with upward eye at the beautiful Venus which hung above his hearth. "You are welcome, Pelham; I am worshipping my household divinity!"

I prostrated myself on the opposite sofa, and made some answer to the classical epicure, which made us both laugh heartily. We then talked of pictures, painters, poets, the ancients, and Dr. Henderson on Wines; we gave ourselves up, without restraint, to the enchanting fascination of the last-named subject, and our mutual enthusiasm confirming our cordiality, we went down stairs to our dinner, as charmed with each other as boon companions always should be.

"This is *comme il faut*," said I, looking round at the well filled table, and the sparkling spirits immersed in the ice-pails, "a genuine friendly dinner. It is very rarely that I dare entrust myself to such extempore hospitality—*miserum est aliena vivere quadra*;—a friendly dinner, a family meal, are things from which I fly with undisguised aversion. It is very hard, that in England, one cannot have a friend on pain of being shot or poisoned; if you refuse his familiar invitations, he thinks you mean to affront him, and says something rude, for which you are forced to challenge him; if you accept them, you perish beneath the weight of boiled mutton and turnips, or—"

"My dear friend," interrupted Guloseton, with his mouth full, "it is very true; but this is no time for talking, let us eat."

I acknowledged the justice of the rebuke, and we did not interchange another word beyond the exclamations of surprise, pleasure, admiration, or dissatisfaction, called up by the objects which engrossed our attention, till we found ourselves alone with our dessert.

When I thought my host had imbibed a sufficient quantity of wine, I once more renewed my attack. I had tried him before upon that point of vanity which is centered in power, and political consideration, but in vain; I now bethought me of another.

"How few persons there are," said I, "capable of giving even a tolerable dinner—how many capable of admiring one worthy of estimation. I could imagine no greater triumph for the ambitious epicure, than to see at his board the first and most honoured persons of the state, all lost in wonder at the depth, the variety, the purity, the munificence of his taste; all forgetting, in the extorted respect which a gratified palate never fails to produce, the more visionary schemes and projects which usually occupy their thoughts;—to find those whom all England are soliciting for posts and power, become, in their turn, eager and craving aspirants for places—at his table;—to know that all the grand movements

of the ministerial body are planned and agitated over the inspirations of his viands and the excitement of his wine—from a haunch of venison, like the one of which we have partaken to-day, what noble and substantial measures might arise? From a saute de foie, what delicate subtleties of finesse might have their origin? from a ragout a la financiere, what godlike improvements in taxation? Oh, could such a lot be mine, I would envy neither Napoleon for the goodness of his fortune, nor S—for the grandeur of his genius.”

Guloseton laughed. ”The ardour of your enthusiasm blinds your philosophy, my dear Pelham; like Montesquieu, the liveliness of your fancy often makes you advance paradoxes which the consideration of your judgment would afterwards condemn. For instance, you must allow, that if one had all those fine persons at one’s table, one would be forced to talk more, and consequently to eat less; moreover, you would either be excited by your triumph, or you would not, that is indisputable; if you are not excited you have the bore for nothing; if you are excited you spoil your digestion: nothing is so detrimental to the stomach as the feverish inquietude of the passions. All philosophies recommend calm as the to kalon of their code; and you must perceive, that if, in the course you advise, one has occasional opportunities of pride, one also has those of mortification. Mortification! terrible word; how many apoplexies have arisen from its source! No, Pelham, away with ambition; fill your glass, and learn, at last, the secret of real philosophy.”

”Confound the man!” was my mental anathema.—”Long life to the Solomon of sautes,” was my audible exclamation.

”There is something,” resumed Guloseton, ”in your countenance and manner, at once so frank, lively, and ingenuous, that one is not only prepossessed in your favour, but desirous of your friendship. I tell you, therefore, in confidence, that nothing more amuses me than to see the courtship I receive from each party. I laugh at all the unwise and passionate contests in which others are engaged, and I would as soon think of entering into the chivalry of Don Quixote, or attacking the visionary enemies of the Bedlamite, as of taking part in the fury of politicians. At present, looking afar off at their delirium, I can ridicule it; were I to engage in it, I should be hurt by it. I have no wish to become the weeping, instead of the laughing, philosopher. I sleep well now—I have no desire to sleep ill. I eat well—why should I lose my appetite? I am undisturbed and unattacked in the enjoyments best suited to my taste—for what purpose should I be hurried into the abuse of the journalists and the witticisms of pamphleteers? I can ask those whom I like to my house—why should I be forced into asking those whom I do not like? In fine, my good Pelham, why should I sour my temper and shorten my life, put my green old age into flannel and physic, and become, from the happiest of sages, the most miserable of fools? Ambition reminds me of what Bacon says of anger—’It is like rain, it breaks itself upon that

which it falls on.' Pelham, my boy, taste the Chateau Margot."

However hurt my vanity might be in having so ill succeeded in my object, I could not help smiling with satisfaction at my entertainer's principles of wisdom. My diplomatic honour, however, was concerned, and I resolved yet to gain him. If, hereafter, I succeeded, it was by a very different method than I had yet taken; meanwhile, I departed from the house of this modern Apicius with a new insight into the great book of mankind, and a new conclusion from its pages; viz. that no virtue can make so perfect a philosopher as the senses; there is no content like that of the epicure—no active code of morals so difficult to conquer as the inertness of his indolence; he is the only being in the world for whom the present has a suppremer gratification than the future.

My cabriolet soon whirled me to Lady Roseville's door; the first person I saw in the drawing-room, was Ellen. She lifted up her eyes with that familiar sweetness with which they had long since began to welcome me. "Her brother may perish on the gibbet!" was the thought that curdled my blood, and I bowed distantly and passed on.

I met Vincent. He seemed dispirited and dejected. He already saw how ill his party had succeeded; above all, he was enraged at the idea of the person assigned by rumour to fill the place he had intended for himself. This person was a sort of rival to his lordship, a man of quaintness and quotation, with as much learning as Vincent, equal wit, and—but that personage is still in office, and I will say no more, lest he should think I flatter.

To our subject. It has probably been observed that Lord Vincent had indulged less of late in that peculiar strain of learned humour formerly his wont. The fact is, that he had been playing another part; he wished to remove from his character that appearance of literary coxcombry with which he was accused. He knew well how necessary, in the game of politics, it is to appear no less a man of the world than of books; and though he was not averse to display his clerkship and scholastic information, yet he endeavoured to make them seem rather valuable for their weight, than curious for their fashion. How few there are in the world who retain, after a certain age, the character originally natural to them! We all get, as it were, a second skin; the little foibles, propensities, eccentricities, we first indulged through affectation, conglomerate and encrust till the artificiality grows into nature.

"Pelham," said Vincent, with a cold smile, "the day will be your's; the battle is not to the strong—the whigs will triumph. 'Fugere Pudor, verumque, fidesque; in quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolique insidioeque et vis et amor sceleratus habendi.'"

"A pretty modest quotation," said I. "You must allow at least, that the amor sceleratus habendi was also, in some moderate degree, shared by the Pudor and Fides which characterize your party; otherwise, I am at a loss

how to account for the tough struggle against us we have lately had the honour of resisting.”

”Never mind,” replied Vincent, ”I will not refute you,

”’La richesse permet une juste fierte, Mais il faut etre souple avec la pauvreté.’ It is not for us, the defeated, to argue with you the victors. But pray, (continued Vincent, with a sneer which pleased me not), pray, among this windfall of the Hesperian fruit, what nice little apple will fall to your share?”

”My good Vincent, don’t let us anticipate; if any such apple should come into my lap, let it not be that of discord between us.”

”Who talks of discord?” asked Lady Roseville, joining us.

”Lord Vincent,” said I, ”fancies himself the celebrated fruit, on which was written, *detur pulcerrimoe*, to be given to the fairest. Suffer me therefore, to make him a present to your ladyship.”

Vincent muttered something which, as I really liked and esteemed him, I was resolved not to hear; accordingly I turned to another part of the room: there I found Lady Dawton—she was a tall, handsome woman, as proud as a liberal’s wife ought to be. She received me with unusual graciousness, and I sat myself beside her. Three dowagers, and an old beau of the old school, were already sharing the conversation with the haughty countess. I found that the topic was society.

”No,” said the old beau, who was entitled Mr. Clarendon, ”society is very different from what it was in my younger days. You remember, Lady Paulet, those delightful parties at D–House? where shall we ever find any thing like them? Such ease, such company—even the mixture was so piquant, if one chanced to sit next a bourgeois, he was sure to be distinguished for his wit or talent. People were not tolerated, as now, merely for their riches.”

”True,” cried Lady Dawton, ”it is the introduction of low persons, without any single pretension, which spoils the society of the present day!” And the three dowagers sighed amen, to this remark.

”And yet,” said I, ”since I may safely say so here without being suspected of a personality in the shape of a compliment, don’t you think, that without any such mixture, we should be very indifferent company? Do we not find those dinners and soirees the pleasantest where we see a minister next to a punster, a poet to a prince, and a coxcomb like me next to a beauty like Lady Dawton? The more variety there is in the conversation, the more agreeable it becomes.”

”Very just,” answered Mr. Clarendon; ”but it is precisely because I wish for that variety that I dislike a miscellaneous society. If one does not

know the person beside whom one has the happiness of sitting, what possible subject can one broach with any prudence. I put politics aside, because, thanks to party spirit, we rarely meet those we are strongly opposed to; but if we sneer at the methodists, our neighbour may be a saint—if we abuse a new book, he may have written it—if we observe that the tone of the piano-forte is bad, his father may have made it—if we complain of the uncertainty of the banking interest, his uncle may have been gazetted last week. I name no exaggerated instances; on the contrary, I refer these general remarks to particular individuals, whom all of us have probably met. Thus, you see, that a variety of topics is prescribed in a mixed company, because some one or other of them will be certain to offend.”

Perceiving that we listened to him with attention, Mr. Clarendon continued—”Nor is this more than a minor objection to the great mixture prevalent amongst us: a more important one may be found in the universal imitation it produces. The influx of common persons being once permitted, certain sets recede, as it were, from the contamination, and contract into very diminished coteries. Living familiarly solely amongst themselves, however they may be forced into visiting promiscuously, they imbibe certain manners, certain peculiarities in mode and words—even in an accent or a pronunciation, which are confined to themselves; and whatever differs from these little eccentricities, they are apt to condemn as vulgar and suburban. Now, the fastidiousness of these sets making them difficult of intimate access, even to many of their superiors in actual rank, those very superiors, by a natural feeling in human nature, of prizing what is rare, even if it is worthless, are the first to solicit their acquaintance; and, as a sign that they enjoy it, to imitate those peculiarities which are the especial hieroglyphics of this sacred few. The lower grades catch the contagion, and imitate those they imagine most likely to know the proprieties of the mode; and thus manners, unnatural to all, are transmitted second-hand, third-hand, fourth-hand, till they are ultimately filtered into something worse than no manners at all. Hence, you perceive all people timid, stiff, unnatural, and ill at ease; they are dressed up in a garb which does not fit them, to which they have never been accustomed, and are as little at home as the wild Indian in the boots and garments of the more civilized European.”

”And hence,” said I, ”springs that universal vulgarity of idea, as well as manner, which pervades all society—for nothing is so plebeian as imitation.”

”A very evident truism!” said Clarendon—”what I lament most, is the injudicious method certain persons took to change this order of things, and diminish the desagremens of the mixture we speak of. I remember well, when Almack’s was first set up, the intention was to keep away the rich roturiers from a place, the tone of which was also intended to be contrary to their own. For this purpose the patronesses were instituted, the price of admission made extremely low, and all ostentatious refreshments discarded: it was an admirable institution for the interests

of the little oligarchy who ruled it—but it has only increased the general imitation and vulgarity. Perhaps the records of that institution contain things more disgraceful to the aristocracy of England, than the whole history of Europe can furnish. And how could the Monsieur and Madame Jourdain help following the servile and debasing example of Monseigneur le Duc et Pair?”

”How strange it is,” said one of the dowagers, ”that of all the novels on society with which we are annually inundated, there is scarcely one which gives even a tolerable description of it.”

”Not strange,” said Clarendon, with a formal smile, ”if your ladyship will condescend to reflect. Most of the writers upon our little, great world, have seen nothing of it: at most, they have been occasionally admitted into the routs of the B.’s and C.’s, of the second, or rather the third set. A very few are, it is true, gentlemen; but gentlemen, who are not writers, are as bad as writers who are not gentlemen. In one work, which, since it is popular, I will not name, there is a stiffness and stiltedness in the dialogue and descriptions, perfectly ridiculous. The author makes his countesses always talking of their family, and his earls always quoting the peerage. There is as much fuss about state, and dignity, and pride, as if the greatest amongst us were not far too busy with the petty affairs of the world to have time for such lofty vanities. There is only one rule necessary for a clever writer who wishes to delineate the beau monde. It is this: let him consider that ’dukes, and lords, and noble princes,’ eat, drink, talk, move, exactly the same as any other class of civilized people—nay, the very subjects in conversation are, for the most part, the same in all sets—only, perhaps, they are somewhat more familiarly and easily treated than among the lower orders, who fancy rank is distinguished by pomposity, and that state affairs are discussed with the solemnity of a tragedy—that we are always my lording and my ladying each other—that we ridicule commoners, and curl our hair with Debrett’s Peerage.”

We all laughed at this speech, the truth of which we readily acknowledged.

”Nothing,” said Lady Dawton, ”amuses me more, than to see the great distinction novel writers make between the titled and the untitled; they seem to be perfectly unaware, that a commoner, of ancient family and large fortune, is very often of far more real rank and estimation, and even weight, in what they are pleased to term fashion, than many of the members of the Upper House. And what amuses me as much, is the no distinction they make between all people who have titles—Lord A—, the little baron, is exactly the same as Lord Z—, the great marquess, equally haughty and equally important.

”Mais, mon Dieu,” said a little French count, who had just joined us; ”how is it that you can expect to find a description of society entertaining, when the society itself is so dull?—the closer the copy

the more tiresome it must be. Your manner, pour vous amuser, consists in standing on a crowded staircase, and complaining that you are terribly bored. L'on s'accoutume difficilement a une vie qui se passe sur l'escalier."

"It is very true," said Clarendon, "we cannot defend ourselves. We are a very sensible, thinking, brave, sagacious, generous, industrious, noble-minded people; but it must be confessed, that we are terrible bores to ourselves and all the rest of the world. Lady Paulet, if you are going so soon, honour me by accepting my arm."

"You should say your hand," said the Frenchman.

"Pardon me," answered the gallant old beau; "I say, with your brave countryman when he lost his legs in battle, and was asked by a lady, like the one who now leans on me, whether he would not sooner have lost his arms? 'No, Madam,' said he, (and this, Monsieur le Comte, is the answer I give to your rebuke) 'I want my hands to guard my heart.'"

Finding our little knot was now broken up, I went into another part of the room, and joined Vincent, Lady Roseville, Ellen, and one or two other persons who were assembled round a table covered with books and prints. Ellen was sitting on one side of Lady Roseville; there was a vacant chair next her, but I avoided it, and seated myself on the other side of Lady Roseville.

"Pray, Miss Glanville," said Lord Vincent, taking up a thin volume, "do you greatly admire the poems of this lady?"

"What, Mrs. Hemans?" answered Ellen. "I am more enchanted with her poetry than I can express: if that is 'The Forest Sanctuary' which you have taken up, I am sure you will bear me out in my admiration."

Vincent turned over the leaves with the quiet cynicism of manner habitual to him; but his countenance grew animated after he had read two pages. "This is, indeed, beautiful," said he, "really and genuinely beautiful. How singular that such a work should not be more known; I never met with it before. But whose pencil marks are these?"

"Mine, I believe," said Ellen, modestly.

"Well," said Lady Roseville, "I fear we shall never have any popular poet in our time, now that Lord Byron is dead."

"So the booksellers say," replied Vincent; "but I doubt it: there will be always a certain interregnum after the death of a great poet, during which, poetry will be received with distaste, and chiefly for this reason, that nearly all poetry about the same period, will be of the same school as the most popular author. Now the public soon wearies of this

monotony; and no poetry, even equally beautiful with that of the most approved writer, will become popular, unless it has the charm of variety. It must not be perfect in the old school, it must be daring in a new one;—it must effect a through revolution in taste, and build itself a temple out of the ruins of the old worship. All this a great genius may do, if he will take the pains to alter, radically, the style he may have formed already. He must stoop to the apprenticeship before he aspires to the mastery. C'est un metier que de faire un livre comme de faire une pendule."

"I must confess, for my part," said Lord Edward Neville (an author of some celebrity and more merit), "that I was exceedingly weary of those doleful ditties with which we were favoured for so many years. No sooner had Lord Byron declared himself unhappy, than every young gentleman with a pale face and dark hair, used to think himself justified in frowning in the glass and writing Odes to Despair. All persons who could scribble two lines were sure to make them into rhymes of "blight" and "night." Never was there so grand a penchant for the triste."

"It would be interesting enough," observed Vincent, "to trace the origin of this melancholy mania. People are wrong to attribute it to poor Lord Byron—it certainly came from Germany; perhaps Werter was the first hero of that school."

"There seems," said I, "an unaccountable prepossession among all persons, to imagine that whatever seems gloomy must be profound, and whatever is cheerful must be shallow. They have put poor Philosophy into deep mourning, and given her a coffin for a writing-desk, and a skull for an inkstand."

"Oh," cried Vincent, "I remember some lines so applicable to your remark, that I must forthwith interrupt you, in order to introduce them. Madame de Stael said, in one of her works, that melancholy was a source of perfection. Listen now to my author—

"'Une femme nous dit, et nous prouve en effet,
Qu'avant quelques mille ans l'homme sera parfait,
Qu'il devra cet etat a la melancolie.
On sait que la tristesse annonce le genie;
Nous avons deja fait des progres etonnans,
Que de tristes ecrits—que de tristes romans!
Des plus noires horreurs nous sommes idolatres,
Et la melancolie a gagne nos theatres.'"

"What!" cried I, "are you so well acquainted with my favourite book?"

"Your's!" exclaimed Vincent. "Gods, what a sympathy; [La Gastronomie, Poeme, par J. Berchoux.] it has long been my most familiar acquaintance; but—

"Tell us what hath chanced to-day,

That Caesar looks so sad?"

My eye followed Vincent's to ascertain the meaning of this question, and rested upon Glanville, who had that moment entered the room. I might have known that he was expected, by Lady Roseville's abstraction, the restlessness with which she started at times from her seat, and as instantly resumed it; and her fond expecting looks towards the door, every time it shut or opened, which denoted so strongly the absent and dreaming heart of the woman who loves.

Glanville seemed paler than usual, and perhaps even sadder; but he was less distraught and abstracted: no sooner did he see, than he approached me, and extended his hand with great cordiality. His hand, thought I, and I could not bring myself to accept it; I merely addressed him in the common-place salutation. He looked hard and inquisitively at me, and then turned abruptly away. Lady Roseville had risen from her chair—her eyes followed him. He had thrown himself on a settee near the window. She went up to him, and sate herself by his side. I turned—my face burnt—my heart beat—I was now next to Ellen Glanville; she was looking down, apparently employed with some engravings, but I thought her hand (that small, delicate, Titania hand,) trembled.

There was a pause. Vincent was talking with the other occupiers of the table; a woman, at such times, is always the first to speak. "We have not seen you, Mr. Pelham," said Ellen, "since your return to town."

"I have been very ill," I answered, and I felt my voice falter. Ellen looked up anxiously at my face; I could not brook those large, deep, tender eyes, and it now became my turn to occupy myself with the prints.

"You do look pale," she said, in a low voice. I did not trust myself with a further remark—dissimulator as I was to others, I was like a guilty child before the woman I loved. There was another pause—at last Ellen said, "How do you think my brother looks?"

I started; yes, he was her brother, and I was once more myself at that thought. I answered so coldly and almost haughtily, that Ellen coloured, and said, with some dignity, that she should join Lady Roseville. I bowed slightly, and she withdrew to the countess. I seized my hat and departed—but not utterly alone—I had managed to secrete the book which Ellen's hand had marked; through many a bitter day and sleepless night, that book has been my only companion; I have it before me now, and it is open at a page which is yet blistered with the traces of former tears.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

Our mistress is a little given to philosophy:
what disputations shall we have here by and by!
—Gil Blas.

It was now but seldom that I met Ellen, for I went little into general society, and grew every day more engrossed in political affairs. Sometimes, however, when, wearied of myself, and my graver occupations, I yielded to my mother's solicitations, and went to one of the nightly haunts of the goddess we term Pleasure, and the Greeks, Moria, the game of dissipation (to use a Spanish proverb) shuffled us together. It was then that I had the most difficult task of my life to learn and to perform; to check the lip—the eye—the soul—to heap curb on curb, upon the gushings of the heart, which daily and hourly yearned to overflow; and to feel, that while the mighty and restless tides of passion were thus fettered and restrained, all within was a parched and arid wilderness, that wasted itself, for want of very moisture, away. Yet there was something grateful in the sadness with which I watched her form in the dance, or listened to her voice in the song; and I felt soothed, and even happy, when my fancy flattered itself, that her step never now seemed so light, as it was wont to be when in harmony with mine, nor the songs that pleased her most, so gay as those that were formerly her choice.

Distant and unobserved, I loved to feed my eyes upon her pale and downcast cheek; to note the abstraction that came over her at moments, even when her glance seemed brightest, and her lip most fluent; and to know, that while a fearful mystery might for ever forbid the union of our hands, there was an invisible, but electric chain, which connected the sympathies of our hearts.

Ah! why is it, that the noblest of our passions should be also the most selfish?—that while we would make all earthly sacrifice for the one we love, we are perpetually demanding a sacrifice in return; that if we cannot have the rapture of blessing, we find a consolation in the power to afflict; and that we acknowledge, while we reprobate, the maxim of the sage: 'L'on veut faire tout le bonheur, ou, si cela ne se peut ainsi, tout le malheur de ce qu'on aime.'"

The beauty of Ellen was not of that nature, which rests solely upon the freshness of youth, nor even the magic of expression; it was as faultless as it was dazzling; no one could deny its excess or its perfection; her praises came constantly to my ear into whatever society I went. Say what we will of the power of love, it borrows greatly from opinion; pride, above all things, sanctions and strengthens affection. When all voices were united to panegyryze her beauty—when I knew, that the powers of her wit—the charms of her conversation—the accurate judgment, united to the sparkling imagination, were even more remarkable characteristics of her mind, than loveliness of her person, I could not but feel my ambition, as well as my tenderness, excited; I dwelt with a double intensity on my choice, and with a tenfold bitterness on the obstacles which forbade me to indulge it.

Yet there was one circumstance, to which, in spite of all the evidence against Reginald, my mind still fondly and eagerly clung. In searching

the pockets of the unfortunate Tyrrell, the money he had mentioned to me as being in his possession, could not be discovered. Had Glanville been the murderer, at all events he could not have been the robber; it was true that in the death scuffle, which in all probability took place, the money might have fallen from the person of the deceased, either among the long grass which grew rankly and luxuriantly around, or in the sullen and slimy pool, close to which the murder was perpetrated; it was also possible, that Thornton, knowing the deceased had so large a sum about him, and not being aware that the circumstance had been communicated to me or any one else, might not have been able (when he and Dawson first went to the spot,) to resist so great a temptation. However, there was a slight crevice in this fact, for a sunbeam of hope to enter, and I was too sanguine, by habitual temperament and present passion, not to turn towards it from the general darkness of my thoughts.

With Glanville I was often brought into immediate contact. Both united in the same party, and engaged in concerting the same measures, we frequently met in public, and sometimes even alone. However, I was invariably cold and distant, and Glanville confirmed rather than diminished my suspicions, by making no commentary on my behaviour, and imitating it in the indifference of his own. Yet, it was with a painful and aching heart, that I marked, in his emaciated and sunken cheek, the gradual, but certain progress of disease and death; and while all England rung with the renown of the young, but almost unrivalled orator, and both parties united in anticipating the certainty and brilliancy of his success, I felt how improbable it was, that, even if his crime escaped the unceasing vigilance of justice, this living world would long possess any traces of his genius but the remembrance of his name. There was something in his love of letters, his habits of luxury and expence, the energy of his mind—the solitude, the darkness, the hauteur, the reserve, of his manners and life, which reminded me of the German Wallenstein; nor was he altogether without the superstition of that evil, but extraordinary man. It is true, that he was not addicted to the romantic fables of astrology, but he was an earnest, though secret, advocate of the world of spirits. He did not utterly disbelieve the various stories of their return to earth, and their visits to the living; and it would have been astonishing to me, had I been a less diligent observer of human inconsistencies, to mark a mind otherwise so reasoning and strong, in this respect so credulous and weak; and to witness its reception of a belief, not only so adverse to ordinary reflection, but so absolutely contradictory to the philosophy it passionately cultivated, and the principles it obstinately espoused.

One evening, I, Vincent, and Clarendon, were alone at Lady Roseville's, when Reginald and his sister entered. I rose to depart; la belle Contesse would not suffer it; and when I looked at Ellen, and saw her blush at my glance, the weakness of my heart conquered, and I remained.

Our conversation turned partly upon books, and principally on the science *du coeur et du monde*, for Lady Roseville was *un peu philosophe*, as well

as more than un peu litteraire; and her house, like those of the Du Deffands and D'Epainays of the old French regime, was one where serious subjects were cultivated, as well as the lighter ones; where it was the mode to treat no less upon things than to scandalize persons; and where maxims on men and reflections on manners, were as much in their places, as strictures on the Opera and invitations to balls.

All who were now assembled were more or less suited to one another; all were people of the world, and yet occasional students of the closet; but all had a different method of expressing their learning or their observations. Clarendon was dry, formal, shrewd, and possessed of the suspicious philosophy common to men hacknied in the world. Vincent relieved his learning by the quotation, or metaphor, or originality of some sort with which it was expressed. Lady Roseville seldom spoke much, but when she did, it was rather with grace than solidity. She was naturally melancholy and pensive, and her observations partook of the colourings of her mind; but she was also a dame de la cour, accustomed to conceal, and her language was gay and trifling, while the sentiments it clothed were pensive and sad.

Ellen Glanville was an attentive listener, but a diffident speaker. Though her knowledge was even masculine for its variety and extent, she was averse to displaying it; the childish, the lively, the tender, were the outward traits of her character—the flowers were above, but the mine was beneath; one noted the beauty of the former—one seldom dreamt of the value of the latter.

Glanville's favourite method of expressing himself was terse and sententious. He did not love the labour of detail: he conveyed the knowledge of years in a problem. Sometimes he was fanciful, sometimes false; but, generally, dark, melancholy, and bitter.

As for me, I entered more into conversation at Lady Roseville's than I usually do elsewhere; being, according to my favourite philosophy, gay on the serious, and serious on the gay; and, perhaps, this is a juster method of treating the two than would be readily imagined: for things which are usually treated with importance, are, for the most part, deserving of ridicule; and those which we receive as trifles, swell themselves into a consequence we little dreamt of, before they depart.

Vincent took up a volume: it was Shelley's Posthumous Poems. "How fine," said he, "some of these are; but they are fine fragments of an architecture in bad taste: they are imperfect in themselves, and faulty in the school they belonged to; yet, such as they are, the master-hand is evident upon them. They are like the pictures of Paul Veronese—often offending the eye, often irritating the judgment, but redolent of something vast and lofty—their very faults are majestic—this age, perhaps no other will ever do them justice—but the disciples of future schools will make glorious pillage of their remains. The writings of Shelley would furnish matter for a hundred volumes: they are an admirable

museum of ill-arranged curiosities—they are diamonds, awkwardly set; but one of them, in the hands of a skilful jeweller, would be inestimable: and the poet of the future, will serve him as Mercury did the tortoise in his own translation from Homer—make him 'sing sweetly when he's dead!' Their lyres will be made out of his shell."

"If I judge rightly," said Clarendon, "his literary faults were these: he was too learned in his poetry, and too poetical in his learning. Learning is the bane of a poet. Imagine how beautiful Petrarch would be without his platonic conceits: fancy the luxuriant imagination of Cowley, left to run wild among the lofty objects of nature, not the minute peculiarities of art. Even Milton, who made a more graceful and gorgeous use of learning than, perhaps, any other poet, would have been far more popular if he had been more familiar. Poetry is for the multitude—erudition for the few. In proportion as you mix them, erudition will gain in readers, and poetry lose."

"True," said Glanville; "and thus the poetical, among philosophers, are the most popular of their time; and the philosophical among poets, the least popular of theirs."

"Take care," said Vincent, smiling, "that we are not misled by the point of your deduction; the remark is true, but with a certain reservation, viz. that the philosophy which renders a poet less popular, must be the philosophy of learning, not of wisdom. Wherever it consists in the knowledge of the plainer springs of the heart, and not in abstruse inquiry into its metaphysical and hidden subtleties, it necessarily increases the popularity of the poem; because, instead of being limited to the few, it comes home to every one. Thus it is the philosophy of Shakspeare, Byron, Horace, Pope, Moliere, which has put them into every one's hands and hearts—while that of Propertius, even of Lucretius, of Cowley, and Shelley, makes us often throw down the book, because it fatigues us with the scholar. Philosophy, therefore, only sins in poetry, when, in the severe garb of learning, it becomes 'harsh and crabbed,' and not 'musical, as is Apollo's lute.'"

"Alas!" said I, "how much more difficult than of yore, education is become—formerly, it had only one object—to acquire learning; and now, we have not only to acquire it, but to know what to do with it when we have—nay, there are not a few cases where the very perfection of learning will be to appear ignorant."

"Perhaps," said Glanville, "the very perfection of wisdom may consist in retaining actual ignorance. Where was there ever the individual who, after consuming years, life, health, in the pursuit of science, rested satisfied with its success, or rewarded by its triumph? Common sense tells us that the best method of employing life, is to enjoy it. Common sense tells us, also, the ordinary means of this enjoyment; health, competence, and the indulgence, but the moderate indulgence, of our passions. What have these to do with science?"

"I might tell you," replied Vincent, "that I myself have been no idle nor inactive seeker after the hidden treasures of mind; and that, from my own experience, I could speak of pleasure, pride, complacency, in the pursuit, that were no inconsiderable augmenters of my stock of enjoyment: but I have the candour to confess, also, that I have known disappointment, mortification, despondency of mind, and infirmity of body, that did more than balance the account. The fact is, in my opinion, that the individual is a sufferer for his toils, but then the mass is benefited by his success. It is we who reap, in idle gratification, what the husbandman has sown in the bitterness of labour. Genius did not save Milton from poverty and blindness—nor Tasso from the madhouse—nor Galileo from the inquisition; they were the sufferers, but posterity the gainers. The literary empire reverses the political; it is not the many made for one—it is the one made for many; wisdom and genius must have their martyrs as well as religion, and with the same results, viz: *semen ecclesioest sanguis martyrorum*. And this reflection must console us for their misfortunes, for, perhaps, it was sufficient to console them. In the midst of the most affecting passage in the most wonderful work, perhaps, ever produced, for the mixture of universal thought with individual interest—I mean the two last cantos of Childe Harold—the poet warms from himself at his hopes of being remembered

"'In his line
With his land's language.'

"And who can read the noble and heart-speaking apology of Algernon Sidney, without entering into his consolation no less than his misfortunes? Speaking of the law being turned into a snare instead of a protection, and instancing its uncertainty and danger in the times of Richard the Second, he says, 'God only knows what will be the issue of the like practices in these our days; perhaps he will in his mercy speedily visit his afflicted people; I die in the faith that he will do it, though I know not the time or ways.'"

"I love," said Clarendon, "the enthusiasm which places comfort in so noble a source; but, is vanity, think you, a less powerful agent than philanthropy? is it not the desire of shining before men that prompts us to whatever may effect it? and if it can create, can it not also support? I mean, that if you allow that to shine, to eclater, to enjoy praise, is no ordinary incentive to the commencement of great works, the conviction of future success for this desire becomes no inconsiderable reward. Grant, for instance, that this desire produced the 'Paradise Lost,' and you will not deny that it might also support the poet through his misfortunes. Do you think that he thought rather of the pleasure his work should afford to posterity, than of the praises posterity should extend to his work? Had not Cicero left us such frank confessions of himself, how patriotic, how philanthropic we should have esteemed him; now we know both his motive and meed was vanity, may we not extend the knowledge of

human nature which we have gained in this instance by applying it to others? For my part, I should be loth to inquire how great a quantum of vanity mingled with the haughty patriotism of Sidney, or the unconquered spirit of Cato.”

Glanville bowed his head in approval. ”But,” observed I, ”why be so uncharitable to this poor, and persecuted principle, since none of you deny the good and great actions it effects; why stigmatize vanity as a vice, when it creates, or, at least participates in, so many virtues? I wonder the ancients did not erect the choicest of their temples to its worship. Quant a moi, I shall henceforth only speak of it as the primum mobile of whatever we venerate and admire, and shall think it the highest compliment I can pay to a man, to tell him he is eminently vain.”

”I incline to your opinion,” cried Vincent, laughing. ”The reason we dislike vanity in others, is because it is perpetually hurting our own. Of all passions (if for the moment I may call it such) it is the most indiscreet; it is for ever blabbing out its own secrets. If it would but keep its counsel, it would be as graciously received in society, as any other well-dressed and well-bred intruder of quality. Its garrulity makes it despised. But in truth it must be clear, that vanity in itself is neither a vice nor a virtue, any more than this knife, in itself, is dangerous or useful; the person who employs gives it its qualities; thus, for instance, a great mind desires to shine, or is vain, in great actions; a frivolous one, in frivolities: and so on through the varieties of the human intellect. But I cannot agree with Mr Clarendon, that my admiration of Algernon Sidney (Cato I never did admire) would be at all lessened by the discovery, that his resistance to tyranny in a great measure originated in vanity, or that the same vanity consoled him, when he fell a victim to that resistance; for what does it prove but this, that, among the various feelings of his soul, indignation at oppression, (so common to all men)—enthusiasm for liberty, (so predominant in him)—the love of benefiting others—the noble pride of being, in death, consistent with himself; among all these feelings, among a crowd of others equally honourable and pure—there was also one, and perhaps no inconsiderable feeling of desire, that his life and death should be hereafter appreciated justly—*contemptu famoe, contemni virtutem*—contempt of fame, is the contempt of virtue? Never consider that vanity an offence, which limits itself to wishing for the praise of good men for good actions: next to our own esteem, says the best of the Roman philosophers, ’it is a virtue to desire the esteem of others.’”

”By your emphasis on the word esteem,” said Lady Roseville, ”I suppose you attach some peculiar importance to the word?”

”I do,” answered Vincent. ”I use it in contradistinction to admiration. We may covet general admiration for a bad action—(for many bad actions have the clinquant, which passes for real gold)—but one can expect general esteem only for a good one.”

"From this distinction," said Ellen, modestly, "may we not draw an inference, which will greatly help us in our consideration of vanity; may we not deem that vanity, which desires only the esteem of others to be invariably a virtue, and that which only longs for admiration to be frequently a vice?"

"We may admit your inference," said Vincent; "and before I leave this question, I cannot help remarking upon the folly of the superficial, who imagine, by studying human motives, that philosophers wish to depreciate human actions. To direct our admiration to a proper point, is surely not to destroy it; yet how angry inconsiderate enthusiasts are, when we assign real, in the place of exaggerated feelings. Thus the advocates for the doctrine of utility—the most benevolent, because the most indulgent, of all philosophies—are branded with the epithets of selfish and interested; decriers of moral excellence, and disbelievers in generous actions. Vice has no friend like the prejudices which call themselves virtue. *La pretente ordinaire de ceux qui font le malheur des autres est qu'ils veulent leur bien.*"

My eyes were accidentally fixed on Glanville as Vincent ceased; he looked up, and coloured faintly as he met my look; but he did not withdraw his own—keenly and steadily we gazed upon each other, till Ellen, turning round suddenly, remarked the unwonted meaning of our looks, and placed her hand in her brother's, with a sort of fear.

It was late; he rose to withdraw, and passing me, said in a low tone, "A little while, and you shall know all." I made no answer—he left the room with Ellen.

"Lady Roseville has had but a dull evening, I fear, with our stupid saws and antient instances," said Vincent. The eyes of the person he addressed were fixed upon the door; I was standing close by her, and as the words struck her ear, she turned abruptly;—a tear fell upon my hand—she perceived it, and though I would not look upon her face, I saw that her very neck blushed; but she, like me, if she gave way to feeling, had learnt too deep a lesson from the world, not readily to resume her self-command; she answered Vincent railingly, upon his bad compliment to us, and received our adieus with all her customary grace, and more than her customary gaiety.

CHAPTER LXIX.

Ah! Sir, had I but bestowed half the pains in learning a trade, that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day; but, rogue as I am, still I may be your friend, and that, perhaps, when you least expect it.
—Vicar of Wakefield.

What with the anxiety and uncertainty of my political prospects, the continued dissipation in which I lived, and, above all, the unpropitious

state of my belle passion, my health gave way; my appetite forsook me—my sleep failed me—a wrinkle settled itself under my left eye, and my mother declared, that I should have no chance with an heiress: all these circumstances together, were not without their weight. So I set out one morning to Hampton Court, (with a volume of Bishop Berkely, and a bottle of wrinkle water,) for the benefit of the country air.

It is by no means an unpleasant thing to turn one's back upon the great city, in the height of its festivities. Misanthropy is a charming feeling for a short time, and one inhales the country, and animadverts on the town, with the most melancholy satisfaction in the world. I sat myself down at a pretty little cottage, a mile out of the town. From the window of my drawing-room I revelled in the luxurious contemplation of three pigs, one cow, and a straw-yard; and I could get to the Thames in a walk of five minutes, by a short cut through a lime-kiln. Such pleasing opportunities of enjoying the beauties of nature, are not often to be met with: you may be sure, therefore, that I made the most of them. I rose early, walked before breakfast, *pour ma sante*, and came back with a most satisfactory head-ache, *pour mes peines*. I read for just three hours, walked for two more, thought over Abernethy, dyspepsia, and blue pills, till dinner; and absolutely forgot Lord Dawton, ambition, Guloseton, epicurism—aye, all but—of course, reader, you know whom I am about to except—the ladye of my love.

One bright, laughing day, I threw down my book an hour sooner than usual, and sallied out with a lightness of foot and exhilaration of spirit, to which I had long been a stranger. I had just sprung over a stile that led into one of those green shady lanes, which make us feel the old poets who loved, and lived for, Nature, were right in calling our island "the merry England"—when I was startled by a short, quick bark, on one side of the hedge. I turned sharply round; and, seated upon the sward, was a man, apparently of the pedlar profession; a large deal box was lying open before him; a few articles of linen, and female dress, were scattered round, and the man himself appeared earnestly occupied in examining the deeper recesses of his itinerant warehouse. A small black terrier flew towards me with no friendly growl. "Down," said I: "all strangers are not foes, though the English generally think so."

The man hastily looked up; perhaps he was struck with the quaintness of my remonstrance to his canine companion; for, touching his hat, civilly, he said—"The dog, Sir, is very quiet; he only means to give me the alarm by giving it to you; for dogs seem to have no despicable insight into human nature, and know well that the best of us may be taken by surprise."

"You are a moralist," said I, not a little astonished in my turn by such an address from such a person. "I could not have expected to stumble upon a philosopher so easily. Have you any wares in your box likely to suit me? if so, I should like to purchase of so moralizing a vendor?"

"No, Sir," said the seeming pedlar, smiling, and yet at the same time hurrying his goods into his box, and carefully turning the key—"no, Sir, I am only a bearer of other men's goods; my morals are all that I can call my own, and those I will sell you at your own price."

"You are candid, my friend," said I, "and your frankness, alone, would be inestimable in this age of deceit, and country of hypocrisy."

"Ah, Sir!" said my new acquaintance, "I see already that you are one of those persons who look to the dark side of things; for my part, I think the present age the best that ever existed, and our own country the most virtuous in Europe."

"I congratulate you, Mr. Optimist, on your opinions," quoth I, "but your observation leads me to suppose, that you are both an historian and a traveller: am I right?"

"Why," answered the box-bearer, "I have dabbled a little in books, and wandered not a little among men. I am just returned from Germany, and am now going to my friends in London. I am charged with this box of goods; God send me the luck to deliver it safe."

"Amen," said I; "and with that prayer and this trifle, I wish you a good morning."

"Thank you a thousand times, Sir, for both," replied the man—"but do add to your favours by informing me of the right road to the town of—"

"I am going in that direction myself; if you choose to accompany me part of the way, I can ensure your not missing the rest."

"Your honour is too good!" returned he of the box, rising, and slinging his fardel across him—"it is but seldom that a gentleman of your rank will condescend to walk three paces with one of mine. You smile, Sir; perhaps you think I should not class myself among gentlemen; and yet I have as good a right to the name as most of the set. I belong to no trade—I follow no calling: I rove where I list, and rest where I please: in short, I know no occupation but my indolence, and no law but my will. Now, Sir, may I not call myself a gentleman?"

"Of a surety!" quoth I; "you seem to me to hold a middle rank between a half-pay captain and the king of the gipsies."

"You have hit it, Sir," rejoined my companion, with a slight laugh. He was now by my side, and as we walked on, I had leisure more minutely to examine him. He was a middle-sized, and rather athletic man, apparently about the age of thirty-eight. He was attired in a dark blue frock coat, which was neither shabby nor new, but ill made, and much too large and long for its present possessor; beneath this was a faded velvet waistcoat, that had formerly, like the Persian ambassador's tunic,

”blushed with crimson, and blazed with gold;” but which might now have been advantageously exchanged in Monmouth-street for the lawful sum of two shillings and nine-pence; under this was an inner vest of the cashmere shawl pattern, which seemed much too new for the rest of the dress. Though his shirt was of a very unwashed hue, I remarked, with some suspicion, that it was of a very respectable fineness; and a pin, which might be paste, or could be diamond, peeped below a tattered and dingy black kid stock, like a gipsy’s eye beneath her hair.

His trowsers were of a light grey, and Providence, or the tailor, avenged itself upon them, for the prodigal length bestowed upon their ill-sorted companion, the coat; for they were much too tight for the muscular limbs they concealed, and rising far above the ankle, exhibited the whole of a thick Wellington boot, which was the very picture of Italy upon the map.

The face of the man was common-place and ordinary; one sees a hundred such, every day, in Fleet-street or the ’Change; the features were small, irregular, and somewhat flat: yet, when you looked twice upon the countenance, there was something marked and singular in the expression, which fully atoned for the commonness of the features. The right eye turned away from the left, in that watchful squint which seems constructed on the same considerate plan as those Irish guns, made for shooting round a corner; his eye-brows were large and shaggy, and greatly resembled bramble bushes, in which his fox-like eyes had taken refuge. Round these vulpine retreats were a labyrinthean maze of those wrinkles, vulgarly called crow’s-feet;—deep, intricate, and intersected, they seemed for all the world like the web of a chancery suit. Singular enough, the rest of the countenance was perfectly smooth and unindented; even the lines from the nostril to the corners of the mouth, usually so deeply traced in men of his age, were scarcely more apparent than in a boy of eighteen.

His smile was frank—his voice clear and hearty—his address open, and much superior to his apparent rank of life, claiming somewhat of equality, yet conceding a great deal of respect; but, notwithstanding all these certainly favourable points, there was a sly and cunning expression in his perverse and vigilant eye and all the wrinkled demesnes in its vicinity, that made me mistrust even while I liked my companion; perhaps, indeed, he was too frank, too familiar, too degage, to be quite natural. Your honest men soon buy reserve by experience. Rogues are communicative and open, because confidence and openness cost them nothing. To finish the description of my new acquaintance, I should observe, that there was something in his countenance, which struck me as not wholly unfamiliar; it was one of those which we have not, in all human probability, seen before, and yet, which (perhaps from their very commonness) we imagine we have encountered a hundred times.

We walked on briskly, notwithstanding the warmth of the day; in fact, the air was so pure, the grass so green, the laughing noonday so full of the hum, the motion, and the life of creation, that the sensation produced

was rather that of freshness and invigoration, than of languor and heat.

"We have a beautiful country, Sir," said my hero of the box. "It is like walking through a garden, after the more sterile and sullen features of the Continent—a pure mind, Sir, loves the country; for my part, I am always disposed to burst out in thanksgiving to Providence when I behold its works, and, like the vallies in the psalm, I am ready to laugh and sing."

"An enthusiast," said I, "as well as a philosopher!—perhaps (and I believed it likely), I have the honour of addressing a poet also."

"Why, Sir," replied the man, "I have made verses in my life; in short, there is little I have not done, for I was always a lover of variety; but, perhaps, your honour will let me return the suspicion, Are you not a favourite of the muse?"

"I cannot say that I am," said I. "I value myself only on my common sense—the very antipodes to genius, you know, according to the orthodox belief."

"Common sense!" repeated my companion, with a singular and meaning smile, and a twinkle with his left eye. "Common sense. Ah, that is not my forte, Sir. You, I dare say, are one of those gentlemen whom it is very difficult to take in, either passively or actively, by appearance, or in act? For my part, I have been a dupe all my life—a child might cheat me! I am the most unsuspecting person in the world."

"Too candid by half," thought I; "the man is certainly a rascal; but what's that to me? I shall never see him again;" and true to my love of never losing an opportunity of ascertaining individual character, I observed, that I thought such an acquaintance very valuable, especially if he were in trade; it was a pity, therefore, for my sake, that my companion had informed me that he followed no calling.

"Why, Sir," said he, "I am occasionally in employment; my nominal profession is that of a broker. I buy shawls and handkerchiefs of poor countesses, and retail them to rich plebeians. I fit up new married couples with linen, at a more moderate rate than the shops, and procure the bridegroom his present of jewels, at forty per cent. less than the jewellers; nay, I am as friendly to an intrigue as a marriage; and when I cannot sell my jewels, I will my good offices, A gentleman so handsome as your honour, may have an affair upon your hands: if so, you may rely upon my secrecy and zeal. In short, I am an innocent, good-natured fellow, who does harm to no one for nothing, and good to every one for something."

"I admire your code," quoth I, "and whenever I want a mediator between Venus and myself, will employ you. Have you always followed your present idle profession, or were you brought up to any other?"

"I was intended for a silversmith," answered my friend; "but Providence willed it otherwise; they taught me from childhood to repeat the Lord's prayer; Heaven heard me, and delivered me from temptation—there is, indeed, something terribly seducing in the face of a silver spoon!"

"Well," said I, "you are the honestest knave I ever met, and one would trust you with one's purse for the ingenuousness with which you own you would steal it. Pray, think you it is probable that I have ever had the happiness to meet you before? I cannot help fancying so—yet as I have never been in the watch-house, or the Old Bailey, my reason tells me that I must be mistaken."

"Not at all, Sir," returned my worthy; "I remember you well, for I never saw a face like yours that I did not remember. I had the honour of sipping some British liquors, in the same room with yourself one evening; you were then in company with my friend Mr. Gordon."

"Ha!" said I, "I thank ye for the hint; I now remember well, by the same token, that he told me you were the most ingenious gentleman in England; and that you had a happy propensity of mistaking other people's possessions for your own; I congratulate myself upon so desirable an acquaintance." [Note: See Vol. II, p. 127.]

My friend, who was indeed no other than Mr. Job Jonson, smiled with his usual blandness, and made me a low bow of acknowledgment before he resumed:

"No doubt, Sir, Mr. Gordon informed you right. I flatter myself few gentlemen understand better than myself, the art of appropriation; though I say it who should not say it, I deserve the reputation I have acquired. Sir, I have always had ill fortune to struggle against, and have always remedied it by two virtues—perseverance and ingenuity. To give you an idea of my ill fortune, know that I have been taken up twenty-three times, on suspicion; of my perseverance, know that twenty-three times I have been taken up justly; and of my ingenuity, know that I have been twenty-three times let off, because there was not a tittle of legal evidence against me."

"I venerate your talents, Mr. Jonson," replied I, "if by the name of Jonson it pleaseth you to be called, although, like the heathen deities, I presume that you have many other titles, whereof some are more grateful to your ears than others."

"Nay," answered the man of two virtues—"I am never ashamed of my name; indeed, I have never done any thing to disgrace me. I have never indulged in low company, nor profligate debauchery: whatever I have executed by way of profession, has been done in a superior and artistlike manner; not in the rude, bungling way of other adventurers. Moreover, I have always had a taste for polite literature, and went once as apprentice to a

publishing bookseller, for the sole purpose of reading the new works before they came out. In fine, I have never neglected any opportunity of improving my mind; and the worst that can be said against me is, that I have remembered my catechism, and taken all possible pains "to learn and labour truly, to get my living, and do my duty in that state of life, to which it has pleased Providence to call me."

"I have often heard," answered I, "that there is honour among thieves; I am happy to learn from you, that there is also religion: your baptismal sponsors must be proud of so diligent a godson."

"They ought to be, Sir," replied Mr. Jonson, "for I gave them the first specimens of my address; the story is long, but if you ever give me an opportunity, I will relate it."

"Thank you," said I; "meanwhile I must wish you good morning: your road now lies to the right. I return you my best thanks for your condescension, in accompanying so undistinguished an individual as myself."

"Oh, never mention it, your honour," rejoined Mr. Jonson; "I am always too happy to walk with a gentleman of your 'common sense.' Farewell, Sir; may we meet again."

So saying, Mr. Jonson struck into his new road, and we parted. [Note: If any one should think this sketch from nature exaggerated, I refer him to the "Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux."]

I went home, musing on my adventure, and delighted with my adventurer. When I was about three paces from the door of my home, I was accosted, in a most pitiful tone, by a poor old beggar, apparently in the last extreme of misery and disease. Notwithstanding my political economy, I was moved into alms-giving, by a spectacle so wretched. I put my hand into my pocket, my purse was gone; and, on searching the other, lo—my handkerchief, my pocket-book, and a gold bracelet, which had belonged to Madame D'Anville, had vanished too.

One does not keep company with men of two virtues, and receive compliments upon one's common sense for nothing!

The beggar still continued to importune me. "Give him some food and half a crown," said I, to my landlady. Two hours afterwards, she came up to me—"Oh, Sir! my silver tea-pot—that villain, the beggar!"

A light flashed upon me—"Ah, Mr. Job Jonson! Mr. Job Jonson!" cried I, in an indescribable rage; "out of my sight, woman! out of my sight!" I stopped short; my speech failed me. Never tell me that shame is the companion of guilt—the sinful knave is never so ashamed of himself as is the innocent fool who suffers by him.

CHAPTER LXX.

Then must I plunge again into the crowd,
And follow all that peace disdains to seek.
—Byron.

In the quiet of my retreat I remained for eight days—during which time I never looked once at a newspaper—imagine how great was my philosophy! On the ninth, I began to think it high time I should hear from Dawton; and finding that I had eaten two rolls for breakfast, and that my untimely wrinkle began to assume a more mitigated appearance, I bethought me once more of the "Beauties of Babylon."

While I was in this kindly mood towards the great city and its inhabitants, my landlady put two letters in my hand—one was from my mother, the other from Guloeton. I opened the latter first; it ran thus:

"Dear Pelham,

"I was very sorry to hear you had left town—and so unexpectedly too. I obtained your address from Mivart's, and hasten to avail myself of it. Pray come to town immediately, I have received some chevreuil as a present, and long for your opinion; it is too nice to keep: for all things nice were made but to grow bad when nicest; as Moore, I believe, says of flowers, substituting sweet and fleetest, for bad and nicest; so, you see, you must come without loss of time.

"But you, my friend—how can you possibly have been spending your time? I was kept awake all last night, by thinking what you could have for dinner. Fish is out of the question in the country; chickens die of the pip every where but in London; game is out of season; it is impossible to send to Gibblet's for meat; it is equally impossible to get it any where else; and as for the only two natural productions of the country, vegetables and eggs, I need no extraordinary penetration, to be certain, that your cook cannot transmute the latter into an omelette aux huitres, on the former into legumes a la creme.

"Thus, you see, by a series of undeniable demonstrations, you must absolutely be in a state of starvation. At this thought, the tears rush into my eyes: for heaven's sake, for my sake, for your own sake, but above all, for the sake of the chevreuil, hasten to London. I figure you to myself in the last stage of atrophy—airy as a trifle, thin as the ghost of a greyhound.

"I need say no more on the subject. I may rely on your own discretion, to procure me the immediate pleasure of your company. Indeed, were I to dwell longer on your melancholy situation, my feelings would overcome me—*Mais, revenons a nos moutons*—(a most pertinent phrase, by the by—oh! the French excel us in every thing, from the paramount science of cookery, to the little art of conversation.)

"You must tell me your candid, your unbiassed, your deliberate opinion of chevreuil. For my part, I should not wonder at the mythology of the northern heathen nations, which places hunting among the chief enjoyments of their heaven, were chevreuil the object of their chase; but nihil est omni parte beatum, it wants fat, my dear Pelham, it wants fat: nor do I see how to remedy this defect; for were we by art to supply the fat, we should deprive ourselves of the flavour bestowed by nature; and this, my dear Pelham, was always my great argument for liberty. Cooped, chained, and confined in cities, and slavery, all things lose the fresh and generous tastes, which it is the peculiar blessing of freedom and the country to afford.

"Tell me, my friend, what has been the late subject of your reflections? My thoughts have dwelt much, and seriously, on the 'terra incognita,' the undiscovered tracts in the pays culinaire, which the profoundest investigators have left untouched and unexplored in veal. But more of this hereafter;—the lightness of a letter, is ill suited to the depths of philosophical research.

"Lord Dawton sounded me upon my votes yesterday. 'A thousand pities too,' said he, 'that you never speak in the House of Lords.' 'Orator fit,' said I—orators are subject to apoplexy.

"Adieu, my dear friend, for friend you are, if the philosopher was right in defining true friendship to consist in liking and disliking the same things. [Seneca.] You hate parsnips au naturel—so do I; you love pates du foie gras, et moi aussi—nous voila les meilleurs amis du monde.

"Gulo seton."

So much for my friend, thought I—and now for my mother, opening the maternal epistle, which I herewith transcribe:

"My dear Henry,

"Lose no time in coming to town. Every day the ministers are filling up the minor places, and it requires a great stretch of recollection in a politician, to remember the absent. Mr. V—, said yesterday, at a dinner party, where I was present, that Lord Dawton had promised him the Borough of—. Now you know, my dear Henry, that was the very borough he promised to you: you must see further into this; Lord Dawton, is a good sort of man enough, but refused once to fight a duel; therefore, if he has disregarded his honour in one instance, he may do so in another: at all events, you have no time to lose.

"The young Duke of—gives a ball tomorrow evening: Mrs.—pays all the expenses, and I know for a certainty that she will marry him in a week; this as yet is a secret. There will be a great mixture, but the ball will

be worth going to: I have a card for you.

"Lady Huffemall and I think that we shall not patronize the future duchess; but have not yet made up our minds. Lady Roseville, however, speaks of the intended match with great respect, and says that since we admit convenience, as the chief rule in matrimony, she never remembers an instance in which it has been more consulted.

"There are to be several promotions in the peerage. Lord H-'s friends wish to give out that he will have a dukedom; Mais j'en doute. However, he has well deserved it; for he not only gives the best dinners in town, but the best account of them, in the Morning Post, afterwards; which I think is very properly upholding the dignity of our order.

"I hope most earnestly that you do not (in your country retreat) neglect your health; nor, I may add, your mind; and that you take an opportunity every other day of practising waltzing, which you can very well do, with the help of an arm-chair. I would send you down (did I not expect you here so soon) Lord Mount E-'s Musical Reminiscences; not only because it is a very entertaining book; but because I wish you to pay much greater attention to music than you seem inclined to do. T. H—who is never very refined in his bon mots, says, that Lord M. seems to have considered the world a concert, in which the best performer plays first fiddle. It is, indeed, quite delightful to see the veneration our musical friend has for the orchestra and its occupants. I wish to heaven, my dear Henry, he could instil into you a little of his ardour. I am quite mortified at times by your ignorance of tunes and operas: nothing tells better in conversation, than a knowledge of music, as you will one day or other discover.

"God bless you, my dearest Henry. Fully expecting you, I have sent to engage your former rooms at Mivart's; do not let me be disappointed.

"Yours,

"F. P."

I read the above letter twice over, and felt my cheek glow and my heart swell as I passed the passage relative to Lord Dawton and the borough. The new minister had certainly, for some weeks since, been playing a double part with me; it would long ago have been easy to procure me a subordinate situation—still easier to place me in parliament; yet he had contented himself with doubtful promises and idle civilities. What, however, seemed to me most unaccountable was, his motive in breaking or paltering with his engagement; he knew that I had served him and his party better than half his corps; he professed, not only to me, but to society, the highest opinion of my abilities, knowledge, and application. He saw, consequently, how serviceable I could be as a friend; and from the same qualities, joined to the rank of my birth and connections, and the high and resentful temper of my mind, he might readily augur that I

could be equally influential as a foe.

With this reflection, I stilled the beating of my heart, and the fever of my pulse. I crushed the obnoxious letter in my hand, walked thrice up and down my room, paused at the bell-rung it violently-ordered post horses instantly, and in less than an hour was on the road to London.

How different is the human mind, according to the difference of place. In our passions, as in our creeds, we are the mere dependents of geographical situation. Nay, the trifling variation of a single mile will revolutionize the whole tides and torrents of our hearts. The man who is meek, generous, benevolent, and kind in the country, enters the scene of contest, and becomes forthwith fiery or mean, selfish or stern, just as if the virtues were only for solitude, and the vices for the city. I have ill expressed the above reflection; n'importe-so much the better shall I explain my feelings at the time I speak of-for I was then too eager and engrossed to attend to the niceties of words. On my arrival at Mivart's, I scarcely allowed myself time to change my dress before I set out to Lord Dawton. He shall afford me an explanation, I thought, or a recompence, or a revenge. I knocked at the door-the minister was out. "Give him this card," said I, haughtily, to the porter, "and say I shall call to-morrow at three."

I walked to Brookes's-there I met Mr. V-. My acquaintance with him was small, but he was a man of talent, and, what was more to my purpose, of open manners. I went up to him, and we entered into conversation. "Is it true," said I; "that I am to congratulate you upon the certainty of your return for Lord Dawton's borough of-?"

"I believe so," replied V-. "Lord Dawton engaged it to me last week, and Mr. H-, the present member, has accepted the Chiltern Hundreds. You know all our family support Lord Dawton warmly on the present crisis, and my return for this borough was materially insisted upon." Such things are, you see, Mr. Pelham, even in these virtuous days of parliamentary purity."

"True," said I, dissembling my chagrin, "yourself and Dawton have made an admirable exchange. Think you the ministry can be said to be fairly seated?"

"By no means; every thing depends upon the motion of-, brought on next week. Dawton looks to that as to the decisive battle for this session."

Lord Gavelton now joined us, and I sauntered away with the utmost (seeming) indifference. At the top of St. James's-street, Lady Roseville's well known carriage passed me-she stopped for a moment. "We shall meet at the Duke of-'s to-night," said she, "shall we not?"

"If you go-certainly," I replied.

I went home to my solitary apartment, and if I suffered somewhat of the torments of baffled hope and foiled ambition, the pang is not for the spectator. My lighter moments are for the world—my deeper for myself; and, like the Spartan boy, I would keep, even in the pangs of death, a mantle over the teeth and fangs which are fastening upon my breast.

CHAPTER LXXI.

Nocet empta dolore voluptas.
—Ovid.

The FIRST person I saw at the Duke of—'s was Mr. Mivart—he officiated as gentleman usher: the SECOND was my mother—she was, as usual, surrounded by men, "the shades of heroes that have been," remnants of a former day, when the feet of the young and fair Lady Frances were as light as her head, and she might have rivalled in the science de la danse, even the graceful Duchess of B—d. Over the dandies of her own time she still preserved her ancient empire; and it was amusing enough to hear the address of the *ci-devant* jeunes hommes, who continued, through habit, the compliments began thirty years since, through admiration.

My mother was, indeed, what the world calls a very charming, agreeable woman. Few persons were more popular in society; her manners were perfection—her smile enchantment; she lived, moved, breathed, only for the world, and the world was not ungrateful for the constancy of her devotion. Yet, if her letters have given my readers any idea of her character, they will perceive that the very desire of supremacy in ton, gave (God forgive my filial impiety!) a sort of demi-vulgarism to her ideas; for they who live wholly for the opinion of others, always want that self-dignity which alone confers a high cast to the sentiments; and the most really unexceptionable in mode, are frequently the least genuinely patrician in mind.

I joined the maternal party, and Lady Frances soon took an opportunity of whispering, "You are looking very well, and very handsome; I declare you are not unlike me, especially about the eyes. I have just heard that Miss Glanville will be a great heiress, for poor Sir Reginald cannot live much longer. She is here to-night; pray do not lose the opportunity."

My cheek burnt like fire at this speech, and my mother, quietly observing that I had a beautiful colour, and ought therefore immediately to find out Miss Glanville, lest it should vanish by the least delay, turned from me to speak of a public breakfast about shortly to be given. I passed into the dancing-room; there I found Vincent; he was in unusually good spirits.

"Well," said he, with a sneer, "you have not taken your seat yet. I suppose Lord Dawton's representative, whose place you are to supply, is like Theseus, *sedet eternumque sedebit*. A thousand pities you can't come in before next week; we shall then have fiery motions in the Lower House,

as the astrologers say.”

I smiled. ”Ah, mon cher!” said I, ”Sparta hath many a worthier son than me! Meanwhile, how get on the noble Lords Lesborough and Lincoln? ’sure such a pair were never seen, so justly formed to meet by nature!’”

”Pooh!” said Vincent, coarsely, ”they shall get on well enough, before you get in. Look to yourself, and remember that ’Caesar plays the ingrate.’”

Vincent turned away; my eyes were rivetted on the ground; the beautiful Lady—passed by me; ”What, you in a reverie?” said she, laughing; ”our very host will turn thoughtful next!”

”Nay,” said I, ”in your absence would you have me glad? However, if Moore’s mythology be true—Beauty loves Folly the better for borrowing something from Reason; but, come, this is a place not for the grave, but the giddy. Let us join the waltzers.”

”I am engaged.”

”I know it! do you think I would dance with any woman who was not engaged?—there would be no triumph to one’s vanity in that case. Allons, ma belle, you must prefer me to an engagement;” and so saying, I led off my prize.

Her intended partner was Mr. V—; just as we had joined the dancers, he spied us out, and approached with his long, serious, respectful face; the music struck up, and the next moment poor V. was very nearly struck down. Fraught with the most political spite, I whirled up against him; apologized with my blandest smile, and left him wiping his mouth, and rubbing his shoulder, the most forlorn picture of Hope in adversity, that can possibly be conceived.

I soon grew wearied of my partner, and leaving her to fate, rambled into another room. There, seated alone, was Lady Roseville. I placed myself beside her; there was a sort of freemasonry between her and myself; each knew something more of the other than the world did, and we read his or her heart, by other signs than words. I soon saw that she was in no mirthful mood; so much the better—she was the fitter companion for a baffled aspirant like me.

The room we were in was almost deserted, and finding ourselves uninterrupted, the stream of our conversation flowed into sentiment.

”How little,” said Lady Roseville, ”can the crowd know of the individuals who compose it. As the most opposite colours may be blended into one, and so lose their individual hues, and be classed under a single name, so every one here will go home, and speak of the ’gay scene,’ without thinking for a moment how many breaking hearts may have composed it.”

"I have often thought," said I, "how harsh we are in our judgments of others—how often we accuse those persons of being worldly, who merely seem so to the world; who, for instance, that saw you in your brightest moments, would ever suppose that you could make the confession you have just made?"

"I would not make such a confession to many beside yourself," answered Lady Roseville; "nay, you need not thank me. I am some years older than you; I have lived longer in the world; I have seen much of its various characters; and my experience has taught me to penetrate and prize a character like yours. While you seem frivolous to the superficial, I know you to have a mind not only capable of the most solid and important affairs, but habituated by reflection to consider them. You appear effeminate, I know that none are more daring—indolent, none are more actively ambitious—utterly selfish, and I know that no earthly interest could bribe you into meanness or injustice—no, nor even into a venial dereliction of principle. It is from this estimate of your character, that I am frank and open to you. Besides, I recognize something in the careful pride with which you conceal your higher and deeper feelings, resembling the strongest actuating principle in my own mind. All this interests me warmly in your fate; may it be as bright as my presentiments forebode."

I looked into the beautiful face of the speaker as she concluded; perhaps, at that solitary moment, my heart was unfaithful to Ellen; but the infidelity passed away like the breath from the mirror. Coxcomb as I was, I knew well how passionless was the interest expressed for me. Libertine as I had been, I knew, also, how pure may be the friendship of a woman, provided she loves another.

I thanked Lady Roseville, warmly, for her opinion, "Perhaps," I added, "dared I solicit your advice, you would not find me wholly undeserving of your esteem."

"My advice," answered Lady Roseville, "would be, indeed, worse than useless, were it not regulated by a certain knowledge which, perhaps, you do not possess. You seem surprised. Eh bien; listen to me—are you not in no small degree lie with Lord Dawton?—do you not expect something from him worthy of your rank and merit?"

"You do, indeed, surprise me," said I. "However close my connection with Lord Dawton may be, I thought it much more secret than it appears to be. However, I own that I have a right to expect from Lord Dawton, not, perhaps, a recompense of service, but, at least, a fulfilment of promises. In this expectation I begin to believe I shall be deceived."

"You will!" answered Lady Roseville. "Bend your head lower—the walls have ears. You have a friend, an unwearied and earnest friend, with those now in power; directly he heard that Mr. V—was promised the borough,

which he knew had been long engaged to you, he went straight to Lord Dawton. He found him with Lord Clandonald; however, he opened the matter immediately. He spoke with great warmth of your claims—he did more—he incorporated them with his own, which are of no mean order, and asked no other recompense for himself than the fulfilment of a long made promise to you. Dawton was greatly confused, and Lord Clandonald replied, for him, that certainly there was no denying your talents—that they were very great—that you had, unquestionably, been of much service to their party, and that, consequently, it must be politic to attach you to their interests; but that there was a certain *fierte*, and assumption, and he might say (mark the climax) independence about you, which could not but be highly displeasing in one so young; moreover, that it was impossible to trust to you—that you pledged yourself to no party—that you spoke only of conditions and terms—that you treated the proposal of placing you in parliament rather as a matter of favour on your part, than on Lord Dawton’s—and, in a word, that there was no relying upon you. Lord Dawton then took courage, and chimed in with a long panegyric on V—, and a long account of what was due to him, and to the zeal of his family, adding, that in a crisis like this, it was absolutely necessary to engage a certain, rather than a doubtful and undecided support; that, for his part, if he placed you in parliament, he thought you quite as likely to prove a foe as a friend; that, owing to the marriage of your uncle, your expectations were by no means commensurate with your presumption, and that the same talents which made your claims to favour, as an ally, created also no small danger in placing you in any situation where you could become hurtful as an enemy. All this, and much more to the same purpose, was strenuously insisted upon by the worthy pair; and your friend was obliged to take his leave, perfectly convinced that, unless you assumed a more complaisant bearing, or gave a more decided pledge, to the new minister, it was hopeless for you to expect any thing from him, at least, for the present. The fact is, he stands too much in awe of you, and would rather keep you out of the House than contribute an iota towards obtaining you a seat. Upon all this, you may rely as certain.”

”I thank you from my heart,” said I, warmly, seizing and pressing Lady Roseville’s hand. ”You tell me what I have long suspected; I am now upon my guard, and they shall find that I can offend as well as defend. But it is no time for me to boast; oblige me by informing me of the name of my unknown friend; I little thought there was a being in the world who would stir three steps for Henry Pelham.”

”That friend,” replied Lady Roseville, with a faltering voice and a glowing cheek, ”was Sir Reginald Glanville.”

”What!” cried I, ”repeat the name to me again, or—” I paused, and recovered myself. ”Sir Reginald Glanville,” I resumed haughtily, ”is too gracious to enter into my affairs. I must be strangely altered if I need the officious zeal of any intermeddler to redress my wrongs.”

”Nay, Mr. Pelham,” said the countess, hastily, ”you do Glanville—you do

yourself injustice. For him, there never passes a day in which he does not mention you with the highest encomiums and the most affectionate regard. He says, of late, that you have altered towards him, but that he does not blame you—he never mentions the cause; if I am not intruding, suffer me to inquire into it; perhaps (oh! how happy it would make me) I may be able to reconcile you; if you knew—if you could but guess half of the noble and lofty character of Reginald Glanville, you would suffer no petty difference to divide you.”

”It is no petty difference,” said I, rising, ”nor am I permitted to mention the cause. Meanwhile, may God bless you, dearest Lady Roseville, and preserve that kind and generous heart from worse pangs than those of disappointed ambition, or betrayed trust.”

Lady Roseville looked down—her bosom heaved violently; she felt the meaning of my words. I left her and St. J—’s Square. I returned home to court sleep as vainly as the monarch in the tragedy, and exclaim as idly as the peasant in the farce, ”Oh! that there were no House of Commons in the world!”

CHAPTER LXXII.

Good Mr. Knave, give me my due,
I like a tart as well as you;
But I would starve on good roast beef,
Ere I would look so like a thief.
—The Queen of Hearts.

Nune vino pellite curas;
Cras ingens iterabimus aequor.
Horace.

The next morning I received a note from Guloseton, asking me to dine with him at eight, to meet his chevreuil. I sent back an answer in the affirmative, and then gave myself wholly up to considering what was the best line of conduct to pursue with regard to Lord Dawton. ”It would be pleasant enough,” said Anger, ”to go to him, to ask him boldly for the borough so often pledged to you, and in case of his refusal, to confront, to taunt, and to break with him.” ”True,” replied that more homely and less stage effect arguer, which we term Knowledge of the world; ”but this would be neither useful nor dignified—common sense never quarrels with any one. Call upon Lord Dawton, if you will—ask him for his promise, with your second best smile, and receive his excuses with your very best. Then do as you please—break with him or not—you can do either with grace and quiet; never make a scene about any thing—reproach and anger always do make a scene.” ”Very true,” said I, in answer to the latter suggestion—and having made up my mind, I repaired a quarter before three to Lord Dawton’s House.

”Ah, Pelham,” said the little minister; ”delighted to see you look so

much the better from the country air; you will stay in town now, I hope, till the end of the season?"

"Certainly," my lord, "or, at all events, till the prorogation of parliament; how, indeed, could I do otherwise with your lordship's kind promise before my eyes. Mr.—, the member for your borough of—, has, I believe, accepted the Chiltern Hundreds? I feel truly obliged to you for so promptly fulfilling your promise to me."

"Hem! my dear Pelham, hem!" murmured Lord Dawton. I bent forward as if in the attitude of listening respect, but really the more clearly to perceive, and closely to enjoy his confusion. He looked up and caught my eye, and not being too much gratified with its involuntary expression, he grew more and more embarrassed; at last he summoned courage.

"Why, my dear Sir," he said, "I did, it is true, promise you that borough; but individual friendship must frequently be sacrificed to the public good. All our party insisted upon returning Mr. V—in place of the late member: what could I do? I mentioned your claims, they all, to a man, enlarged upon your rival's: to be sure, he is an older person, and his family is very powerful in the Lower House; in short, you perceive, my dear Pelham—that is, you are aware—you can feel for the delicacy of my situation—one could not appear too eager for one's own friends at first, and I was forced to concede."

Lord Dawton was now fairly delivered of his speech; it was, therefore, only left me to congratulate him on his offspring.

"My dear lord," I began, "you could not have pleased me better: Mr. V. is a most estimable man, and I would not, for the world, have had you suspected of placing such a trifle as your own honour—that is to say—your promise to me, before the commands—that is to say, the interests—of your party; but no more of this now. Was your lordship at the Duke of—'s last night?"

Dawton seized joyfully the opportunity of changing the conversation, and we talked and laughed on indifferent matters till I thought it time to withdraw; this I did with the most cordial appearance of regard and esteem; nor was it till I had fairly set my foot out of his door, that I suffered myself to indulge the "black bile," at my breast. I turned towards the Green Park, and was walking slowly along the principal mall with my hands behind me, and my eyes on the ground, when I heard my own name uttered. On looking back, I perceived Lord Vincent on horseback; he stopped, and conversed with me. In the humour I was in with Lord Dawton, I received him with greater warmth than I had done of late; and he also, being in a social mood, seemed so well satisfied with our rencontre, and my behaviour, that he dismounted to walk with me.

"This park is a very different scene now," said Vincent, "from what it

was in the times of 'The Merry Monarch;' yet it is still, a spot much more to my taste, than its more gaudy and less classical brother of Hyde. There is something pleasingly melancholy, in walking over places haunted by history; for all of us live more in the past than the present."

"And how exactly alike in all ages," said I, "men have been. On the very spot we are on now, how many have been actuated by the same feelings that now actuate us—how many have made perhaps exactly the same remark just made by you. It is this universal identity, which forms our most powerful link with those that have been—there is a satisfaction in seeing how closely we resemble the Agamemnons of gone times, and we take care to lose none of it, by thinking how closely we also resemble the sordidi Thersites."

"True," replied Vincent, "if wise and great men did but know, how little difference there is between them and the foolish or the mean, they would not take such pains to be wise and great; to use the Chinese proverb, 'they sacrifice a picture to get possession of its ashes.' It is almost a pity that the desire to progress should be so necessary to our being; ambition is often a fine, but never a felicitous feeling. Cyprian, in a beautiful passage on envy, calls it 'the moth of the soul:' but perhaps, even that passion is less gnawing, less a 'tabes pectoris,' than ambition. You are surprised at my heat—the fact is, I am enraged at thinking how much we forfeit, when we look up only, and trample unconsciously, in the blindness of our aspiration, on the affections which strew our path. Now, you and I have been utterly estranged from each other of late. Why?—for any dispute—any disagreement in private—any discovery of meanness—treachery, unworthiness in the other? No! merely because I dine with Lord Lincoln, and you with Lord Dawton, voila tout. Well say the Jesuits, that they who live for the public, must renounce all private ties; the very day we become citizens, we are to cease to be men. Our privacy is like Leo Decimus; [Note: See Jovius.] directly it dies, all peace, comfort, joy, and sociality are to die with it; and an iron age, 'barbara vis et dira malorum omnium incommoda' [Note: See Jovius.] to succeed."

"It is a pity, that we struck into different paths," said I; "no pleasure would have been to me greater, than making our political interests the same; but—" "Perhaps there is no but," interrupted Vincent; "perhaps, like the two knights in the hacknied story, we are only giving different names to the same shield, because we view it on different sides; let us also imitate them in their reconciliation, as well as their quarrel, and since we have already run our lances against each other, be convinced of our error, and make up our difference."

I was silent; indeed, I did not like to trust myself to speak. Vincent continued:

"I know," said he, "and it is in vain for you to conceal it, that you have been ill-used by Dawton. Mr. V. is my first cousin; he came to me

the day after the borough was given to him, and told me all that Clandonald and Dawton had said to him at the time. Believe me, they did not spare you;—the former, you have grievously offended; you know that he has quarrelled irremediably with his son Dartmore, and he insists that you are the friend and abettor of that ingenuous youth, in all his debaucheries and extravagance—*tu illum corrumpi sinis*. I tell you this without hesitation, for I know you are less vain than ambitious, and I do not care about hurting you in the one point, if I advance you in the other. As for me, I own to you candidly and frankly, that there is no pains I would spare to secure you to our party. Join us, and you shall, as I have often said, be on the parliamentary benches of our corps, without a moment of unnecessary delay. More I cannot promise you, because I cannot promise more to myself; but from that instant your fortune, if I augur aught aright from your ability, will be in your own hands. You shake your head—surely you must see, that there is not a difference between two vehemently opposite parties to be reconciled—*aut numen aut Nebuchadrezar*. There is but a verbal disagreement between us, and we must own the wisdom of the sentence recorded in Aulus Gellius, that 'he is but a madman, who splits the weight of things upon the hair-breadths of words.' You laugh at the quaintness of the quotation; quaint proverbs are often the truest."

If my reader should think lightly of me, when I own that I felt wavering and irresolute at the end of this speech, let him for a moment place himself in my situation—let him feel indignant at the treachery, the injustice, the ingratitude of one man; and, at the very height of his resentment, let him be soothed, flattered, courted, by the offered friendship and favour of another. Let him personally despise the former, and esteem the latter; and let him, above all, be convinced as well as persuaded of the truth of Vincent's remark, *viz.* that no sacrifice of principle, nor of measures, was required—nothing but an alliance against men, not measures. And who were those men? bound to me by a single tie—meriting from my gratitude a single consideration? No! the men, above all others, who had offered me the greatest affront, and deserved from me the smallest esteem.

But, however human feelings might induce me to waver, I felt that it was not by them only I was to decide. I am not a man whose vices or virtues are regulated by the impulse and passion of the moment; if I am quick to act, I am habitually slow to deliberate. I turned to Vincent, and pressed his hand: "I dare not trust myself to answer you now," said I: "give me till to-morrow; I shall then have both considered and determined."

I did not wait for his reply. I sprung from him, turned down the passage which leads to Pall Mall, and hastened home once more to commune with my own heart, and—not to be still.

In these confessions I have made no scruple of owning my errors and my foibles; all that could occasion mirth, or benefit to the reader were his own. I have kept a veil over the darker and stormier emotions of my soul;

all that could neither amuse nor instruct him, are mine!

Hours passed on—it became time to dress—I rung for Bedos—dressed with my usual elaborateness of pains—great emotions interfere little with the mechanical operations of life—and drove to Guloseton's.

He was unusually entertaining; the dinner too was unusually good; but, thinking that I was sufficiently intimate with my host not to be obliged to belie my feelings, I remained distrait, absent, and dull.

"What is the matter with you, my friend?" said the good natured epicure; "you have neither applauded my jokes, nor tasted my escalopes; and your behaviour has trifled alike with my chevreuil, and my feelings." The proverb is right, in saying "Grief is communicative." I confess that I was eager to unbosom myself to one upon whose confidence I could depend. Guloseton heard me with great attention and interest—"Little," said he, kindly, "little as I care for these matters myself, I can feel for those who do: I wish I could serve you better than by advice. However, you cannot, I imagine, hesitate to accept Vincent's offer. What matters it whether you sit on one bench or on another, so that you do not sit in a thorough draught—or dine at Lord Lincoln's, or Lord Dawton's, so long as the cooks are equally good? As for Dawton, I always thought him a shuffling, mean fellow, who buys his wines at the second price, and sells his offices at the first. Come, my dear fellow, let us drink to his confusion."

So saying, Guloseton filled my glass to the brim. He had sympathized with me—I thought it, therefore, my duty to sympathize with him; nor did we part till the eyes of the bon vivant saw more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in the philosophy of the sober.