

THE DISOWNED - VOLUME 3.

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON*

CHAPTER XXI.

Mrs. Trinket. What d'ye buy, what d'ye lack, gentlemen? Gloves, ribbons, and essences,—ribbons, gloves, and essences.
ETHEREGE.

"And so, my love," said Mr. Copperas, one morning at breakfast, to his wife, his right leg being turned over his left, and his dexter hand conveying to his mouth a huge morsel of buttered cake,—and, so my love, they say that the old fool is going to leave the jackanapes all his fortune?"

"They do say so, Mr. C.; for my part I am quite out of patience with the art of the young man; I dare say he is no better than he should be; he always had a sharp look, and for aught I know there may be more in that robbery than you or I dreamed of, Mr. Copperas. It was a pity," continued Mrs. Copperas, upbraiding her lord with true matrimonial tenderness and justice, for the consequences of his having acted from her advice,—it was a pity, Mr. C., that you should have refused to lend him the pistols to go to the old fellow's assistance, for then who knows but—"

"I might have converted them into pocket pistols," interrupted Mr. C., "and not have overshot the mark, my dear—ha, ha, ha!"

"Lord, Mr. Copperas, you are always making a joke of everything."

"No, my dear, for once I am making a joke of nothing."

"Well, I declare it's shameful," cried Mrs. Copperas, still following up her own indignant meditations, "and after taking such notice of Adolphus, too, and all!"

"Notice, my dear! mere words," returned Mr. Copperas, "mere words, like ventilators, which make a great deal of air, but never raise the wind; but don't put yourself in a stew, my love, for the doctors say

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that copperas in a stew is poison!"

At this moment Mr. de Warens, throwing open the door, announced Mr. Brown; that gentleman entered, with a sedate but cheerful air. "Well, Mrs. Copperas, your servant; any table-linen wanted? Mr. Copperas, how do you do? I can give you a hint about the stocks. Master Copperas, you are looking bravely; don't you think he wants some new pinbefores, ma'am? But Mr. Clarence Linden, where is he? Not up yet, I dare say. Ah, the present generation is a generation of sluggards, as his worthy aunt, Mrs. Minden, used to say."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Copperas, with a disdainful toss of the head, "I know nothing about the young man. He has left us; a very mysterious piece of business indeed, Mr. Brown; and now I think of it, I can't help saying that we were by no means pleased with your introduction: and, by the by, the chairs you bought for us at the sale were a mere take-in, so slight that Mr. Walruss broke two of them by only sitting down."

"Indeed, ma'am?" said Mr. Brown, with expostulating gravity; "but then Mr. Walruss is so very corpulent. But the young gentleman, what of him?" continued the broker, artfully turning from the point in dispute.

"Lord, Mr. Brown, don't ask me: it was the unluckiest step we ever made to admit him into the bosom of our family; quite a viper, I assure you; absolutely robbed poor Adolphus."

"Lord help us!" said Mr. Brown, with a look which "cast a browner horror" o'er the room, "who would have thought it? and such a pretty young man!"

"Well," said Mr. Copperas, who, occupied in finishing the buttered cake, had hitherto kept silence, "I must be off. Tom—I mean de Warens—have you stopped the coach?"

"Yees, sir."

And what coach is it?"

"It be the Swallow, sir."

"Oh, very well. And now, Mr. Brown, having swallowed in the roll, I will e'en roll in the Swallow—Ha, ha, ha!—At any rate," thought Mr. Copperas, as he descended the stairs, "he has not heard that before."

"Ha, ha!" gravely chuckled Mr. Brown, "what a very facetious, lively gentleman Mr. Copperas is. But touching this ungrateful young man, Mr. Linden, ma'am?"

"Oh, don't tease me, Mr. Brown, I must see after my domestics: ask Mr. Talbot, the old miser in the next house, the havarr, as the French say."

"Well, now," said Mr. Brown, following the good lady down stairs, "how distressing for me! and to say that he was Mrs. Minden's nephew, too!"

But Mr. Brown's curiosity was not so easily satisfied, and finding Mr. de Warens leaning over the "front" gate, and "pursuing with wistful eyes" the departing "Swallow," he stopped, and, accosting him, soon possessed himself of the facts that "old Talbot had been robbed and murdered, but that Mr. Linden had brought him to life again; and that old Talbot had given him a hundred thousand pounds, and adopted him as his son; and that how Mr. Linden was going to be sent to foreign parts, as an ambassador, or governor, or great person; and that how meester and meeses were quite 'cut up' about it."

All these particulars having been duly deposited in the mind of Mr. Brown, they produced an immediate desire to call upon the young gentleman, who, to say nothing of his being so very nearly related to his old customer, Mrs. Minden, was always so very great a favourite with him, Mr. Brown.

Accordingly, as Clarence was musing over his approaching departure, which was now very shortly to take place, he was somewhat startled by the apparition of Mr. Brown—"Charming day, sir,—charming day," said the friend of Mrs. Minden,—"just called in to congratulate you. I have a few articles, sir, to present you with,—quite rarities, I assure you,—quite presents, I may say. I picked them up at a sale of the late Lady Waddilove's most valuable effects. They are just the things, sir, for a gentleman going on a foreign mission. A most curious ivory chest, with an Indian padlock, to hold confidential letters,—belonged formerly, sir, to the Great Mogul; and a beautiful diamond snuff-box, sir, with a picture of Louis XIV. on it, prodigiously fine, and will look so loyal too: and, sir, if you have any old aunts in the country, to send a farewell present to, I have some charming fine cambric, a superb Dresden tea set, and a lovely little 'ape,' stuffed by the late Lady W. herself."

"My good sir," began Clarence.

"Oh, no thanks, sir,—none at all,—too happy to serve a relation of Mrs. Minden,—always proud to keep up family connections. You will be at home to-morrow, sir, at eleven; I will look in; your most humble servant, Mr. Linden." And almost upsetting Talbot, who had just entered, Mr. Brown bowed himself out.

CHAPTER XXII.

He talked with open heart and tongue,
Affectionate and true;
A pair of friends, though I was young
And Matthew seventy-two.—WORDSWORTH.

Meanwhile the young artist proceeded rapidly with his picture. Devoured by his enthusiasm, and utterly engrossed by the sanguine anticipation of a fame which appeared to him already won, he allowed himself no momentary interval of relaxation; his food was eaten by starts, and without stirring from his easel; his sleep was brief and broken by feverish dreams; he no longer roved with Clarence, when the evening threw her shade over his labours; all air and exercise he utterly relinquished; shut up in his narrow chamber, he passed the hours in a fervid and passionate self-commune, which, even in suspense from his work, riveted his thoughts the closer to its object. All companionship, all intrusion, he bore with irritability and impatience. Even Clarence found himself excluded from the presence of his friend; even his nearest relation, who doted on the very ground which he hallowed with his footstep, was banished from the haunted sanctuary of the painter; from the most placid of human beings, Warner seemed to have grown the most morose.

Want of rest, abstinence from food, the impatience of the strained spirit and jaded nerves, all contributed to waste the health while they excited the genius of the artist. A crimson spot, never before seen there, burned in the centre of his pale cheek; his eye glowed with a brilliant but unnatural fire; his features grew sharp and attenuated; his bones worked from his whitening and transparent skin; and the soul and frame, turned from their proper and kindly union, seemed contesting, with fierce struggles, which should obtain the mastery and the triumph.

But neither his new prospects nor the coldness of his friend diverted the warm heart of Clarence from meditating how he could most effectually serve the artist before he departed from the country. It was a peculiar object of desire to Warner that the most celebrated painter of the day, who was on terms of intimacy with Talbot, and who with the benevolence of real superiority was known to take a keen interest in the success of more youthful and inexperienced genius,—it was a peculiar object of desire to Warner, that Sir Joshua Reynolds should see his picture before it was completed; and Clarence, aware of this wish, easily obtained from Talbot a promise that it should be effected. That was the least service of his zeal touched by the earnestness of Linden's friendship, anxious to oblige in any way his preserver, and well pleased himself to be the patron of merit, Talbot readily engaged to obtain for Warner whatever the attention and favour

of high rank or literary distinction could bestow. "As for his picture," said Talbot (when, the evening before Clarence's departure, the latter was renewing the subject), "I shall myself become the purchaser, and at a price which will enable our friend to afford leisure and study for the completion of his next attempt; but even at the risk of offending your friendship, and disappointing your expectations, I will frankly tell you that I think Warner overrates, perhaps not his talents, but his powers; not his ability for doing something great hereafter, but his capacity of doing it at present. In the pride of his heart, he has shown me many of his designs, and I am somewhat of a judge: they want experience, cultivation, taste, and, above all, a deeper study of the Italian masters. They all have the defects of a feverish colouring, an ambitious desire of effect, a wavering and imperfect outline, an ostentatious and unnatural strength of light and shadow; they show, it is true, a genius of no ordinary stamp, but one ill regulated, inexperienced, and utterly left to its own suggestions for a model. However, I am glad he wishes for the opinion of one necessarily the best judge: let him bring the picture here by Thursday; on that day my friend has promised to visit me; and now let us talk of you and your departure."

The intercourse of men of different ages is essentially unequal: it must always partake more or less of advice on one side and deference on the other; and although the easy and unpedantic turn of Talbot's conversation made his remarks rather entertaining than obviously admonitory, yet they were necessarily tinged by his experience, and regulated by his interest in the fortunes of his young friend.

"My dearest Clarence," said he, affectionately, "we are about to bid each other a long farewell. I will not damp your hopes and anticipations by insisting on the little chance there is that you should ever see me again. You are about to enter upon the great world, and have within you the desire and power of success; let me flatter myself that you can profit by my experience. Among the 'Colloquia' of Erasmus, there is a very entertaining dialogue between Apicius and a man who, desirous of giving a feast to a very large and miscellaneous party, comes to consult the epicure what will be the best means to give satisfaction to all. Now you shall be this Spudaeus (so I think he is called), and I will be Apicius; for the world, after all, is nothing more than a great feast of different strangers, with different tastes and of different ages, and we must learn to adapt ourselves to their minds, and our temptations to their passions, if we wish to fascinate or even to content them. Let me then call your attention to the hints and maxims which I have in this paper amused myself with drawing up for your instruction. Write to me from time to time, and I will, in replying to your letters, give you the best advice in my power. For the rest, my dear boy, I have only to request that you will be frank, and I, in my turn, will promise that when I cannot assist, I will never reprove. And now, Clarence, as the hour is late and you leave us early tomorrow, I will no longer

detain you. God bless you and keep you. You are going to enjoy life,—I to anticipate death; so that you can find in me little congenial to yourself; but as the good Pope said to our Protestant countryman, 'Whatever the difference between us, I know well that an old man's blessing is never without its value.'"

As Clarence clasped his benefactor's hand, the tears gushed from his eyes. Is there one being, stubborn as the rock to misfortune, whom kindness does not affect? For my part, kindness seems to me to come with a double grace and tenderness from the old; it seems in them the hoarded and long purified benevolence of years; as if it had survived and conquered the baseness and selfishness of the ordeal it had passed; as if the winds, which had broken the form, had swept in vain across the heart, and the frosts which had chilled the blood and whitened the thin locks had possessed no power over the warm tide of the affections. It is the triumph of nature over art; it is the voice of the angel which is yet within us. Nor is this all: the tenderness of age is twice blessed,—blessed in its trophies over the obduracy of encrusting and withering years, blessed because it is tinged with the sanctity of the grave; because it tells us that the heart will blossom even upon the precincts of the tomb, and flatters us with the inviolacy and immortality of love.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Cannot I create,
Cannot I form, cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe?—KEATS.

The next morning Clarence, in his way out of town, directed his carriage (the last and not the least acceptable present from Talbot) to stop at Warner's door. Although it was scarcely sunrise, the aged grandmother of the artist was stirring, and opened the door to the early visitor. Clarence passed her with a brief salutation, hurried up the narrow stairs, and found himself in the artist's chamber. The windows were closed, and the air of the room was confined and hot. A few books, chiefly of history and poetry, stood in confused disorder upon some shelves opposite the window. Upon a table beneath them lay a flute, once the cherished recreation of the young painter, but now long neglected and disused; and, placed exactly opposite to Warner, so that his eyes might open upon his work, was the high-prized and already more than half-finished picture.

Clarence bent over the bed; the cheek of the artist rested upon his arm in an attitude unconsciously picturesque; the other arm was tossed over the coverlet, and Clarence was shocked to see how emaciated it

had become. But ever and anon the lips of the sleeper moved restlessly, and words, low and inarticulate, broke out. Sometimes he started abruptly, and a bright but evanescent flush darted over his faded and hollow cheek; and once the fingers of the thin hand which lay upon the bed expanded and suddenly closed in a firm and almost painful grasp; it was then that for the first time the words of the artist became distinct.

"Ay, ay," he said, "I have thee, I have thee at last. Long, very long thou hast burnt up my heart like fuel, and mocked me, and laughed at my idle efforts; but now, now, I have thee. Fame, Honour, Immortality, whatever thou art called, I have thee, and thou canst not escape; but it is almost too late!" And, as if wrung by some sudden pain, the sleeper turned heavily round, groaned audibly, and awoke.

"My friend," said Clarence, soothingly, and taking his hand, "I have come to bid you farewell. I am just setting off for the Continent, but I could not leave England without once more seeing you. I have good news, too, for you." And Clarence proceeded to repeat Talbot's wish that Warner should bring the picture to his house on the following Thursday, that Sir Joshua might inspect it. He added also, in terms the flattery of which his friendship could not resist exaggerating, Talbot's desire to become the purchaser of the picture.

"Yes," said the artist, as his eye glanced delightedly over his labour; "yes, I believe when it is once seen there will be many candidates!"

"No doubt," answered Clarence; "and for that reason you cannot blame Talbot for wishing to forestall all other competitors for the prize;" and then, continuing the encouraging nature of the conversation, Clarence enlarged upon the new hopes of his friend, besought him to take time, to spare his health, and not to injure both himself and his performance by over-anxiety and hurry. Clarence concluded by retailing Talbot's assurance that in all cases and circumstances he (Talbot) considered himself pledged to be Warner's supporter and friend.

With something of impatience, mingled with pleasure, the painter listened to all these details; nor was it to Linden's zeal nor to Talbot's generosity, but rather to the excess of his own merit, that he secretly attributed the brightening prospect offered him.

The indifference which Warner, though of a disposition naturally kind, evinced at parting with a friend who had always taken so strong an interest in his behalf, and whose tears at that moment contrasted forcibly enough with the apathetic coldness of his own farewell, was a remarkable instance how acute vividness on a single point will deaden feeling on all others. Occupied solely and burningly with one intense thought, which was to him love, friendship, health, peace, wealth,

Warner could not excite feelings, languid and exhausted with many and fiery conflicts, to objects of minor interest, and perhaps he inwardly rejoiced that his musings and his study would henceforth be sacred even from friendship.

Deeply affected, for his nature was exceedingly unselfish, generous, and susceptible, Clarence tore himself away, placed in the grandmother's hand a considerable portion of the sum he had received from Talbot, hurried into his carriage, and found himself on the high road to fortune, pleasure, distinction, and the Continent.

But while Clarence, despite of every advantage before him, hastened to a court of dissipation and pleasure, with feelings in which regretful affection for those he had left darkened his worldly hopes and mingled with the sanguine anticipations of youth, Warner, poor, low-born, wasted with sickness, destitute of friends, shut out by his temperament from the pleasures of his age, burned with hopes far less alloyed than those of Clarence, and found in them, for the sacrifice of all else, not only a recompense, but a triumph.

Thursday came. Warner had made one request to Talbot, which had with difficulty been granted: it was that he himself might unseen be the auditor of the great painter's criticisms, and that Sir Joshua should be perfectly unaware of his presence. It had been granted with difficulty, because Talbot wished to spare Warner the pain of hearing remarks which he felt would be likely to fall far short of the sanguine self-elation of the young artist; and it had been granted because Talbot imagined that, even should this be the case, the pain would be more than counterbalanced by the salutary effect it might produce. Alas! vanity calculates but poorly upon the vanity of others! What a virtue we should distil from frailty; what a world of pain we should save our brethren, if we would suffer our own weakness to be the measure of theirs!

Thursday came: the painting was placed by the artist's own hand in the most favourable light; a curtain, hung behind it, served as a screen for Warner, who, retiring to his hiding-place, surrendered his heart to delicious forebodings of the critic's wonder and golden anticipations of the future destiny of his darling work. Not a fear dashed the full and smooth cup of his self-enjoyment. He had lain awake the whole of the night in restless and joyous impatience for the morrow. At daybreak he had started from his bed, he had unclosed his shutters, he had hung over his picture with a fondness greater, if possible, than he had ever known before! like a mother, he felt as if his own partiality was but a part of a universal tribute; and, as his aged relative, turning her dim eyes to the painting, and, in her innocent idolatry, rather of the artist than his work, praised and expatiated and foretold, his heart whispered, "If it wring this worship from ignorance, what will be the homage of science?"

He who first laid down the now hackneyed maxim that diffidence is the companion of genius knew very little of the workings of the human heart. True, there may have been a few such instances, and it is probable that in this maxim, as in most, the exception made the rule. But what could ever reconcile genius to its sufferings, its sacrifices, its fevered inquietudes, the intense labour which can alone produce what the shallow world deems the giant offspring of a momentary inspiration: what could ever reconcile it to these but the haughty and unquenchable consciousness of internal power; the hope which has the fulness of certainty that in proportion to the toil is the reward; the sanguine and impetuous anticipation of glory, which bursts the boundaries of time and space, and ranges immortality with a prophet's rapture? Rob Genius of its confidence, of its lofty self-esteem, and you clip the wings of the eagle: you domesticate, it is true, the wanderer you could not hitherto comprehend, in the narrow bounds of your household affections; you abase and tame it more to the level of your ordinary judgments, but you take from it the power to soar; the hardihood which was content to brave the thundercloud and build its eyrie on the rock, for the proud triumph of rising above its kind, and contemplating with a nearer eye the majesty of heaven.

But if something of presumption is a part of the very essence of genius, in Warner it was doubly natural, for he was still in the heat and flush of a design, the defects of which he had not yet had the leisure to examine; and his talents, self-taught and self-modelled, had never received either the excitement of emulation or the chill of discouragement from the study of the masterpieces of his art.

The painter had not been long alone in his concealment before he heard steps; his heart beat violently, the door opened, and he saw, through a small hole which he had purposely made in the curtain, a man with a benevolent and prepossessing countenance, whom he instantly recognized as Sir Joshua Reynolds, enter the room, accompanied by Talbot. They walked up to the picture, the painter examined it closely, and in perfect silence. "Silence," thought Warner, "is the best homage of admiration;" but he trembled with impatience to hear the admiration confirmed by words,—those words came too soon.

"It is the work of a clever man, certainly," said Sir Joshua; "but" (terrible monosyllable) "of one utterly unskilled in the grand principles of his art—look here, and here, and here, for instance;" and the critic, perfectly unconscious of the torture he inflicted, proceeded to point out the errors of the work. Oh! the agony, the withering agony of that moment to the ambitious artist! In vain he endeavoured to bear up against the judgment,—in vain he endeavoured to persuade himself that it was the voice of envy which in those cold, measured, defining accents, fell like drops of poison upon his heart. He felt at once, and as if by a magical inspiration, the truth of the verdict; the scales of self-delusion fell from his eyes; by a hideous mockery, a kind of terrible pantomime, his goddess seemed at a word, a

breath, transformed into a monster: life, which had been so lately concentrated into a single hope, seemed now, at once and forever, cramped, curdled, blistered into a single disappointment.

"But," said Talbot, who had in vain attempted to arrest the criticisms of the painter (who, very deaf at all times, was, at that time in particular, engrossed by the self-satisfaction always enjoyed by one expatiating on his favourite topic),—"but," said Talbot, in a louder voice, "you own there is great genius in the design?"

"Certainly, there is genius," replied Sir Joshua, in a tone of calm and complacent good-nature; "but what is genius without culture? You say the artist is young, very young; let him take time: I do not say let him attempt a humbler walk; let him persevere in the lofty one he has chosen, but let him first retrace every step he has taken; let him devote days, months, years, to the most diligent study of the immortal masters of the divine art, before he attempts (to exhibit, at least) another historical picture. He has mistaken altogether the nature of invention: a fine invention is nothing more than a fine deviation from, or enlargement on, a fine model: imitation, if noble and general, insures the best hope of originality. Above all, let your young friend, if he can afford it, visit Italy."

"He shall afford it," said Talbot, kindly, "for he shall have whatever advantages I can procure him; but you see the picture is only half-completed: he could alter it!"

"He had better burn it!" replied the painter, with a gentle smile.

And Talbot, in benevolent despair, hurried his visitor out of the room. He soon returned to seek and console the artist, but the artist was gone; the despised, the fatal picture, the blessing and curse of so many anxious and wasted hours, had vanished also with its creator.

CHAPTER XXIV.

What is this soul, then? Whence
Came it?—It does not seem my own, and I
Have no self-passion or identity!
Some fearful end must be—

.

There never lived a mortal man, who bent
His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
But starved and died.—KEATS: Endymion.

On entering his home, Warner pushed aside, for the first time in his

life with disrespect, his aged and kindly relation, who, as if in mockery of the unfortunate artist stood prepared to welcome and congratulate his return. Bearing his picture in his arms, he rushed upstairs, hurried into his room, and locked the door. Hastily he tore aside the cloth which had been drawn over the picture; hastily and tremblingly he placed it upon the frame accustomed to support it, and then, with a long, long, eager, searching, scrutinizing glance, he surveyed the once beloved mistress of his worship. Presumption, vanity, exaggerated self-esteem, are, in their punishment, supposed to excite ludicrous not sympathetic emotion; but there is an excess of feeling, produced by whatever cause it may be, into which, in spite of ourselves, we are forced to enter. Even fear, the most contemptible of the passions, becomes tragic the moment it becomes an agony.

"Well, well!" said Warner, at last, speaking very slowly, "it is over,—it was a pleasant dream,—but it is over,—I ought to be thankful for the lesson." Then suddenly changing his mood and tone, he repeated, "Thankful! for what? that I am a wretch,—a wretch more utterly hopeless and miserable and abandoned than a man who freights with all his wealth, his children, his wife, the hoarded treasures and blessings of an existence, one ship, one frail, worthless ship, and, standing himself on the shore, sees it suddenly go down! Oh, was I not a fool,—a right noble fool,—a vain fool,—an arrogant fool,—a very essence and concentration of all things that make a fool, to believe such delicious marvels of myself! What, man!" (here his eye saw in the opposite glass his features, livid and haggard with disease, and the exhausting feelings which preyed within him)—"what, man! would nothing serve thee but to be a genius,—thee, whom Nature stamped with her curse! Dwarf-like and distorted, mean in stature and in lineament, thou wert, indeed, a glorious being to perpetuate grace and beauty, the majesties and dreams of art! Fame for thee, indeed—ha-ha! Glory—ha-ha! a place with Titian, Correggio, Raphael—ha-ha—ha! O, thrice modest, thrice-reasonable fool! But this vile daub; this disfigurement of canvas; this loathed and wretched monument of disgrace; this notable candidate for—ha-ha—immortality! this I have, at least, in my power." And seizing the picture, he dashed it to the ground, and trampled it with his feet upon the dusty boards, till the moist colours presented nothing but one confused and dingy stain.

This sight seemed to recall him for a moment. He paused, lifted up the picture once more, and placed it on the table. "But," he muttered, "might not this critic be envious? am I sure that he judged rightly—fairly? The greatest masters have looked askant and jealous at their pupils' works. And then, how slow, how cold, how damned cold, how indifferently he spoke; why, the very art should have warmed him more. Could he have—No, no, no: it was true, it was! I felt the conviction thrill through me like a searing iron. Burn it—did he say—ay—burn it: it shall be done this instant."

And, hastening to the door, he undid the bolt. He staggered back as he beheld his old and nearest surviving relative, the mother of his father, seated upon the ground beside the door, terrified by the exclamations she did not dare to interrupt. She rose slowly, and with difficulty as she saw him; and, throwing around him the withered arms which had nursed his infancy, exclaimed, "My child!—my poor—poor child! what has come to you of late? you, who were so gentle, so mild, so quiet,—you are no longer the same,—and oh, my son, how ill you look: your father looked so just before he died!"

"Ill!" said he, with a sort of fearful gayety, "ill—no: I never was so well; I have been in a dream till now; but I have woke at last. Why, it is true that I have been silent and shy, but I will be so no more. I will laugh, and talk, and walk, and make love, and drink wine, and be all that other men are. Oh, we will be so merry! But stay here, while I fetch a light."

"A light, my child, for what?"

"For a funeral!" shouted Warner, and, rushing past her, he descended the stairs, and returned almost in an instant with a light.

Alarmed and terrified, the poor old woman had remained motionless and weeping violently. Her tears Warner did not seem to notice; he pushed her gently into the room, and began deliberately, and without uttering a syllable, to cut the picture into shreds.

"What are you about, my child?" cried the old woman "you are mad; it is your beautiful picture that you are destroying!"

Warner did not reply, but going to the hearth, piled together, with nice and scrupulous care, several pieces of paper, and stick, and matches, into a sort of pyre; then, placing the shreds of the picture upon it, he applied the light, and the whole was instantly in a blaze.

"Look, look!" cried he, in an hysterical tone, "how it burns and crackles and blazes! What master ever equalled it now?—no fault now in those colours,—no false tints in that light and shade! See how that flame darts up and soars!—that flame is my spirit! Look—is it not restless?—does it not aspire bravely?—why, all its brother flames are grovellers to it!—and now,—why don't you look!—it falters—fades—drips—and—ha—ha—ha! poor idler, the fuel is consumed—and—it is darkness."

As Warner uttered these words his eyes reeled; the room swam before him; the excitement of his feeble frame had reached its highest pitch; the disease of many weeks had attained its crisis; and, tottering back a few paces, he fell upon the floor, the victim of a delirious and raging fever.

But it was not thus that the young artist was to die. He was reserved for a death that, like his real nature, had in it more of gentleness and poetry. He recovered by slow degrees, and his mind, almost in spite of himself, returned to that profession from which it was impossible to divert the thoughts and musings of many years. Not that he resumed the pencil and the easel: on the contrary, he could not endure them in his sight; they appeared, to a mind festered and sore, like a memorial and monument of shame. But he nursed within him a strong and ardent desire to become a pilgrim to that beautiful land of which he had so often dreamed, and which the innocent destroyer of his peace had pointed out as the theatre of inspiration and the nursery of future fame.

The physicians who, at Talbot's instigation, attended him, looked at his hectic cheek and consumptive frame, and readily flattered his desire; and Talbot, no less interested in Warner's behalf on his own account than bound by his promise to Clarence, generously extended to the artist that bounty which is the most precious prerogative of the rich. Notwithstanding her extreme age, his grandmother insisted upon attending him: there is in the heart of woman so deep a well of love that no age can freeze it. They made the voyage: they reached the shore of the myrtle and the vine, and entered the Imperial City. The air of Rome seemed at first to operate favourably upon the health of the English artist. His strength appeared to increase, his spirit to expand; and though he had relapsed into more than his original silence and reserve, he resumed, with apparent energy, the labours of the easel: so that they who looked no deeper than the surface might have imagined the scar healed, and the real foundation of future excellence begun.

But while Warner most humbled himself before the gods of the pictured world; while the true principles of the mighty art opened in their fullest glory on his soul; precisely at this very moment shame and despondency were most bitter at his heart: and while the enthusiasm of the painter kindled, the ambition of the man despaired. But still he went on, transfusing into his canvas the grandeur and simplicity of the Italian school; still, though he felt palpably within him the creeping advance of the deadliest and surest enemy to fame, he pursued, with an unwearied ardour, the mechanical completion of his task; still, the morning found him bending before the easel, and the night brought to his solitary couch meditation rather than sleep. The fire, the irritability which he had evinced before his illness had vanished, and the original sweetness of his temper had returned; he uttered no complaint, he dwelt upon no anticipation of success; hope and regret seemed equally dead within him; and it was only when he caught the fond, glad eyes of his aged attendant that his own filled with tears, or that the serenity of his brow darkened into sadness.

This went on for some months; till one evening they found the painter by his window, seated opposite to an unfinished picture. The pencil

was still in his hand; the quiet of settled thought was still upon his countenance; the soft breeze of a southern twilight waved the hair livingly from his forehead; the earliest star of a southern sky lent to his cheek something of that subdued lustre which, when touched by enthusiasm, it had been accustomed to wear; but these were only the mockeries of life: life itself was no more! He had died, reconciled, perhaps, to the loss of fame, in discovering that Art is to be loved for itself, and not for the rewards it may bestow upon the artist.

There are two tombs close to each other in the strangers' burial-place at Rome: they cover those for whom life, unequally long, terminated in the same month. The one is of a woman, bowed with the burden of many years: the other darkens over the dust of the young artist.

CHAPTER XXV.

Think upon my grief,
And on the justice of my flying hence,
To keep me from a most unholy match.—SHAKSPEARE.

"But are you quite sure," said General St. Leger, "are you quite sure that this girl still permits Mordaunt's addresses?"

"Sure!" cried Miss Diana St. Leger, "sure, General! I saw it with my own eyes. They were standing together in the copse, when I, who had long had my suspicions, crept up, and saw them; and Mr. Mordaunt held her hand, and kissed it every moment. Shocking and indecorous!"

"I hate that man! as proud as Lucifer," growled the General. "Shall we lock her up, or starve her?"

"No, General, something better than that."

"What, my love? flog her?"

"She's too old for that, brother; we'll marry her."

"Marry her!"

"Yes, to Mr. Glumford; you know that he has asked her several times."

"But she cannot bear him."

"We'll make her bear him, General St. Leger."

"But if she marries, I shall have nobody to nurse me when I have the

gout.”

”Yes, brother: I know of a nice little girl, Martha Richardson, your second cousin’s youngest daughter; you know he has fourteen children, and you may have them all, one after another, if you like.”

”Very true, Diana; let the jade marry Mr. Glumford.”

”She shall,” said the sister; ”and I’ll go about it this very moment: meantime I’ll take care that she does not see her lover any more.”

About three weeks after this conversation, Mordaunt, who had in vain endeavoured to see Isabel, who had not even heard from her, whose letters had been returned to him unopened, and who, consequently, was in despair, received the following note:—

This is the first time I have been able to write to you, at least to get my letter conveyed: it is a strange messenger that I have employed, but I happened formerly to make his acquaintance; and accidentally seeing him to-day, the extremity of the case induced me to give him a commission which I could trust to no one else. Algernon, are not the above sentences written with admirable calmness? are they not very explanatory, very consistent, very cool? and yet do you know that I firmly believe I am going mad? My brain turns round and round, and my hand burns so that I almost think that, like our old nurse’s stories of the fiend, it will scorch the paper as I write. And I see strange faces in my sleep and in my waking, all mocking at me, and they torture and aunt me and when I look at those faces I see no human relenting, no! though I weep and throw myself on my knees and implore them to save me. Algernon, my only hope is in you. You know that I have always hitherto refused to ruin you, and even now, though I implore you to deliver me, I will not be so selfish as—as I know not what I write, but if I cannot be your wife—I will not be his! No! if they drag me to church, it shall be to my grave, not my bridal. ISABEL ST. LEGER.

When Mordaunt had read this letter, which, in spite of its incoherence, his fears readily explained, he rose hastily; his eyes rested upon a sober-looking man, clad in brown. The proud love no spectators to their emotions.

”Who are you, sir?” said Algernon, quickly.

”Morris Brown,” replied the stranger, coolly and civilly. ”Brought that letter to you, sir; shall be very happy to serve you with anything else; just fitted out a young gentleman as ambassador, a nephew to Mrs. Minden,—very old friend of mine. Beautiful slabs you have here, sir, but they want a few knick-knacks; shall be most happy to supply you; got a lovely little ape, sir, stuffed by the late Lady Waddilove; it would look charming with this old-fashioned carving;

give the room quite the air of a museum."

"And so," said Mordaunt, for whose ear the eloquence of Mr. Brown contained only one sentence, "and so you brought this note, and will take back my answer?"

"Yes, sir; anything to keep up family connections; I knew a Lady Morden very well,—very well indeed, sir,—a relation of yours, I presume, by the similarity of the name; made her very valuable presents; shall be most happy to do the same to you, when you are married, sir. You will refurnish the house, I suppose? Let me see; fine proportions to this room, sir; about thirty-six feet by twenty-eight; I'll do the thing twenty per cent cheaper than the trade; and touching the lovely little—"

"Here," interrupted Mordaunt, "you will take back this note, and be sure that Miss Isabel St. Leger has it as soon as possible; oblige me by accepting this trifle,—a trifle indeed compared with my gratitude, if this note reaches its destination safely."

"I am sure," said Mr. Brown, looking with surprise at the gift, which he held with no unwilling hand, "I am sure, sir, that you are very generous, and strongly remind me of your relation, Lady Morden; and if you would like the lovely little ape as a present—I mean really a present—you shall have it, Mr. Mordaunt."

But Mr. Mordaunt had left the room, and the sober Morris, looking round, and cooling in his generosity, said to himself, "It is well he did not hear me, however; but I hope he will marry the nice young lady, for I love doing a kindness. This house must be refurnished; no lady will like these old-fashioned chairs."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Squire and fool are the same thing here—FARQUHAR.

In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And, with an unthrift love, did run from Venice.—SHAKSPEARE.

The persecutions which Isabel had undergone had indeed preyed upon her reason as well as her health; and, in her brief intervals of respite from the rage of the uncle, the insults of the aunt, and, worse than all, the addresses of the intended bridegroom, her mind, shocked and unhinged, reverted with such intensity to the sufferings she endured as to give her musings the character of insanity. It was in one of

these moments that she had written to Mordaunt; and had the contest continued much longer the reason of the unfortunate and persecuted girl would have totally deserted her.

She was a person of acute, and even poignant, sensibilities, and these the imperfect nature of her education had but little served to guide or to correct; but as her habits were pure and good, the impulses which spring from habit were also sinless and exalted, and, if they erred, "they leaned on virtue's side," and partook rather of a romantic and excessive generosity than of the weakness of womanhood or the selfishness of passion. All the misery and debasement of her equivocal and dependent situation had not been able to drive her into compliance with Mordaunt's passionate and urgent prayers; and her heart was proof even to the eloquence of love, when that eloquence pointed towards the worldly injury and depreciation of her lover: but this new persecution was utterly unforeseen in its nature and intolerable from its cause. To marry another; to be torn forever from one in whom her whole heart was wrapped; to be forced not only to forego his love, but to feel that the very thought of him was a crime,—all this, backed by the vehement and galling insults of her relations, and the sullen and unmoved meanness of her intended bridegroom, who answered her candour and confession with a stubborn indifference and renewed overtures, made a load of evil which could neither be borne with resignation nor contemplated with patience.

She was sitting, after she had sent her letter, with her two relations, for they seldom trusted her out of their sight, when Mr. Glumford was announced. Now, Mr. George Glumford was a country gentleman of what might be termed a third-rate family in the county: he possessed about twelve hundred a year, to say nothing of the odd pounds, shillings, and pence, which, however, did not meet with such contempt in his memory or estimation; was of a race which could date as far back as Charles the Second; had been educated at a country school with sixty others, chiefly inferior to himself in rank; and had received the last finish at a very small hall at Oxford. In addition to these advantages, he had been indebted to nature for a person five feet eight inches high, and stout in proportion; for hair very short, very straight, and of a red hue, which even through powder cast out a yellow glow; for an obstinate dogged sort of nose, beginning in snub, and ending in bottle; for cold, small, gray eyes, a very small mouth, pinched up and avaricious; and very large, very freckled, yet rather white hands, the nails of which were punctiliously cut into a point every other day, with a pair of scissors which Mr. Glumford often boasted had been in his possession since his eighth year; namely, for about thirty-two legitimate revolutions of the sun.

He was one of those persons who are equally close and adventurous; who love the eclat of a little speculation, but take exceeding good care that it should be, in their own graceful phrase, "on the safe side of the hedge." In pursuance of this characteristic of mind, he had

resolved to fall in love with Miss Isabel St. Leger; for she being very dependent, he could boast to her of his disinterestedness, and hope that she would be economical through a principle of gratitude; and being the nearest relation to the opulent General St. Leger and his unmarried sister there seemed to be every rational probability of her inheriting the bulk of their fortunes. Upon these hints of prudence spake Mr. George Glumford.

Now, when Isabel, partly in her ingenuous frankness, partly from the passionate promptings of her despair, revealed to him her attachment to another, and her resolution never, with her own consent, to become his, it seemed to the slow but not uncalculating mind of Mr. Glumford not by any means desirable that he should forego his present intentions, but by all means desirable that he should make this reluctance of Isabel an excuse for sounding the intentions and increasing the posthumous liberality of the East Indian and his sister.

"The girl is of my nearest blood," said the Major-General, "and if I don't leave my fortune to her, who the devil should I leave it to, sir?" and so saying, the speaker, who was in a fell paroxysm of the gout, looked so fiercely at the hinting wooer that Mr. George Glumford, who was no Achilles, was somewhat frightened, and thought it expedient to hint no more.

"My brother," said Miss Diana, "is so odd; but he is the most generous of men: besides, the girl has claims upon him." Upon these speeches Mr. Glumford thought himself secure; and inly resolving to punish the fool for her sulkiness and bad taste as soon as he lawfully could, he continued his daily visits and told his sporting acquaintance that his time was coming.

Revenons a nos moutons. Forgive this preliminary detail, and let us return to Mr. Glumford himself, whom we left at the door, pulling and fumbling at the glove which covered his right hand, in order to present the naked palm to Miss Diana St. Leger. After this act was performed, he approached Isabel, and drawing his chair near to her, proceeded to converse with her as the Ogre did with Puss in Boots; namely, "as civilly as an Ogre could do."

This penance had not proceeded far, before the door was again opened, and Mr. Morris Brown presented himself to the conclave.

"Your servant, General; your servant, Madam. I took the liberty of coming back again, Madam, because I forgot to show you some very fine silks, the most extraordinary bargain in the world,—quite presents; and I have a Sevres bowl here, a superb article, from the cabinet of the late Lady Waddilove."

Now Mr. Brown was a very old acquaintance of Miss Diana St. Leger, for

there is a certain class of old maids with whom our fair readers are no doubt acquainted, who join to a great love of expense a great love of bargains, and who never purchase at the regular place if they can find any irregular vendor. They are great friends of Jews and itinerants, hand-in-glove with smugglers, Ladies Bountiful to pedlers, are diligent readers of puffs and advertisements, and eternal haunters of sales and auctions. Of this class was Miss Diana a most prominent individual: judge, then, how acceptable to her was the acquaintance of Mr. Brown. That indefatigable merchant of miscellanies had, indeed, at a time when brokers were perhaps rather more rare and respectable than now, a numerous country acquaintance, and thrice a year he performed a sort of circuit to all his customers and connections; hence his visit to St. Leger House, and hence Isabel's opportunity of conveying her epistle.

"Pray," said Mr. Glumford, who had heard much of Mr. Brown's "presents" from Miss Diana,—"pray don't you furnish rooms, and things of that sort?"

"Certainly, sir, certainly, in the best manner possible."

"Oh, very well; I shall want some rooms furnished soon,—a bedroom and a dressing-room, and things of that sort, you know. And so—perhaps you may have something in your box that will suit me, gloves or handkerchiefs or shirts or things of that sort."

"Yes, sir, everything, I sell everything," said Mr. Brown, opening his box. "I beg pardon, Miss Isabel, I have dropped my handkerchief by your chair; allow me to stoop," and Mr. Brown, stooping under the table, managed to effect his purpose; unseen by the rest, a note was slipped into Isabel's hand, and under pretence of stooping too, she managed to secure the treasure. Love need well be honest if, even when it is most true, it leads us into so much that is false!

Mr. Brown's box was now unfolded before the eyes of the crafty Mr. Glumford, who, having selected three pair of gloves, offered the exact half of the sum demanded.

Mr. Brown lifted up his hands and eyes.

"You see," said the imperturbable Glumford, "that if you let me have them for that, and they last me well, and don't come unsewn, and stand cleaning, you'll have my custom in furnishing the house, and rooms, and—things of that sort."

Struck with the grandeur of this opening, Mr. Brown yielded, and the gloves were bought.

"The fool!" thought the noble George, laughing in his sleeve, "as if I should ever furnish the house from his box!" Strange that some men

should be proud of being mean! The moment Isabel escaped to dress for dinner, she opened her lover's note. It was as follows.—

Be in the room, your retreat, at nine this evening. Let the window be left unclosed. Precisely at that hour I will be with you. I shall have everything in readiness for your flight. Be sure, dearest Isabel, that nothing prevents your meeting me there, even if all your house follow or attend you. I will bear you from all. Oh, Isabel! in spite of the mystery and wretchedness of your letter, I feel too happy, too blest at the thought that our fates will be at length united, and that the union is at hand. Remember nine.
A. M.

Love is a feeling which has so little to do with the world, a passion so little regulated by the known laws of our more steady and settled emotions, that the thoughts which it produces are always more or less connected with exaggeration and romance. To the secret spirit of enterprise which, however chilled by his pursuits and habits, still burned within Mordaunt's breast, there was a wild pleasure in the thought of bearing off his mistress and his bride from the very home and hold of her false friends and real foes; while in the contradictions of the same passion, Isabel, so far from exulting at her approaching escape, trembled at her danger and blushed for her temerity; and the fear and the modesty of woman almost triumphed over her brief energy and fluctuating resolve.

CHAPTER XXVII.

We haste,—the chosen and the lovely bringing;
Love still goes with her from her place of birth;
Deep, silent joy, within her soul is springing,
Though in her glance the light no more is mirth.—Mrs. HEMANS.

"Damn it!" said the General.

"The vile creature!" cried Miss Diana.

"I don't understand things of that sort," ejaculated the bewildered Mr. Glumford.

"She has certainly gone," said the valiant General.

"Certainly!" grunted Miss Diana.

"Gone!" echoed the bridegroom not to be.

And she was gone! Never did more loving and tender heart forsake all, and cling to a more loyal and generous nature. The skies were darkened with clouds,—

”And the dim stars rushed through them rare and fast;”

and the winds wailed with a loud and ominous voice; and the moon came forth, with a faint and sickly smile, from her chamber in the mist, and then shrank back, and was seen no more; but neither omen nor fear was upon Mordaunt’s breast, as it swelled beneath the dark locks of Isabel, which were pressed against it.

As Faith clings the more to the cross of life, while the wastes deepen around her steps, and the adders creep forth upon her path, so love clasps that which is its hope and comfort the closer, for the desert which encompasses and the dangers which harass its way.

They had fled to London, and Isabel had been placed with a very distant and very poor, though very high-born, relative of Algernon, till the necessary preliminaries could be passed and the final bond knit. Yet still the generous Isabel would have refused, despite the injury to her own fame, to have ratified a union which filled her with gloomy presentiments for Mordaunt’s fate; and still Mordaunt by little and little broke down her tender scruples and self-immolating resolves, and ceased not his eloquence and his suit till the day of his nuptials was set and come.

The morning was bright and clear; the autumn was drawing towards its close, and seemed willing to leave its last remembrance tinged with the warmth and softness of its parent summer, rather than with the stern gloom and severity of its chilling successor.

And they stood beside the altar, and their vows were exchanged. A slight tremor came over Algernon’s frame, a slight shade darkened his countenance; for even in that bridal hour an icy and thrilling foreboding curdled to his heart; it passed,—the ceremony was over, and Mordaunt bore his blushing and weeping bride from the church. His carriage was in attendance; for, not knowing how long the home of his ancestors might be his, he was impatient to return to it. The old Countess d’Arcy, Mordaunt’s relation, with whom Isabel had been staying, called them back to bless them; for, even through the coldness of old age, she was touched by the singularity of their love and affected by their nobleness of heart. She laid her wan and shrivelled hand upon each, as she bade them farewell, and each shrank back involuntarily, for the cold and light touch seemed like the fingers of the dead.

Fearful, indeed, is the vicinity of death and life,—the bridal chamber and the charnel. That night the old woman died. It appeared as if Fate had set its seal upon the union it had so long forbidden,

and had woven a dark thread even in the marriage-bond. At least, it tore from two hearts, over which the cloud and the blast lay couched in a "grim repose," the last shelter, which, however frail and distant, seemed left to them upon the inhospitable earth.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Live while ye may, yet happy pair; enjoy
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed.—MILTON.

The autumn and the winter passed away; Mordaunt's relation continued implacable. Algernon grieved for this, independent of worldly circumstances; for, though he had seldom seen that relation, yet he loved him for former kindness—rather promised, to be sure, than yet shown—with the natural warmth of an affection which has but few objects. However, the old gentleman (a very short, very fat person; very short and very fat people, when they are surly, are the devil and all; for the humours of their mind, like those of their body, have something corrupt and un purgeable in them) wrote him one bluff, contemptuous letter, in a witty strain,—for he was a bit of a humourist,—disowned his connection, and very shortly afterwards died, and left all his fortune to the very Mr. Vavasour who was at law with Mordaunt, and for whom he had always openly expressed the strongest personal dislike: spite to one relation is a marvellous tie to another. Meanwhile the lawsuit went on less slowly than lawsuits usually do, and the final decision was very speedily to be given.

We said the autumn and the winter were gone; and it was in one of those latter days in March, when, like a hoyden girl subsiding into dawning womanhood, the rude weather mellows into a softer and tenderer month, that, by the side of a stream, overshadowed by many a brake and tree, sat two persons.

"I know not, dearest Algernon," said one, who was a female, "if this is not almost the sweetest month in the year, because it is the month of Hope."

"Ay, Isabel; and they did it wrong who called it harsh, and dedicated it to Mars. I exult even in the fresh winds which hardier frames than mine shrink from, and I love feeling their wild breath fan my cheek as I ride against it. I remember," continued Algernon, musingly, "that on this very day three years ago, I was travelling through Germany, alone and on horseback, and I paused, not far from Ens, on the banks of the Danube; the waters of the river were disturbed and fierce, and the winds came loud and angry against my face, dashing the spray of the waves upon me, and filling my spirit with a buoyant and glad

delight; and at that time I had been indulging old dreams of poetry, and had laid my philosophy aside; and, in the inspiration of the moment, I lifted up my hand towards the quarter whence the winds came, and questioned them audibly of their birthplace and their bourne; and, as the enthusiasm increased, I compared them to our human life, which a moment is, and then is not; and, proceeding from folly to folly, I asked them, as if they were the interpreters of heaven, for a type and sign of my future lot."

"And what said they?" inquired Isabel, smiling, yet smiling timidly.

"They answered not," replied Mordaunt; "but a voice within me seemed to say, 'Look above!' and I raised my eyes,—but I did not see thee, love,—so the Book of Fate lied."

"Nay, Algernon, what did you see?" asked Isabel, more earnestly than the question deserved.

"I saw a thin cloud, alone amidst many dense and dark ones scattered around; and as I gazed it seemed to take the likeness of a funeral procession—coffin, bearers, priests, all—as clear in the cloud as I have seen them on the earth: and I shuddered as I saw; but the winds blew the vapour onwards, and it mingled with the broader masses of cloud; and then, Isabel, the sun shone forth for a moment, and I mistook, love, when I said you were not there, for that sun was you; but suddenly the winds ceased, and the rain came on fast and heavy: so my romance cooled, and my fever slacked; I thought on the inn at Ens, and the blessings of a wood fire, which is lighted in a moment, and I spurred on my horse accordingly."

"It is very strange," said Isabel.

"What, love?" whispered Algernon, kissing her cheek.

"Nothing, dearest, nothing."

At that instant, the deer, which lay waving their lordly antlers to and fro beneath the avenue which sloped upward from the stream to the house, rose hurriedly and in confusion, and stood gazing, with watchful eyes, upon a man advancing towards the pair.

It was one of the servants with a letter. Isabel saw a faint change (which none else could have seen) in Mordaunt's countenance, as he recognized the writing and broke the seal. When he had read the letter, his eyes fell upon the ground, and then, with a slight start, he lifted them up, and gazed long and eagerly around. Wistfully did he drink, as it were, into his heart the beautiful and expanded scene which lay stretched on either side; the noble avenue which his forefathers had planted as a shelter to their sons, and which now in its majestic growth and its waving boughs seemed to say, "Lo! ye are

repaid!" and the never silent and silver stream, by which his boyhood had sat for hours, lulled by its music, and inhaling the fragrance of the reed and wild flower that decoyed the bee to its glossy banks; and the deer, to whose melancholy belling he had listened so often in the gray twilight with a rapt and dreaming ear; and the green fern waving on the gentle hill, from whose shade his young feet had startled the hare and the infant fawn; and far and faintly gleaming through the thick trees, which clasped it as with a girdle, the old Hall, so associated with vague hopes and musing dreams, and the dim legends of gone time, and the lofty prejudices of ancestral pride,—all seemed to sink within him, as he gazed, like the last looks of departing friends; and when Isabel, who had not dared to break a silence which partook so strongly of gloom, at length laid her hand upon his arm, and lifted her dark, deep, tender eyes to his, he said, as he drew her towards him, and a faint and sickly smile played upon his lips,—

"It is past, Isabel: henceforth we have no wealth but in each other. The cause has been decided—and—and—we are beggars!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

We expose our life to a quotidian ague of frigid impertinences, which would make a wise man tremble to think of.—COWLEY.

We must suppose a lapse of four years from the date of those events which concluded the last chapter; and, to recompence the reader, who I know has a little penchant for "High Life," even in the last century, for having hitherto shown him human beings in a state of society not wholly artificial, I beg him to picture to himself a large room, brilliantly illuminated, and crowded "with the magnates of the land." Here, some in saltatory motion, some in sedentary rest, are dispersed various groups of young ladies and attendant swains, talking upon the subject of Lord Rochester's celebrated poem,—namely, "Nothing!"—and lounging around the doors, meditating probably upon the same subject, stand those unhappy victims of dancing daughters, denominated "Papas."

The music has ceased; the dancers have broken up; and there is a general but gentle sweep towards the refreshment-room. In the crowd—having just entered—there glided a young man of an air more distinguished and somewhat more joyous than the rest.

"How do you do, Mr. Linden?" said a tall and (though somewhat passe) very handsome woman, blazing with diamonds; "are you just come?"

And, here, by the way, I cannot resist pausing to observe that a friend of mine, meditating a novel, submitted a part of the manuscript

to a friendly publisher. "Sir," said the bookseller, "your book is very clever, but it wants dialogue."

"Dialogue!" cried my friend: "you mistake; it is all dialogue."

"Ay, sir, but not what we call dialogue; we want a little conversation in fashionable life,—a little elegant chit-chat or so: and, as you must have seen so much of the beau monde, you could do it to the life: we must have something light and witty and entertaining."

"Light, witty, and entertaining!" said our poor friend; "and how the deuce, then, is it to be like conversation in 'fashionable life'? When the very best conversation one can get is so insufferably dull, how do you think people will be amused by reading a copy of the very worst?"

"They are amused, sir," said the publisher; "and works of this kind sell!"

"I am convinced," said my friend; for he was a man of a placid temper: he took the hint, and his book did sell!

Now this anecdote rushed into my mind after the penning of the little address of the lady in diamonds,—“How do you do, Mr. Linden? Are you just come?”—and it received an additional weight from my utter inability to put into the mouth of Mr. Linden—notwithstanding my desire of representing him in the most brilliant colours—any more happy and eloquent answer than, “Only this instant!”

However, as this is in the true spirit of elegant dialogue, I trust my readers find it as light, witty, and entertaining as, according to the said publisher, the said dialogue is always found by the public.

While Clarence was engaged in talking with this lady, a very pretty, lively, animated girl, with laughing blue eyes, which, joined to the dazzling fairness of her complexion, gave a Hebe-like youth to her features and expression, was led up to the said lady by a tall young man, and consigned, with the ceremonious bow of the *vieille tour*, to her protection.

"Ah, Mr. Linden," cried the young lady, "I am very glad to see you,—such a beautiful ball!—Everybody here that I most like. Have you had any refreshments, Mamma? But I need not ask, for I am sure you have not; do come, Mr. Linden will be our cavalier."

"Well, Flora, as you please," said the elderly lady, with a proud and fond look at her beautiful daughter; and they proceeded to the refreshment-room.

No sooner were they seated at one of the tables, than they were

accosted by Lord St. George, a nobleman whom Clarence, before he left England, had met more than once at Mr. Talbot's.

"London," said his lordship to her of the diamonds, "has not seemed like the same place since Lady Westborough arrived; your presence brings out all the other luminaries: and therefore a young acquaintance of mine—God bless me, there he is, seated by Lady Flora—very justly called you the 'evening star.'"

"Was that Mr. Linden's pretty saying?" said Lady Westborough, smiling.

"It was," answered Lord St. George; "and, by the by, he is a very sensible, pleasant person, and greatly improved since he left England last."

"What!" said Lady Westborough, in a low tone (for Clarence, though in earnest conversation with Lady Flora, was within hearing), and making room for Lord St. George beside her, "what! did you know him before he went to —? You can probably tell me, then, who—that is to say—what family he is exactly of—the Lindens of Devonshire, or—or—"

"Why, really," said Lord St. George, a little confused, for no man likes to be acquainted with persons whose pedigree he cannot explain, "I don't know what may be his family: I met him at Talbot's four or five years ago; he was then a mere boy, but he struck me as being very clever, and Talbot since told me that he was a nephew of his own."

"Talbot," said Lady Westborough, musingly, "what Talbot?"

"Oh! the Talbot—the *ci-devant* jeune homme!"

"What, that charming, clever, animated old gentleman, who used to dress so oddly, and had been so celebrated a beau garçon in his day?"

"Exactly so," said Lord St. George, taking snuff, and delighted to find he had set his young acquaintance on so honourable a footing.

"I did not know he was still alive," said Lady Westborough, and then, turning her eyes towards Clarence and her daughter, she added carelessly, "Mr. Talbot is very rich, is he not?"

"Rich as Croesus," replied Lord St. George, with a sigh.

"And Mr. Linden is his heir, I suppose?"

"In all probability," answered Lord St. George; "though I believe I can boast a distant relationship to Talbot. However, I could not make him fully understand it the other day, though I took particular pains to explain it."

While this conversation was going on between the Marchioness of Westborough and Lord St. George, a dialogue equally interesting to the parties concerned, and I hope, equally light, witty, and entertaining to readers in general, was sustained between Clarence and Lady Flora.

"How long shall you stay in England?" asked the latter, looking down.

"I have not yet been able to decide," replied Clarence, "for it rests with the ministers, not me. Directly Lord Aspeden obtains another appointment, I am promised the office of Secretary of Legation; but till then, I am—

"'A captive in Augusta's towers
To beauty and her train.'"

"Oh!" cried Lady Flora, laughing, "you mean Mrs. Desborough and her train: see where they sweep! Pray go and render her homage."

"It is rendered," said Linden, in a low voice, "without so long a pilgrimage, but perhaps despised."

Lady Flora's laugh was hushed; the deepest blushes suffused her cheeks, and the whole character of that face, before so playful and joyous, seemed changed, as by a spell, into a grave, subdued, and even timid look.

Linden resumed, and his voice scarcely rose above a whisper. A whisper! O delicate and fairy sound! music that speaketh to the heart, as if loth to break the spell that binds it while it listens! Sigh breathed into words, and freighting love in tones languid, like homeward bees, by the very sweets with which they are charged! "Do you remember," said he, "that evening at — when we last parted? and the boldness which at that time you were gentle enough to forgive?"

Lady Flora replied not.

"And do you remember," continued Clarence, "that I told you that it was not as an unknown and obscure adventurer that I would claim the hand of her whose heart as an adventurer I had won?"

Lady Flora raised her eyes for one moment, and encountering the ardent gaze of Clarence, as instantly dropped them.

"The time is not yet come," said Linden, "for the fulfilment of this promise; but may I—dare I hope, that when it does, I shall not be—"

"Flora, my love," said Lady Westborough, "let me introduce to you Lord Borodaile."

Lady Flora turned: the spell was broken; and the lovers were instantly transformed into ordinary mortals. But, as Flora, after returning Lord Borodaile's address, glanced her eye towards Clarence, she was struck with the sudden and singular change of his countenance; the flush of youth and passion was fled, his complexion was deadly pale, and his eyes were fixed with a searching and unaccountable meaning upon the face of the young nobleman, who was alternately addressing, with a quiet and somewhat haughty fluency, the beautiful mother, and the more lovely though less commanding daughter. Directly Linden perceived that he was observed, he rose, turned away, and was soon lost among the crowd.

Lord Borodaile, the son and heir of the powerful Earl of Ulswater, was about the age of thirty, small, slight, and rather handsome than otherwise, though his complexion was dark and sallow; and a very aquiline nose gave a stern and somewhat severe air to his countenance. He had been for several years abroad, in various parts of the Continent, and (no other field for an adventurous and fierce spirit presenting itself) had served with the gallant Earl of Effingham, in the war between the Turks and Russians, as a volunteer in the armies of the latter. In this service he had been highly distinguished for courage and conduct; and, on his return to England about a twelvemonth since, had obtained the command of a cavalry regiment. Passionately fond of his profession, he entered into its minutest duties with a zeal not exceeded by the youngest and poorest subaltern in the army.

His manners were very cold, haughty, collected, and self-possessed, and his conversation that of a man who has cultivated his intellect rather in the world than the closet. I mean, that, perfectly ignorant of things, he was driven to converse solely upon persons, and, having imbibed no other philosophy than that which worldly deceits and disappointments bestow, his remarks, though shrewd, were bitterly sarcastic, and partook of all the ill-nature for which a very scanty knowledge of the world gives a sour and malevolent mind so ready an excuse.

"How very disagreeable Lord Borodaile is!" said Lady Flora, when the object of the remark turned away and rejoined some idlers of his corps.

"Disagreeable!" said Lady Westborough. "I think him charming: he is so sensible. How true his remarks on the world are!"

Thus is it always; the young judge harshly of those who undeceive or revolt their enthusiasm; and the more advanced in years, who have not learned by a diviner wisdom to look upon the human follies and errors by which they have suffered with a pitying and lenient eye, consider every maxim of severity on those frailties as the proof of a superior knowledge, and praise that as a profundity of thought which in reality is but an infirmity of temper.

Clarence is now engaged in a minuet de la tour with the beautiful Countess of —, the best dancer of the day in England. Lady Flora is flirting with half a dozen beaux, the more violently in proportion as she observes the animation with which Clarence converses, and the grace with which his partner moves; and, having thus left our two principal personages occupied and engaged, let us turn for a moment to a room which we have not entered.

This is a forlorn, deserted chamber, destined to cards, which are never played in this temple of Terpsichore. At the far end of this room, opposite to the fireplace, are seated four men, engaged in earnest conversation.

The tallest of these was Lord Quintown, a nobleman remarkable at that day for his personal advantages, his good fortune with the beau sexe, his attempts at parliamentary eloquence, in which he was lamentably unsuccessful, and his adherence to Lord North. Next to him sat Mr. St. George, the younger brother of Lord St. George, a gentleman to whom power and place seemed married without hope of divorce; for, whatever had been the changes of ministry for the last twelve years, he, secure in a lucrative though subordinate situation, had "smiled at the whirlwind and defied the storm," and, while all things shifted and vanished round him, like clouds and vapours, had remained fixed and stationary as a star. "Solid St. George," was his appellative by his friends, and his enemies did not grudge him the title. The third was the minister for —; and the fourth was Clarence's friend, Lord Aspeden. Now this nobleman, blessed with a benevolent, smooth, calm countenance, valued himself especially upon his diplomatic elegance in turning a compliment.

Having a great taste for literature as well as diplomacy, this respected and respectable peer also possessed a curious felicity for applying quotation; and nothing rejoiced him so much as when, in the same phrase, he was enabled to set the two jewels of his courtliness of flattery and his profundity of erudition. Unhappily enough, his compliments were seldom as well taken as they were meant; and, whether from the ingratitude of the persons complimented or the ill fortune of the noble adulator, seemed sometimes to produce indignation in place of delight. It has been said that his civilities had cost Lord Aspeden four duels and one beating; but these reports were probably the malicious invention of those who had never tasted the delicacies of his flattery.

Now these four persons being all members of the Privy Council, and being thus engaged in close and earnest conference were, you will suppose, employed in discussing their gravities and secrets of state: no such thing; that whisper from Lord Quintown, the handsome nobleman, to Mr. St. George, is no hoarded and valuable information which would rejoice the heart of the editor of an Opposition paper, no direful

murmur, "perplexing monarchs with the dread of change;" it is only a recent piece of scandal, touching the virtue of a lady of the court, which (albeit the sage listener seems to pay so devout an attention to the news) is far more interesting to the gallant and handsome informant than to his brother statesman; and that emphatic and vehement tone with which Lord Aspeden is assuring the minister for — of some fact, is merely an angry denunciation of the chicanery practised at the last Newmarket.

"By the by, Aspeden," said Lord Quintown, "who is that good-looking fellow always flirting with Lady Flora Ardenne,—an attache of yours, is he not?"

"Oh! Linden, I suppose you mean. A very sensible, clever young fellow, who has a great genius for business and plays the flute admirably. I must have him for my secretary, my dear lord, mind that."

"With such a recommendation, Lord Aspeden," said the minister, with a bow, "the state would be a great loser did it not elect your attache, who plays so admirably on the flute, to the office of your secretary. Let us join the dancers."

"I shall go and talk with Count B—," quoth Mr. St. George.

"And I shall make my court to his beautiful wife," said the minister, sauntering into the ballroom, to which his fine person and graceful manners were much better adapted than was his genius to the cabinet or his eloquence to the senate.

The morning had long dawned, and Clarence, for whose mind pleasure was more fatiguing than business, lingered near the door, to catch one last look of Lady Flora before he retired. He saw her leaning on the arm of Lord Borodaile, and hastening to join the dancers with her usual light step and laughing air; for Clarence's short conference with her had, in spite of his subsequent flirtations, rendered her happier than she had ever felt before. Again a change passed over Clarence's countenance,—a change which I find it difficult to express without borrowing from those celebrated German dramatists who could portray in such exact colours "a look of mingled joy, sorrow, hope, passion, rapture, and despair;" for the look was not that of jealousy alone, although it certainly partook of its nature, but a little also of interest, and a little of sorrow; and when he turned away, and slowly descended the stairs, his eyes were full of tears, and his thoughts far—far away;—whither?

CHAPTER XXX.

Quae fert adolescentia
Ea ne me celet consuefecit filium.—TERENCE.

[“The things which youth proposes I accustomed
my son that he should never conceal from me.”]

The next morning Clarence was lounging over his breakfast, and glancing listlessly now at the pages of the newspapers, now at the various engagements for the week, which lay confusedly upon his table, when he received a note from Talbot, requesting to see him as soon as possible.

“Had it not been for that man,” said Clarence to himself, “what should I have been now? But, at least, I have not disgraced his friendship. I have already ascended the roughest because the lowest steps on the hill where Fortune builds her temple. I have already won for the name I have chosen some ‘golden opinions’ to gild its obscurity. One year more may confirm my destiny and ripen hope into success: then—then, I may perhaps throw off a disguise that, while it befriended, has not degraded me, and avow myself to her! Yet how much better to dignify the name I have assumed than to owe respect only to that which I have not been deemed worthy to inherit! Well, well, these are bitter thoughts; let me turn to others. How beautiful Flora looked last night! and, he—he—but enough of this: I must dress, and then to Talbot.”

Muttering these wayward fancies, Clarence rose, completed his toilet, sent for his horses, and repaired to a village about seven miles from London, where Talbot, having yielded to Clarence’s fears and solicitations, and left his former insecure tenement, now resided under the guard and care of an especial and private watchman.

It was a pretty, quiet villa, surrounded by a plantation and pleasure-ground of some extent for a suburban residence, in which the old philosopher (for though in some respects still frail and prejudiced, Talbot deserved that name) held his home. The ancient servant, on whom four years had passed lightly and favouringly, opened the door to Clarence, with his usual smile of greeting and familiar yet respectful salutation, and ushered our hero into a room, furnished with the usual fastidious and rather feminine luxury which characterized Talbot’s tastes. Sitting with his back turned to the light, in a large easy-chair, Clarence found the wreck of the once gallant, gay Lothario.

There was not much alteration in his countenance since we last saw him; the lines, it is true, were a little more decided, and the cheeks a little more sunken; but the dark eye beamed with all its wonted

vivacity, and the delicate contour of the mouth preserved all its physiognomical characteristics of the inward man. He rose with somewhat more difficulty than he was formerly wont to do, and his limbs had lost much of their symmetrical proportions; yet the kind clasp of his hand was as firm and warm as when it had pressed that of the boyish attache four years since; and the voice which expressed his salutation yet breathed its unconquered suavity and distinctness of modulation. After the customary greetings and inquiries were given and returned, the young man drew his chair near to Talbot's, and said,—

”You sent for me, dear sir; have you anything more important than usual to impart to me?—or—and I hope this is the case—have you at last thought of any commission, however trifling, in the execution of which I can be of use?”

”Yes, Clarence, I wish your judgment to select me some strawberries,—you know that I am a great epicure in fruit,—and get me the new work Dr. Johnson has just published. There, are you contented? And now, tell me all about your horse; does he step well? Has he the true English head and shoulder? Are his legs fine, yet strong? Is he full of spirit and devoid of vice?”

”He is all this, sir, thanks to you for him.”

”Ah!” cried Talbot,—

”’Old as I am, for riding feats unfit,
The shape of horses I remember yet”

”And now let us hear how you like Ranelagh; and above all how you liked the ball last night.”

And the vivacious old man listened with the profoundest appearance of interest to all the particulars of Clarence's animated detail. His vanity, which made him wish to be loved, had long since taught him the surest method of becoming so; and with him, every visitor, old, young, the man of books, or the disciple of the world, was sure to find the readiest and even eagerest sympathy in every amusement or occupation. But for Clarence, this interest lay deeper than in the surface of courtly breeding. Gratitude had first bound to him his adopted son, then a tie yet unexplained, and lastly, but not least, the pride of protection. He was vain of the personal and mental attractions of his protege, and eager for the success of one whose honours would reflect credit on himself.

But there was one part of Clarence's account of the last night to which the philosopher paid a still deeper attention, and on which he was more minute in his advice; what this was, I cannot, as yet, reveal to the reader.

The conversation then turned on light and general matters,—the scandal, the literature, the politics, the on dits of the day; and lastly upon women; thence Talbot dropped into his office of Mentor.

”A celebrated cardinal said, very wisely, that few ever did anything among men until women were no longer an object to them. That is the reason, by the by, why I never succeeded with the former, and why people seldom acquire any reputation, except for a hat, or a horse, till they marry. Look round at the various occupations of life. How few bachelors are eminent in any of them! So you see, Clarence, you will have my leave to marry Lady Flora as soon as you please.”

Clarence coloured, and rose to depart. Talbot followed him to the door, and then said, in a careless way, ”By the by, I had almost forgotten to tell you that, as you have now many new expenses, you will find the yearly sum you have hitherto received doubled. To give you this information is the chief reason why I sent for you this morning. God bless you, my dear boy.”

And Talbot shut the door, despite his politeness, in the face and thanks of his adopted son.

CHAPTER XXXI.

There is a great difference between seeking to raise a laugh from everything, and seeking in everything what justly may be laughed at. LORD SHAFTESBURY.

Behold our hero, now in the zenith of distinguished dissipation! Courteous, attentive, and animated, the women did not esteem him the less for admiring them rather than himself; while, by the gravity of his demeanour to men,—the eloquent, yet unpretending flow of his conversation, whenever topics of intellectual interest were discussed, the plain and solid sense which he threw into his remarks, and the avidity with which he courted the society of all distinguished for literary or political eminence,—he was silently but surely establishing himself in esteem as well as popularity, and laying the certain foundation of future honour and success.

Thus, although he had only been four months returned to England, he was already known and courted in every circle, and universally spoken of as among ”the most rising young gentlemen” whom fortune and the administration had marked for their own. His history, during the four years in which we have lost sight of him, is briefly told.

He soon won his way into the good graces of Lord Aspeden; became his private secretary and occasionally his confidant. Universally admired for his attraction of form and manner, and, though aiming at reputation, not averse to pleasure, he had that position which fashion confers at the court of —, when Lady Westborough and her beautiful daughter, then only seventeen, came to —, in the progress of a Continental tour, about a year before his return to England. Clarence and Lady Flora were naturally brought much together in the restricted circle of a small court, and intimacy soon ripened into attachment.

Lord Aspeden being recalled, Clarence accompanied him to England; and the ex-minister, really liking much one who was so useful to him, had faithfully promised to procure him the office and honour of secretary whenever his lordship should be reappointed minister.

Three intimate acquaintances had Clarence Linden. The one was the Honourable Henry Trollop, the second Mr. Callythorpe, and the third Sir Christopher Findlater. We will sketch them to you in an instant. Mr. Trollop was a short, stout gentleman, with a very thoughtful countenance,—that is to say, he wore spectacles and took snuff.

Mr. Trollop—we delight in pronouncing that soft liquid name—was eminently distinguished by a love of metaphysics,—metaphysics were in a great measure the order of the day; but Fate had endowed Mr. Trollop with a singular and felicitous confusion of idea. Reid, Berkeley, Cudworth, Hobbes, all lay jumbled together in most edifying chaos at the bottom of Mr. Trollop's capacious mind; and whenever he opened his mouth, the imprisoned enemies came rushing and scrambling out, overturning and contradicting each other in a manner quite astounding to the ignorant spectator. Mr. Callythorpe was meagre, thin, sharp, and yellow. Whether from having a great propensity for nailing stray acquaintances, or being particularly heavy company, or from any other cause better known to the wits of the period than to us, he was occasionally termed by his friends the "yellow hammer." The peculiar characteristics of this gentleman were his sincerity and friendship. These qualities led him into saying things the most disagreeable, with the civilest and coolest manner in the world,—always prefacing them with, "You know, my dear so-and-so, I am your true friend." If this proof of amity was now and then productive of altercation, Mr. Callythorpe, who was ha great patriot, had another and a nobler plea,—"Sir," he would say, putting his hand to his heart,— "sir, I'm an Englishman: I know not what it is to feign." Of a very different stamp was Sir Christopher Findlater. Little cared he for the subtleties of the human mind, and not much more for the disagreeable duties of "an Englishman." Honest and jovial, red in the cheeks, empty in the head, born to twelve thousand a year, educated in the country, and heir to an earldom, Sir Christopher Findlater piqued himself, notwithstanding his worldly advantages, usually so destructive to the kindlier affections, on having the best heart in the world, and this good heart, having a very bad head to regulate and

support it, was the perpetual cause of error to the owner and evil to the public.

One evening, when Clarence was alone in his rooms, Mr. Trollop entered.

"My dear Linden," said the visitor, "how are you?"

"I am, as I hope you are, very well," answered Clarence.

"The human mind," said Trollop, taking off his greatcoat,—

"Sir Christopher Findlater and Mr. Callythorpe, sir," said the valet.

"Pshaw! What has Sir Christopher Findlater to do with the human mind?" muttered Mr. Trollop.

Sir Christopher entered with a swagger and a laugh. "Well, old fellow, how do you do? Deuced cold this evening."

"Though it is an evening in May," observed Clarence; "but then, this cursed climate."

"Climate!" interrupted Mr. Callythorpe, "it is the best climate in the world: I am an Englishman, and I never abuse my country."

"'England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!'"

"As to climate," said Trollop, "there is no climate, neither here nor elsewhere: the climate is in your mind, the chair is in your mind, and the table too, though I dare say you are stupid enough to think the two latter are in the room; the human mind, my dear Findlater—"

"Don't mind me, Trollop," cried the baronet, "I can't bear your clever heads: give me a good heart; that's worth all the heads in the world; d—n me if it is not! Eh, Linden?"

"Your good heart," cried Trollop, in a passion (for all your self-called philosophers are a little choleric), "your good heart is all cant and nonsense: there is no heart at all; we are all mind."

"I be hanged if I'm all mind," said the baronet.

"At least," quoth Linden, gravely, "no one ever accused you of it before."

"We are all mind," pursued the reasoner; "we are all mind, un moulin a raisonnement. Our ideas are derived from two sources, sensation or memory. That neither our thoughts nor passions, nor our ideas formed by the imagination, exist without the mind, everybody will allow;

[Berkeley, Sect. iii., "Principles of Human Knowledge."] therefore, you see, the human mind is—in short, there is nothing in the world but the human mind!"

"Nothing could be better demonstrated," said Clarence.

"I don't believe it," quoth the baronet.

"But you do believe it, and you must believe it," cried Trollop; "for 'the Supreme Being has implanted within us the principle of credulity,' and therefore you do believe it!"

"But I don't," cried Sir Christopher.

"You are mistaken," replied the metaphysician, calmly; "because I must speak truth."

"Why must you, pray?" said the baronet.

"Because," answered Trollop, taking snuff, "there is a principle of veracity implanted in our nature."

"I wish I were a metaphysician," said Clarence, with a sigh.

"I am glad to hear you say so; for you know, my dear Linden," said Callythorpe, "that I am your true friend, and I must therefore tell you that you are shamefully ignorant. You are not offended?"

"Not at all!" said Clarence, trying to smile.

"And you, my dear Findlater" (turning to the baronet), "you know that I wish you well; you know that I never flatter; I'm your real friend, so you must not be angry; but you really are not considered a Solomon."

"Mr. Callythorpe!" exclaimed the baronet in a rage (the best-hearted people can't always bear truth), "what do you mean?"

"You must not be angry, my good sir; you must not, really. I can't help telling you of your faults; for I am a true Briton, sir, a true Briton, and leave lying to slaves and Frenchmen."

"You are in an error," said Trollop; "Frenchmen don't lie, at least not naturally, for in the human mind, as I before said, the Divine Author has implanted a principle of veracity which—"

"My dear sir," interrupted Callythorpe, very affectionately, "you remind me of what people say of you."

"Memory may be reduced to sensation, since it is only a weaker sensation," quoth Trollop; "but proceed."

"You know, Trollop," said Callythorpe, in a singularly endearing intonation of voice, "you know that I never flatter; flattery is unbecoming a true friend,—nay, more, it is unbecoming a native of our happy isles, and people do say of you that you know nothing whatsoever, no, not an iota, of all that nonsensical, worthless philosophy of which you are always talking. Lord St. George said the other day 'that you were very conceited.'—'No, not conceited,' replied Dr. —, 'only ignorant;' so if I were you, Trollop, I would cut metaphysics; you're not offended?"

"By no means," cried Trollop, foaming at the mouth.

"For my part," said the good-hearted Sir Christopher, whose wrath had now subsided, rubbing his hands,— "for my part, I see no good in any of those things: I never read—never—and I don't see how I'm a bit the worse for it. A good man, Linden, in my opinion, only wants to do his duty, and that is very easily done."

"A good man; and what is good?" cried the metaphysician, triumphantly. "Is it implanted within us? Hobbes, according to Reid, who is our last, and consequently best, philosopher, endeavours to demonstrate that there is no difference between right and wrong."

"I have no idea of what you mean," cried Sir Christopher.

"Idea!" exclaimed the pious philosopher. "Sir, give me leave to tell you that no solid proof has ever been advanced of the existence of ideas: they are a mere fiction and hypothesis. Nay, sir, 'hence arises that scepticism which disgraces our philosophy of the mind.' Ideas!—Findlater, you are a sceptic and an idealist."

"I?" cried the affrighted baronet; "upon my honour I am no such thing. Everybody knows that I am a Christian, and—"

"Ah!" interrupted Callythorpe, with a solemn look, "everybody knows that you are not one of those horrid persons,—those atrocious deists and atheists and sceptics, from whom the Church and freedom of old England have suffered such danger. I am a true Briton of the good old school; and I confess, Mr. Trollop, that I do not like to hear any opinions but the right ones."

"Right ones being only those which Mr. Callythorpe professes," said Clarence.

"Exactly so!" rejoined Mr. Callythorpe.

"The human mind," commenced Mr. Trollop, stirring the fire; when

Clarence, who began to be somewhat tired of this conversation, rose. "You will excuse me," said he, "but I am particularly engaged, and it is time to dress. Harrison will get you tea or whatever else you are inclined for."

"The human mind," renewed Trollop, not heeding the interruption; and Clarence forthwith left the room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

You blame Marcius for being proud.—Coriolanus.
Here is another fellow, a marvellous pretty hand at fashioning a compliment.—The Tanner of Tyburn.

There was a brilliant ball at Lady T—'s, a personage who, every one knows, did in the year 17— give the best balls, and have the best-dressed people at them, in London. It was about half-past twelve, when Clarence, released from his three friends, arrived at the countess's. When he entered, the first thing which struck him was Lord Borodaile in close conversation with Lady Flora.

Clarence paused for a few moments, and then, sauntering towards them, caught Flora's eye,—coloured, and advanced. Now, if there was a haughty man in Europe, it was Lord Borodaile. He was not proud of his birth, nor fortune, but he was proud of himself; and, next to that pride, he was proud of being a gentleman. He had an exceeding horror of all common people; a Claverhouse sort of supreme contempt to "puddle blood;" his lip seemed to wear scorn as a garment; a lofty and stern self-admiration, rather than self-love, sat upon his forehead as on a throne. He had, as it were, an awe of himself; his thoughts were so many mirrors of Viscount Borodaile dressed en dieu. His mind was a little Versailles, in which self sat like Louis XIV., and saw nothing but pictures of its self, sometimes as Jupiter and sometimes as Apollo. What marvel then, that Lord Borodaile was a very unpleasant companion? for every human being he had "something of contempt." His eye was always eloquent in disdaining; to the plebeian it said, "You are not a gentleman;" to the prince, "You are not Lord Borodaile."

Yet, with all this, he had his good points. He was brave as a lion; strictly honourable; and though very ignorant, and very self-sufficient, had that sort of dogged good sense which one very often finds in men of stern hearts, who, if they have many prejudices, have little feeling, to overcome.

Very stiffly and very haughtily did Lord Borodaile draw up, when Clarence approached and addressed Lady Flora; much more stiffly and

much more haughtily did he return, though with old-fashioned precision of courtesy, Clarence's bow, when Lady Westborough introduced them to each other. Not that this hauteur was intended as a particular affront: it was only the agreeability of his lordship's general manner.

"Are you engaged?" said Clarence to Flora.

"I am, at present, to Lord Borodaile."

"After him, may I hope?"

Lady Flora nodded assent, and disappeared with Lord Borodaile.

His Royal Highness the Duke of — came up to Lady Westborough; and Clarence, with a smiling countenance and an absent heart, plunged into the crowd. There he met Lord Aspeden, in conversation with the Earl of Holdenworth, one of the administration.

"Ah, Linden," said the diplomatist, "let me introduce you to Lord Holdenworth,—a clever young man, my dear lord, and plays the flute beautifully." With this eulogium, Lord Aspeden glided away; and Lord Holdenworth, after some conversation with Linden, honoured him by an invitation to dinner the next day.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

'T is true his nature may with faults abound;
But who will cavil when the heart is sound?—STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currant.—HORACE.
["The foolish while avoiding vice run into the opposite extremes."]

The next day Sir Christopher Findlater called on Clarence. "Let us lounge in the park," said he.

"With pleasure," replied Clarence; and into the park they lounged.

By the way they met a crowd, who were hurrying a man to prison. The good-hearted Sir Christopher stopped: "Who is that poor fellow?" said he.

"It is the celebrated" (in England all criminals are celebrated. Thurtell was a hero, Thistlewood a patriot, and Fauntleroy was discovered to be exactly like Buonaparte!) "it is the celebrated

robber, John Jefferies, who broke into Mrs. Wilson's house, and cut the throats of herself and her husband, wounded the maid-servant, and split the child's skull with the poker." Clarence pressed forward: "I have seen that man before," thought he. He looked again, and recognized the face of the robber who had escaped from Talbot's house on the eventful night which had made Clarence's fortune. It was a strongly-marked and rather handsome countenance, which would not be easily forgotten; and a single circumstance of excitement will stamp features on the memory as deeply as the commonplace intercourse of years.

"John Jefferies!" exclaimed the baronet; "let us come away."

"Linden," continued Sir Christopher, "that fellow was my servant once. He robbed me to some considerable extent. I caught him. He appealed to my heart; and you know, my dear fellow, that was irresistible, so I let him off. Who could have thought he would have turned out so?" And the baronet proceeded to eulogize his own good-nature, by which it is just necessary to remark that one miscreant had been saved for a few years from transportation, in order to rob and murder ad libitum, and, having fulfilled the office of a common pest, to suffer on the gallows at last. What a fine thing it is to have a good heart! Both our gentlemen now sank into a reverie, from which they were awakened, at the entrance of the park, by a young man in rags who, with a piteous tone, supplicated charity. Clarence, who, to his honour be it spoken, spent an allotted and considerable part of his income in judicious and laborious benevolence, had read a little of political morals, then beginning to be understood, and walked on. The good-hearted baronet put his hand in his pocket, and gave the beggar half a guinea, by which a young, strong man, who had only just commenced the trade, was confirmed in his imposition for the rest of his life; and, instead of the useful support, became the pernicious incumbrance of society.

Sir Christopher had now recovered his spirits. "What's like a good action?" said he to Clarence, with a swelling breast.

The park was crowded to excess; our loungers were joined by Lord St. George. His lordship was a stanch Tory. He could not endure Wilkes, liberty, or general education. He launched out against the enlightenment of domestics. [The ancestors of our present footmen, if we may believe Sir William Temple, seem to have been to the full as intellectual as their descendants. "I have had," observes the philosophic statesman, "several servants far gone in divinity, others in poetry; have known, in the families of some friends; a keeper deep in the Rosicrucian mysteries and a laundress firm in those of Epicurus."]

"What has made you so bitter?" said Sir Christopher.

"My valet," cried Lord St. George,—"he has invented a new toasting-fork, is going to take out a patent, make his fortune, and leave me; that's what I call ingratitude, Sir Christopher; for I ordered his wages to be raised five pounds but last year."

"It was very ungrateful," said the ironical Clarence.

"Very!" reiterated the good-hearted Sir Christopher.

"You cannot recommend me a valet, Findlater," renewed his lordship, "a good, honest, sensible fellow, who can neither read nor write?"

"N-o-o,—that is to say, yes! I can; my old servant Collard is out of place, and is as ignorant as—as—"

"I—or you are?" said Lord St. George, with a laugh.

"Precisely," replied the baronet.

"Well, then, I take your recommendation: send him to me to-morrow at twelve."

"I will," said Sir Christopher.

"My dear Findlater," cried Clarence, when Lord St. George was gone, "did you not tell me, some time ago, that Collard was a great rascal, and very intimate with Jefferies? and now you recommend him to Lord St. George!"

"Hush, hush, hush!" said the baronet; "he was a great rogue to be sure: but, poor fellow, he came to me yesterday with tears in his eyes, and said he should starve if I would not give him a character; so what could I do?"

"At least, tell Lord St. George the truth," observed Clarence.

"But then Lord St. George would not take him!" rejoined the good-hearted Sir Christopher, with forcible naivete. "No, no, Linden, we must not be so hard-hearted; we must forgive and forget;" and so saying, the baronet threw out his chest, with the conscious exultation of a man who has uttered a noble sentiment. The moral of this little history is that Lord St. George, having been pillaged "through thick and thin," as the proverb has it, for two years, at last missed a gold watch, and Monsieur Collard finished his career as his exemplary tutor, Mr. John Jefferies, had done before him. Ah! what a fine thing it is to have a good heart!

But to return. Just as our wanderers had arrived at the farther end of the park, Lady Westborough and her daughter passed them. Clarence, excusing himself to his friend, hastened towards them, and was soon

occupied in saying the prettiest things in the world to the prettiest person, at least in his eyes; while Sir Christopher, having done as much mischief as a good heart well can do in a walk of an hour, returned home to write a long letter to his mother, against "learning and all such nonsense, which only served to blunt the affections and harden the heart."

"Admirable young man!" cried the mother, with tears in her eyes. "A good heart is better than all the heads in the world."

Amen!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Make way, Sir Geoffrey Peveril, or you will compel me to do that I may be sorry for!"

"You shall make no way here but at your peril," said Sir Geoffrey; "this is my ground."—Peveril of the Peak.

One night on returning home from a party at Lady Westborough's in Hanover Square, Clarence observed a man before him walking with an uneven and agitated step. His right hand was clenched, and he frequently raised it as with a sudden impulse, and struck fiercely as if at some imagined enemy.

The stranger slackened his pace. Clarence passed him, and, turning round to satisfy the idle curiosity which the man's eccentric gestures had provoked, his eye met a dark, lowering, iron countenance, which, despite the lapse of four years, he recognized on the moment: it was Wolfe, the republican.

Clarence moved, involuntarily, with a quicker step; but in a few minutes, Wolfe, who was vehemently talking to himself, once more passed him; the direction he took was also Clarence's way homeward, and he therefore followed the republican, though at some slight distance, and on the opposite side of the way. A gentleman on foot, apparently returning from a party, met Wolfe, and, with an air half haughty, half unconscious, took the wall; though, according to old-fashioned rules of street courtesy, he was on the wrong side for asserting the claim. The stern republican started, drew himself up to his full height, and sturdily and doggedly placed himself directly in the way of the unjust claimant. Clarence was now nearly opposite to the two, and saw all that was going on.

With a motion a little rude and very contemptuous, the passenger

attempted to put Wolfe aside, and win his path. Little did he know of the unyielding nature he had to do with; the next instant the republican, with a strong hand, forced him from the pavement into the very kennel, and silently and coldly continued his way.

The wrath of the discomfited passenger was vehemently kindled.

"Insolent dog!" cried he, in a loud and arrogant tone, "your baseness is your protection." Wolfe turned rapidly, and made but two strides before he was once more by the side of his defeated opponent.

"What did you say?" he asked, in his low, deep, hoarse voice.

Clarence stopped. "There will be mischief done here," thought he, as he called to mind the stern temper of the republican.

"Merely," said the other, struggling with his rage, "that it is not for men of my rank to avenge the insults offered us by those of yours!"

"Your rank!" said Wolfe, bitterly retorting the contempt of the stranger, in a tone of the loftiest disdain; "your rank! poor changeling! And what are you, that you should lord it over me? Are your limbs stronger? your muscles firmer? your proportions juster? your mind acuter? your conscience clearer? Fool! fool! go home and measure yourself with lackeys!"

The republican ceased, and pushing the stranger aside, turned slowly away. But this last insult enraged the passenger beyond all prudence. Before Wolfe had proceeded two paces, he muttered a desperate but brief oath, and struck the reformer with a strength so much beyond what his figure (which was small and slight) appeared to possess, that the powerful and gaunt frame of Wolfe recoiled backward several steps, and, had it not been for the iron railing of the neighbouring area, would have fallen to the ground.

Clarence pressed forward: the face of the rash aggressor was turned towards him; the features were Lord Borodaile's. He had scarcely time to make this discovery, before Wolfe had recovered himself. With a wild and savage cry, rather than exclamation, he threw himself upon his antagonist, twined his sinewy arms round the frame of the struggling but powerless nobleman, raised him in the air with the easy strength of a man lifting a child, held him aloft for one moment with a bitter and scornful laugh of wrathful derision, and then dashed him to the ground, and planting his foot upon Borodaile's breast said,—

"So shall it be with all of you: there shall be but one instant between your last offence and your first but final debasement. Lie there! it is your proper place! By the only law which you yourself acknowledge, the law which gives the right divine to the strongest; if

you stir limb or muscle, I will crush the breath from your body.”

But Clarence was now by the side of Wolfe, a new and more powerful opponent.

”Look you,” said he: ”you have received an insult, and you have done justice yourself. I condemn the offence, and quarrel not with you for the punishment; but that punishment is now past: remove your foot, or—”

”What?” shouted Wolfe, fiercely, his lurid and vindictive eye flashing with the released fire of long-pent and cherished passions.

”Or,” answered Clarence, calmly, ”I will hinder you from committing murder.”

At that instant the watchman’s voice was heard, and the night’s guardian himself was seen hastening from the far end of the street towards the place of contest. Whether this circumstance, or Clarence’s answer, somewhat changed the current of the republican’s thoughts, or whether his anger, suddenly raised, was now as suddenly subsiding, it is not easy to decide; but he slowly and deliberately moved his foot from the breast of his baffled foe, and bending down seemed endeavouring to ascertain the mischief he had done. Lord Borodaile was perfectly insensible.

”You have killed him!” cried Clarence in a voice of horror, ”but you shall not escape;” and he placed a desperate and nervous hand on the republican.

”Stand off,” said Wolfe, ”my blood is up! I would not do more violence to-night than I have done. Stand off! the man moves; see!”

And Lord Borodaile, uttering a long sigh, and attempting to rise, Clarence released his hold of the republican, and bent down to assist the fallen nobleman. Meanwhile, Wolfe, muttering to himself, turned from the spot, and strode haughtily away.

The watchman now came up, and, with his aid, Clarence raised Lord Borodaile. Bruised, stunned, half insensible as he was, that personage lost none of his characteristic stateliness; he shook off the watchman’s arm, as if there was contamination in the touch; and his countenance, still menacing and defying in its expression, turned abruptly towards Clarence, as if he yet expected to meet and struggle with a foe.

”How are you, my lord?” said Linden; ”not severely hurt, I trust?”

”Well, quite well,” cried Borodaile. ”Mr. Linden, I think?—I thank you cordially for your assistance; but the dog, the rascal, where is

he?"

"Gone," said Clarence.

"Gone! Where—where?" cried Borodaile; "that living man should insult me, and yet escape!"

"Which way did the fellow go?" said the watchman, anticipative of half-a-crown. "I will run after him in a trice, your honour: I warrant I nab him."

"No—no—" said Borodaile, haughtily, "I leave my quarrels to no man; if I could not master him myself, no one else shall do it for me. Mr. Linden, excuse me, but I am perfectly recovered, and can walk very well without your polite assistance. Mr. Watchman, I am obliged to you: there is a guinea to reward your trouble."

With these words, intended as a farewell, the proud patrician, smothering his pain, bowed with extreme courtesy to Clarence, again thanked him, and walked on unaided and alone.

"He is a game blood," said the watchman, pocketing the guinea.

"He is worthy his name," thought Clarence; "though he was in the wrong, my heart yearns to him."

CHAPTER XXXV.

Things wear a vizard which I think to like not.—Tanner of Tyburn.

Clarence, from that night, appeared to have formed a sudden attachment to Lord Borodaile. He took every opportunity of cultivating his intimacy, and invariably treated him with a degree of consideration which his knowledge of the world told him was well calculated to gain the good will of his haughty and arrogant acquaintance; but all this was in effectual in conquering Borodaile's coldness and reserve. To have been once seen in a humiliating and degrading situation is quite sufficient to make a proud man hate the spectator, and, with the confusion of all prejudiced minds, to transfer the sore remembrance of the event to the association of the witness. Lord Borodaile, though always ceremoniously civil, was immovably distant; and avoided as well as he was able Clarence's insinuating approaches and address. To add to his indisposition to increase his acquaintance with Linden, a friend of his, a captain in the Guards, once asked him who that Mr. Linden was? and, on his lordship's replying that he did not know, Mr. Percy Bobus, the son of a wine-merchant, though the nephew of a duke,

rejoined, "Nobody does know."

"Insolent intruder!" thought Lord Borodaile: "a man whom nobody knows to make such advances to me!"

A still greater cause of dislike to Clarence arose from jealousy. Ever since the first night of his acquaintance with Lady Flora, Lord Borodaile had paid her unceasing attention. In good earnest, he was greatly struck by her beauty, and had for the last year meditated the necessity of presenting the world with a Lady Borodaile. Now, though his lordship did look upon himself in as favourable a light as a man well can do, yet he could not but own that Clarence was very handsome, had a devilish gentlemanlike air, talked with a better grace than the generality of young men, and danced to perfection. "I detest that fellow!" said Lord Borodaile, involuntarily and aloud, as these unwilling truths forced themselves upon his mind.

"Whom do you detest?" asked Mr. Percy Bobus, who was lying on the sofa in Lord Borodaile's drawing-room, and admiring a pair of red-heeled shoes which decorated his feet.

"That puppy Linden!" said Lord Borodaile, adjusting his cravat.

"He is a deuced puppy, certainly!" rejoined Mr. Percy Bobus, turning round in order to contemplate more exactly the shape of his right shoe. "I can't bear conceit, Borodaile."

"Nor I: I abhor it; it is so d-d disgusting!" replied Lord Borodaile, leaning his chin upon his two hands, and looking full into the glass. "Do you use MacNeile's divine pomatum?"

"No, it's too hard; I get mine from Paris: shall I send you some?"

"Do," said Lord Borodaile.

"Mr. Linden, my lord," said the servant, throwing open the door; and Clarence entered.

"I am very fortunate," said he, with that smile which so few ever resisted, "to find you at home, Lord Borodaile; but as the day was wet, I thought I should have some chance of that pleasure; I therefore wrapped myself up in my roquelaure, and here I am."

Now, nothing could be more diplomatic than the compliment of choosing a wet day for a visit, and exposing one's self to "the pitiless shower," for the greater probability of finding the person visited at home. Not so thought Lord Borodaile; he drew himself up, bowed very solemnly, and said, with cold gravity,—

"You are very obliging, Mr. Linden."

Clarence coloured, and bit his lip as he seated himself. Mr. Percy Bobus, with true insular breeding, took up the newspaper.

"I think I saw you at Lady C.'s last night," said Clarence; "did you stay there long?"

"No, indeed," answered Borodaile; "I hate her parties."

"One does meet such odd people there," observed Mr. Percy Bobus; "creatures one never sees anywhere else:"

"I hear," said Clarence, who never abused any one, even the givers of stupid parties, if he could help it, and therefore thought it best to change the conversation,—"I hear, Lord Borodaile, that some hunters of yours are to be sold. I purpose being a bidder for Thunderbolt."

"I have a horse to sell you, Mr. Linden," cried Mr. Percy Bobus, springing from the sofa into civility; "a superb creature."

"Thank you," said Clarence, laughing; "but I can only afford to buy one, and I have taken a great fancy to Thunderbolt."

Lord Borodaile, whose manners were very antiquated in their affability, bowed. Mr. Bobus sank back into his sofa, and resumed the paper.

A pause ensued. Clarence was chilled in spite of himself. Lord Borodaile played with a paper-cutter.

"Have you been to Lady Westborough's lately?" said Clarence, breaking silence.

"I was there last night," replied Lord Borodaile.

"Indeed!" cried Clarence. "I wonder I did not see you there, for I dined with them."

Lord Borodaile's hair curled of itself. "He dined there, and I only asked in the evening!" thought he; but his sarcastic temper suggested a very different reply.

"Ah," said he, elevating his eyebrows, "Lady Westborough told me she had had some people to dinner whom she had been obliged to ask. Bobus, is that the 'Public Advertiser'? See whether that d-d fellow Junius has been writing any more of his venomous letters."

Clarence was not a man apt to take offence, but he felt his bile rise. "It will not do to show it," thought he; so he made some further

remark in a jesting vein; and, after a very ill-sustained conversation of some minutes longer, rose, apparently in the best humour possible, and departed, with a solemn intention never again to enter the house. Thence he went to Lady Westborough's.

The marchioness was in her boudoir: Clarence was as usual admitted; for Lady Westborough loved amusement above all things in the world, and Clarence had the art of affording it better than any young man of her acquaintance. On entering, he saw Lady Flora hastily retreating through an opposite door. She turned her face towards him for one moment: that moment was sufficient to freeze his blood: the large tears were rolling down her cheeks, which were as white as death, and the expression of those features, usually so laughing and joyous, was that of utter and ineffable despair.

Lady Westborough was as lively, as bland, and as agreeable as ever: but Clarence thought he detected something restrained and embarrassed lurking beneath all the graces of her exterior manner; and the single glance he had caught of the pale and altered face of Lady Flora was not calculated to reassure his mind or animate his spirits. His visit was short; when he left the room, he lingered for a few moments in the ante-chamber in the hope of again seeing Lady Flora. While thus loitering, his ear caught the sound of Lady Westborough's voice: "When Mr. Linden calls again, you have my orders never to admit him into this room; he will be shown into the drawing-room."

With a hasty step and a burning cheek Clarence quitted the house, and hurried, first to his solitary apartments, and thence, impatient of loneliness, to the peaceful retreat of his benefactor.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A maiden's thoughts do check my trembling hand.—DRAYTON.

There is something very delightful in turning from the unquietness and agitation, the fever, the ambition, the harsh and worldly realities of man's character to the gentle and deep recesses of woman's more secret heart. Within her musings is a realm of haunted and fairy thought, to which the things of this turbid and troubled life have no entrance. What to her are the changes of state, the rivalries and contentions which form the staple of our existence? For her there is an intense and fond philosophy, before whose eye substances flit and fade like shadows, and shadows grow glowingly into truth. Her soul's creations are not as the moving and mortal images seen in the common day: they are things, like spirits steeped in the dim moonlight, heard when all else are still, and busy when earth's labourers are at rest! They are

”Such stuff
As dreams are made of, and their little life
Is rounded by a sleep.”

Hers is the real and uncentred poetry of being, which pervades and surrounds her as with an air, which peoples her visions and animates her love, which shrinks from earth into itself, and finds marvel and meditation in all that it beholds within, and which spreads even over the heaven in whose faith she so ardently believes the mystery and the tenderness of romance.

LETTER I.

FROM LADY FLORA ARDENNE TO MISS ELEANOR TREVANION.

You say that I have not written to you so punctually of late as I used to do before I came to London, and you impute my negligence to the gayeties and pleasures by which I am surrounded. Eh bien! my dear Eleanor, could you have thought of a better excuse for me? You know how fond we—ay, dearest, you as well as I—used to be of dancing, and how earnestly we were wont to anticipate those children’s balls at my uncle’s, which were the only ones we were ever permitted to attend. I found a stick the other day, on which I had cut seven notches, significant of seven days more to the next ball; we reckoned time by balls then, and danced chronologically. Well, my dear Eleanor, here I am now, brought out, tolerably well-behaved, only not dignified enough, according to Mamma,—as fond of laughing, talking, and dancing as ever; and yet, do you know, a ball, though still very delightful, is far from being the most important event in creation; its anticipation does not keep me awake of a night: and what is more to the purpose, its recollection does not make me lock up my writing-desk, burn my portefeuille, and forget you, all of which you seem to imagine it has been able to effect.

No, dearest Eleanor, you are mistaken; for, were she twice as giddy and ten times as volatile as she is, your own Flora could never, never forget you, nor the happy hours we have spent together, nor the pretty goldfinches we had in common, nor the little Scotch duets we used to sing together, nor our longings to change them into Italian, nor our disappointment when we did so, nor our laughter at Signor Shrikalini, nor our tears when poor darling Bijou died. And do you remember, dearest, the charming green lawn where we used to play together, and plan tricks for your governess? She was very, very cross, though, I think, we were a little to blame too. However, I was much the worst! And pray, Eleanor, don’t you remember how we used to like being called pretty, and told of the conquests we should make? Do you like all that now? For my part, I am tired of it, at least from the generality of one’s flatterers.

Ah! Eleanor, or "heigho!" as the young ladies in novels write, do you remember how jealous I was of you at —, and how spiteful I was, and how you were an angel, and bore with me, and kissed me, and told me that—that I had nothing to fear? Well, Clar—I mean Mr. Linden, is now in town and so popular, and so admired! I wish we were at — again, for there we saw him every day, and now we don't meet more than three times a week; and though I like hearing him praised above all things, yet I feel very uncomfortable when that praise comes from very, very pretty women. I wish we were at — again! Mamma, who is looking more beautiful than ever, is, very kind! she says nothing to be sure, but she must see how—that is to say—she must know that—that I—I mean that Clarence is very attentive to me, and that I blush and look exceedingly silly whenever he is; and therefore I suppose that whenever Clarence thinks fit to ask me, I shall not be under the necessity of getting up at six o'clock, and travelling to Gretna Green, through that odious North Road, up the Highgate Hill, and over Finchley Common.

"But when will he ask you?" My dearest Eleanor, that is more than I can say. To tell you the truth, there is something about Linden which I cannot thoroughly understand. They say he is nephew and heir to the Mr. Talbot whom you may have heard Papa talk of; but if so, why the hints, the insinuations, of not being what he seems, which Clarence perpetually throws out, and which only excite my interest without gratifying my curiosity? 'It is not,' he has said, more than once, 'as an obscure adventurer that I will claim your love;' and if I venture, which is very seldom (for I am a little afraid of him), to question his meaning, he either sinks into utter silence, for which, if I had loved according to book, and not so naturally, I should be very angry with him, or twists his words into another signification, such as that he would not claim me till he had become something higher and nobler than he is now. Alas, my dear Eleanor, it takes a long time to make an ambassador out of an attache.

See now if you reproached me justly with scanty correspondences. If I write a line more, I must begin a new sheet, and that will be beyond the power of a frank,—a thing which would, I know, break the heart of your dear, good, generous, but a little too prudent aunt, and irrevocably ruin me in her esteem. So God bless you, dearest Eleanor, and believe me most affectionately yours, FLORA ARDENNE.

LETTER II.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Pray, dearest Eleanor, does that good aunt of yours—now don't frown, I am not going to speak disrespectfully of her—ever take a liking to young gentlemen whom you detest, and insist upon the fallacy of your opinion and the unerring rectitude of hers? If so, you can pity and comprehend my grief. Mamma has formed quite an attachment to a very

disagreeable person! He is Lord Borodaile, the eldest, and I believe, the only son of Lord Ulswater. Perhaps you may have met him abroad, for he has been a great traveller: his family is among the most ancient in England, and his father's estate covers half a county. All this Mamma tells me, with the most earnest air in the world, whenever I declaim upon his impertinence or disagreeability (is there such a word? there ought to be). "Well," said I to-day, "what's that to me?" "It may be a great deal to you," replied Mamma, significantly, and the blood rushed from my face to my heart. She could not, Eleanor, she could not mean, after all her kindness to Clarence, and in spite of all her penetration into my heart,—oh, no, no,—she could not. How terribly suspicious this love makes one!

But if I disliked Lord Borodaile at first, I have hated him of late; for, somehow or other, he is always in the way. If I see Clarence hastening through the crowd to ask me to dance, at that very instant up steps Lord Borodaile with his cold, changeless face, and his haughty old-fashioned bow, and his abominable dark complexion; and Mamma smiles; and he hopes he finds me disengaged; and I am hurried off; and poor Clarence looks so disappointed and so wretched! You have no idea how ill-tempered this makes me. I could not help asking Lord Borodaile yesterday if he was never going abroad again, and the hateful creature played with his cravat, and answered "Never!" I was in hopes that my sullenness would drive his lordship away: tout au contraire; "Nothing," said he to me the other day, when he was in full pout, "nothing is so plebeian as good-humour!"

I wish, then, Eleanor, that he could see your governess: she must be majesty itself in his eyes!

Ah, dearest, how we belie ourselves! At this moment, when you might think, from the idle, rattling, silly flow of my letter, that my heart was as light and free as it was when we used to play on the green lawn, and under the sunny trees, in the merry days of our childhood, the tears are running down my cheeks; see where they have fallen on the page, and my head throbs as if my thoughts were too full and heavy for it to contain. It is past one! I am alone, and in my own room. Mamma is gone to a rout at H— House, but I knew I should not meet Clarence there, and so said I was ill, and remained at home. I have done so often of late, whenever I have learned from him that he was not going to the same place as Mamma. Indeed, I love much better to sit alone and think over his words and looks; and I have drawn, after repeated attempts, a profile likeness of him; and oh, Eleanor, I cannot tell you how dear it is to me; and yet there is not a line, not a look of his countenance which I have not learned by heart, without such useless aids to my memory. But I am ashamed of telling you all this, and my eyes ache so, that I can write no more.

Ever, as ever, dearest Eleanor, your affectionate friend. F. A.

LETTER III.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Eleanor, I am undone! My mother—my mother has been so cruel; but she cannot, she cannot intend it, or she knows very little of my heart. With some ties may be as easily broken as formed; with others they are twined around life itself.

Clarence dined with us yesterday, and was unusually animated and agreeable. He was engaged on business with Lord Aspeden afterwards, and left us early. We had a few people in the evening, Lord Borodaile among the rest; and my mother spoke of Clarence, and his relationship to and expectations from Mr. Talbot. Lord Borodaile sneered; "You are mistaken," said he, sarcastically; "Mr. Linden may feel it convenient to give out that he is related to so old a family as the Talbots; and since Heaven only knows who or what he is, he may as well claim alliance with one person as another; but he is certainly not the nephew of Mr. Talbot of Scarsdale Park, for that gentleman had no sisters and but one brother, who left an only daughter; that daughter had also but one child, certainly no relation to Mr. Linden. I can vouch for the truth of this statement; for the Talbots are related to, or at least nearly connected with, myself; and I thank Heaven that I have a pedigree, even in its collateral branches, worth learning by heart." And then Lord Borodaile—I little thought, when I railed against him, what serious cause I should have to hate him—turned to me and harassed me with his tedious attentions the whole of the evening.

This morning Mamma sent for me into her boudoir. "I have observed," said she, with the greatest indifference, "that Mr. Linden has, of late, been much too particular in his manner towards you: your foolish and undue familiarity with every one has perhaps given him encouragement. After the gross imposition which Lord Borodaile exposed to us last night, I cannot but consider the young man as a mere adventurer, and must not only insist on your putting a total termination to civilities which we must henceforth consider presumption, but I myself shall consider it incumbent upon me greatly to limit the advances he has thought proper to make towards my acquaintance."

You may guess how thunderstruck I was by this speech. I could not answer; my tongue literally clove to my mouth, and I was only relieved by a sudden and violent burst of tears. Mamma looked exceedingly displeased, and was just going to speak, when the servant threw open the door and announced Mr. Linden. I rose hastily, and had only just time to escape, as he entered; but when I heard that dear, dear voice, I could not resist turning for one moment. He saw me; and was struck mute, for the agony of my soul was stamped visibly on my countenance. That moment was over: with a violent effort I tore myself away.

Eleanor, I can now write no more. God bless you! and me too; for I am very, very unhappy. F. A.