

WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT - BOOK 2.

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON*

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

Primitive character of the country in certain districts of Great Britain.—Connection between the features of surrounding scenery and the mental and moral inclinations of man, after the fashion of all sound ethnological historians.—A charioteer, to whom an experience of British laws suggests an ingenious mode of arresting the progress of Roman Papacy, carries Lionel Haughton and his fortunes to a place which allows of description and invites repose.

In safety, but with naught else rare enough, in a railway train, to deserve commemoration, Lionel reached the station to which he was bound. He there inquired the distance to Fawley Manor House; it was five miles. He ordered a fly, and was soon wheeled briskly along a rough parish road, through a country strongly contrasting the gay river scenery he had so lately quitted,—quite as English, but rather the England of a former race than that which spreads round our own generation like one vast suburb of garden-ground and villas. Here, nor village nor spire, nor porter's lodge came in sight. Rare even were the cornfields; wide spaces of unenclosed common opened, solitary and primitive, on the road, bordered by large woods, chiefly of beech, closing the horizon with ridges of undulating green. In such an England, Knights Templars might have wended their way to scattered monasteries, or fugitive partisans in the bloody Wars of the Roses have found shelter under leafy coverts.

The scene had its romance, its beauty-half savage, half gentle-leading perforce the mind of any cultivated and imaginative gazer far back from the present day, waking up long-forgotten passages from old poets. The stillness of such wastes of sward, such depths of woodland, induced the nurture of revery, gravely soft and lulling. There, Ambition might give rest to the wheel of Ixion, Avarice to the sieve of the Danaids; there, disappointed Love might muse on the brevity of all human passions, and count over the tortured hearts that have found peace in holy meditation, or are now stilled under grassy knolls. See where, at the crossing of

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three roads upon the waste, the landscape suddenly unfolds, an upland in the distance, and on the upland a building, the first sign of social man. What is the building? only a silenced windmill, the sails dark and sharp against the dull leaden sky.

Lionel touched the driver,—"Are we yet on Mr. Darrell's property?" Of the extent of that property he had involuntarily conceived a vast idea.

"Lord, sir, no; we be two miles from Squire Darrell's. He han't much property to speak of hereabouts. But he bought a good bit o' land, too, some years ago, ten or twelve mile t' other side o' the county. First time you are going to Fawley, sir?"

"Yes."

"Ah! I don't mind seeing you afore; and I should have known you if I had, for it is seldom indeed I have a fare to Fawley old Manor House. It must be, I take it, four or five years ago sin' I wor there with a gent, and he went away while I wor feeding the horse; did me out o' my back fare. What bisness had he to walk when he came in my fly? Shabby."

"Mr. Darrell lives very retired, then? sees few persons?" "S'pose so. I never seed him as I knows on; see'd two o' his hosses though,—rare good uns;" and the driver whipped on his own horse, took to whistling, and Lionel asked no more.

At length the chaise stopped at a carriage gate, receding from the road, and deeply shadowed by venerable trees,—no lodge. The driver, dismounting, opened the gate.

"Is this the place?"

The driver nodded assent, remounted, and drove on rapidly through what night by courtesy he called a park. The enclosure was indeed little beyond that of a good-sized paddock; its boundaries were visible on every side: but swelling uplands covered with massy foliage sloped down to its wild, irregular turf soil,—soil poor for pasturage, but pleasant to the eye; with dell and dingle, bosks of fantastic pollards; dotted oaks of vast growth; here and there a weird hollow thorn-tree; patches of fern and gorse. Hoarse and loud cawed the rooks; and deep, deep as from the innermost core of the lovely woodlands came the mellow note of the cuckoo. A few moments more a wind of the road brought the house in sight. At its rear lay a piece of water, scarcely large enough to be styled a lake; too winding in its shaggy banks, its ends too concealed by tree and islet, to be called by the dull name of pond. Such as it was it arrested the eye before the gaze turned towards the house: it had an air of tranquillity so sequestered, so solemn. A lively man of the world would have been seized with spleen at the first glimpse of it; but he who had known some great grief, some anxious care, would have drunk the calm into his weary soul like an anodyne. The house,—small, low, ancient,

about the date of Edward VI., before the statelier architecture of Elizabeth. Few houses in England so old, indeed, as Fawley Manor House. A vast weight of roof, with high gables; windows on the upper story projecting far over the lower part; a covered porch with a coat of half-obliterated arms deep panelled over the oak door. Nothing grand, yet all how venerable! But what is this? Close beside the old, quiet, unassuming Manor House rises the skeleton of a superb and costly pile, —a palace uncompleted, and the work evidently suspended,—perhaps long since, perhaps now forever. No busy workmen nor animated scaffolding. The perforated battlements roofed over with visible haste,—here with slate, there with tile; the Elizabethan mullion casements unglazed; some roughly boarded across,—some with staring forlorn apertures, that showed floorless chambers, for winds to whistle through and rats to tenant. Weeds and long grass were growing over blocks of stone that lay at hand. A wallflower had forced itself into root on the sill of a giant oriel. The effect was startling. A fabric which he who conceived it must have founded for posterity,—so solid its masonry, so thick its walls,—and thus abruptly left to moulder; a palace constructed for the reception of crowding guests, the pomp of stately revels, abandoned to owl and bat. And the homely old house beside it, which that lordly hall was doubtless designed to replace, looking so safe and tranquil at the baffled presumption of its spectral neighbour.

The driver had rung the bell, and now turning back to the chaise met Lionel's inquiring eye, and said, "Yes; Squire Darrell began to build that—many years ago—when I was a boy. I heerd say it was to be the show-house of the whole county. Been stopped these ten or a dozen years."

"Why?—do you know?"

"No one knows. Squire was a laryer, I b'leve: perhaps he put it into Chancery. My wife's grandfather was put into Chancery jist as he was growing up, and never grew afterwards: never got out o' it; nout ever does. There's our churchwarden comes to me with a petition to sign agin the Pope. Says I, 'That old Pope is always in trouble: what's he bin doin' now?' Says he, 'Spreading! He's a-got into Parlyment, and he's now got a colledge, and we pays for it. I does n't know how to stop him.' Says I, 'Put the Pope into Chancery, along with wife's grandfather, and he'll never spread agin.'"

The driver had thus just disposed of the Papacy, when an elderly servant out of livery opened the door. Lionel sprang from the chaise, and paused in some confusion: for then, for the first time, there darted across him the idea that he had never written to announce his acceptance of Mr. Darrell's invitation; that he ought to have done so; that he might not be expected. Meanwhile the servant surveyed him with some surprise. "Mr. Darrell?" hesitated Lionel, inquiringly.

"Not at home, sir," replied the man, as if Lionel's business was over,

and he had only to re-enter his chaise. The boy was naturally rather bold than shy, and he said, with a certain assured air, "My name is Haughton. I come here on Mr. Darrell's invitation."

The servant's face changed in a moment; he bowed respectfully. "I beg pardon, sir. I will look for my master; he is somewhere on the grounds." The servant then approached the fly, took out the knapsack, and, observing Lionel had his purse in his hand, said, "Allow me to save you that trouble, sir. Driver, round to the stable-yard." Stepping back into the house, the servant threw open a door to the left, on entrance, and advanced a chair. "If you will wait here a moment, sir, I will seek for my master."

CHAPTER II.

Guy Darrell—and Stilled Life.

The room in which Lionel now found himself was singularly quaint. An antiquarian or architect would have discovered at a glance that at some period it had formed part of the entrance-hall; and when, in Elizabeth's or James the First's day, the refinement in manners began to penetrate from baronial mansions to the homes of the gentry, and the entrance-hall ceased to be the common refectory of the owner and his dependants, this apartment had been screened off by perforated panels, which for the sake of warmth and comfort had been filled up into solid wainscot by a succeeding generation. Thus one side of the room was richly carved with geometrical designs and arabesque pilasters, while the other three sides were in small simple panels, with a deep fantastic frieze in plaster, depicting a deer-chase in relief and running between woodwork and ceiling. The ceiling itself was relieved by long pendants without any apparent meaning, and by the crest of the Darrells,—a heron, wreathed round with the family motto, "Ardua petit Ardea." It was a dining-room, as was shown by the character of the furniture. But there was no attempt on the part of the present owner, and there had clearly been none on the part of his predecessor, to suit the furniture to the room. The furniture, indeed, was of the heavy, graceless taste of George the First,—cumbrous chairs in walnut-tree, with a worm-eaten mosaic of the heron on their homely backs, and a faded blue worsted on their seats; a marvellously ugly sideboard to match, and on it a couple of black shagreen cases, the lids of which were flung open, and discovered the pistol-shaped handles of silver knives. The mantelpiece reached to the ceiling, in panelled compartments, with heraldic shields, and supported by rude stone Caryatides. On the walls were several pictures,—family portraits, for the names were inscribed on the frames. They varied in date from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George I. A strong family likeness pervaded them all,—high features, dark hair, grave aspects,—

save indeed one, a Sir Ralph Haughton Darrell, in a dress that spoke him of the holiday date of Charles II.,—all knots, lace, and ribbons; evidently the beau of the race; and he had blue eyes, a blonde peruke, a careless profligate smile, and looked altogether as devil-me-care, rakehelly, handsome, good-for-nought, as ever swore at a drawer, beat a watchman, charmed a lady, terrified a husband, and hummed a song as he pinked his man.

Lionel was still gazing upon the effigies of this airy cavalier when the door behind him opened very noiselessly, and a man of imposing presence stood on the threshold,—stood so still, and the carved mouldings of the doorway so shadowed, and as it were cased round his figure, that Lionel, on turning quickly, might have mistaken him for a portrait brought into bold relief from its frame by a sudden fall of light. We hear it, indeed, familiarly said that such a one is like an old picture. Never could it be more appositely said than of the face on which the young visitor gazed, much startled and somewhat awed. Not such as inferior limners had painted in the portraits there, though it had something in common with those family lineaments, but such as might have looked tranquil power out of the canvas of Titian.

The man stepped forward, and the illusion passed. "I thank you," he said, holding out his hand, "for taking me at my word, and answering me thus in person." He paused a moment, surveying Lionel's countenance with a keen but not unkindly eye, and added softly, "Very like your father."

At these words Lionel involuntarily pressed the hand which he had taken. That hand did not return the pressure. It lay an instant in Lionel's warm clasp—not repelling, not responding—and was then very gently withdrawn.

"Did you come from London?"

"No, sir; I found your letter yesterday at Hampton Court. I had been staying some days in that neighbourhood. I came on this morning: I was afraid too unceremoniously; your kind welcome reassures me there."

The words were well chosen and frankly said. Probably they pleased the host, for the expression of his countenance was, on the whole, propitious; but he merely inclined his head with a kind of lofty indifference, then, glancing at his watch, he rang the bell. The servant entered promptly. "Let dinner be served within an hour."

"Pray, sir," said Lionel, "do not change your hours on my account."

Mr. Darrell's brow slightly contracted. Lionel's tact was in fault there; but the great man answered quietly, "All hours are the same to me; and it were strange if a host could be deranged by consideration to his guest,—on the first day too. Are you tired? Would you like to go to your room, or look out for half an hour? The sky is clearing."

"I should so like to look out, sir."

"This way then."

Mr. Darrell, crossing the hall, threw open a door opposite to that by which Lionel entered, and the lake (we will so call it) lay before them, –separated from the house only by a shelving gradual declivity, on which were a few beds of flowers, –not the most in vogue nowadays, and disposed in rambling old-fashioned parterres. At one angle, a quaint and dilapidated sun-dial; at the other, a long bowling-alley, terminated by one of those summer-houses which the Dutch taste, following the Revolution of 1688, brought into fashion. Mr. Darrell passed down this alley (no bowls there now), and observing that Lionel looked curiously towards the summer-house, of which the doors stood open, entered it. A lofty room with coved ceiling, painted with Roman trophies of helmets and fasces, alternated with crossed fifes and fiddles, painted also.

"Amsterdam manners," said Mr. Darrell, slightly shrugging his shoulders. "Here a former race heard music, sang glees, and smoked from clay pipes. That age soon passed, unsuited to English energies, which are not to be united with Holland phlegm! But the view from the window-look out there. I wonder whether men in wigs and women in hoops enjoyed that. It is a mercy they did not clip those banks into a straight canal!"

The view was indeed lovely, –the water looked so blue and so large and so limpid, woods and curving banks reflected deep on its peaceful bosom.

"How Vance would enjoy this!" cried Lionel. "It would come into a picture even better than the Thames."

"Vance? who is Vance?"

"The artist, –a great friend of mine. Surely, sir, you have heard of him or seen his pictures!"

"Himself and his pictures are since my time. Days tread down days for the recluse, and he forgets that celebrities rise with their suns, to wane with their moons,

"'Truditur dies die,
Novaeque pergunt interire lunae'"

"All suns do not set; all moons do not wane!" cried Lionel, with blunt enthusiasm. "When Horace speaks elsewhere of the Julian star, he compares it to a moon –'inter ignes minores' –and surely Fame is not among the orbs which 'pergunt interire,' –hasten on to perish!"

"I am glad to see that you retain your recollections of Horace," said Mr. Darrell, frigidly, and without continuing the allusion to celebrities;

"the most charming of all poets to a man of my years, and" (he very dryly added) "the most useful for popular quotation to men at any age."

Then sauntering forth carelessly, he descended the sloping turf, came to the water-side, and threw himself at length on the grass: the wild thyme which he crushed sent up its bruised fragrance. There, resting his face on his hand, Darrell gazed along the water in abstracted silence. Lionel felt that he was forgotten; but he was not hurt. By this time a strong and admiring interest for his cousin had sprung up within his breast: he would have found it difficult to explain why. But whosoever at that moment could have seen Guy Darrell's musing countenance, or whosoever, a few minutes before, could have heard the very sound of his voice, sweetly, clearly full; each slow enunciation unaffectedly, mellowly distinct,—making musical the homeliest; roughest word, would have understood and shared the interest which Lionel could not explain. There are living human faces, which, independently of mere physical beauty, charm and enthrall us more than the most perfect lineaments which Greek sculptor ever lent to a marble face; there are key-notes in the thrilling human voice, simply uttered, which can haunt the heart, rouse the passions, lull rampant multitudes, shake into dust the thrones of guarded kings, and effect more wonders than ever yet have been wrought by the most artful chorus or the deftest quill.

In a few minutes the swans from the farther end of the water came sailing swiftly towards the bank on which Darrell reclined. He had evidently made friends with them, and they rested their white breasts close on the margin, seeking to claim his notice with a low hissing salutation, which, it is to be hoped, they changed for something less sibilant in that famous song with which they depart this life.

Darrell looked up. "They come to be fed," said he, "smooth emblems of the great social union. Affection is the offspring of utility. I am useful to them: they love me." He rose, uncovered, and bowed to the birds in mock courtesy: "Friends, I have no bread to give you."

LIONEL.—"Let me run in for some. I would be useful too."

MR. DARRELL.—"Rival!—useful to my swans?"

LIONEL (tenderly).—"Or to you, sir."

He felt as if he had said too much, and without waiting for permission, ran indoors to find some one whom he could ask for the bread.

"Sonless, childless, hopeless, objectless!" said Darrell, murmuring to himself, and sank again into reverie.

By the time Lionel returned with the bread, another petted friend had joined the master. A tame doe had caught sight of him from her covert far away, came in light bounds to his side, and was pushing her delicate

nostril into his drooping hand. At the sound of Lionel's hurried step, she took flight, trotted off a few paces, then turned, looking.

"I did not know you had deer here."

"Deer!—in this little paddock!—of course not; only that doe. Fairthorn introduced her here. By the by," continued Darrell, who was now throwing the bread to the swans, and had resumed his careless, unmeditative manner, "you were not aware that I have a brother hermit,—a companion besides the swans and the doe. Dick Fairthorn is a year or two younger than myself, the son of my father's bailiff. He was the cleverest boy at his grammar-school. Unluckily he took to the flute, and unfitted himself for the present century. He condescends, however, to act as my secretary,—a fair classical scholar, plays chess, is useful to me,—I am useful to him. We have an affection for each other. I never forgive any one who laughs at him. The half-hour bell, and you will meet him at dinner. Shall we come in and dress?"

They entered the house; the same man-servant was in attendance in the hall. "Show Mr. Haughton to his room." Darrell inclined his head—I use that phrase, for the gesture was neither bow nor nod—turned down a narrow passage and disappeared.

Led up an uneven staircase of oak, black as ebony, with huge balustrades, and newel-posts supporting clumsy balls, Lionel was conducted to a small chamber, modernized a century ago by a faded Chinese paper, and a mahogany bedstead, which took up three-fourths of the space, and was crested with dingy plumes, that gave it the cheerful look of a hearse; and there the attendant said, "Have you the key of your knapsack, sir? shall I put out your things to dress?" Dress! Then for the first time the boy remembered that he had brought with him no evening dress,—nay, evening dress, properly so called, he possessed not at all in any corner of the world. It had never yet entered into his modes of existence. Call to mind when you were a boy of seventeen, "betwixt two ages hovering like a star," and imagine Lionel's sensations. He felt his cheek burn as if he had been detected in a crime. "I have no dress things," he said piteously; "only a change of linen, and this," glancing at the summer jacket. The servant was evidently a most gentleman-like man: his native sphere that of groom of the chambers. "I will mention it to Mr. Darrell; and if you will favour me with your address in London, I will send to telegraph for what you want against to-morrow."

"Many thanks," answered Lionel, recovering his presence of mind; "I will speak to Mr. Darrell myself."

"There is the hot water, sir; that is the bell. I have the honour to be placed at your commands." The door closed, and Lionel unlocked his knapsack; other trousers, other waistcoat had he,—those worn at the fair, and once white. Alas! they had not since then passed to the care of the laundress. Other shoes,—double-soled for walking. There was no

help for it but to appear at dinner, attired as he had been before, in his light pedestrian jacket, morning waistcoat flowered with sprigs, and a fawn-coloured nether man. Could it signify much,—only two men? Could the grave Mr. Darrell regard such trifles?—Yes, if they intimated want of due respect.

”Durum! sed fit levius Patientia
Quicquid corrigere est nefas.”

On descending the stairs, the same high-bred domestic was in waiting to show him into the library. Mr. Darrell was there already, in the simple but punctilious costume of a gentleman who retains in seclusion the habits customary in the world. At the first glance Lionel thought he saw a slight cloud of displeasure on his host’s brow. He went up to Mr. Darrell ingenuously, and apologized for the deficiencies of his itinerant wardrobe. ”Say the truth,” said his host; ”you thought you were coming to an old churl, with whom ceremony was misplaced.”

”Indeed no!” exclaimed Lionel. ”But—but I have so lately left school.”

”Your mother might have thought for you.”

”I did not stay to consult her, indeed, sir; I hope you are not offended.”

”No, but let me not offend you if I take advantage of my years and our relationship to remark that a young man should be careful not to let himself down below the standard of his own rank. If a king could bear to hear that he was only a ceremonial, a private gentleman may remember that there is but a ceremonial between himself and—his hatter!”

Lionel felt the colour mount his brow; but Darrell pressing the distasteful theme no further, and seemingly forgetting its purport, turned his remarks carelessly towards the weather. ”It will be fair to-morrow: there is no mist on the hill yonder. Since you have a painter for a friend, perhaps you yourself are a draughtsman. There are some landscape effects here which Fairthorn shall point out to you.”

”I fear, Mr. Darrell,” said Lionel, looking down, ”that to-morrow I must leave you.”

”So soon? Well, I suppose the place must be very dull.”

”Not that—not that; but I have offended you, and I would not repeat the offence. I have not the ’ceremonial’ necessary to mark me as a gentleman,—either here or at home.”

”So! Bold frankness and ready wit command ceremonials,” returned Darrell, and for the first time his lip wore a smile. ”Let me present to you Mr. Fairthorn,” as the door, opening, showed a shambling awkward

figure, with loose black knee-breeches and buckled shoes. The figure made a strange sidelong bow; and hurrying in a lateral course, like a crab suddenly alarmed, towards a dim recess protected by a long table, sank behind a curtain fold, and seemed to vanish as a crab does amidst the shingles.

"Three minutes yet to dinner, and two before the lettercarrier goes," said the host, glancing at his watch. "Mr. Fairthorn, will you write a note for me?" There was a mutter from behind the curtain. Darrell walked to the place, and whispered a few words, returned to the hearth, rang the bell. "Another letter for the post, Mills: Mr. Fairthorn is sealing it. You are looking at my book-shelves, Lionel. As I understand that your master spoke highly of you, I presume that you are fond of reading."

"I think so, but I am not sure," answered Lionel, whom his cousin's conciliatory words had restored to ease and good-humour.

"You mean, perhaps, that you like reading, if you may choose your own books."

"Or rather, if I may choose my own time to read them, and that would not be on bright summer days."

"Without sacrificing bright summer days, one finds one has made little progress when the long winter nights come."

"Yes, sir. But must the sacrifice be paid in books? I fancy I learned as much in the play-ground as I did in the schoolroom, and for the last few months, in much my own master, reading hard in the forenoon, it is true, for many hours at a stretch, and yet again for a few hours at evening, but rambling also through the streets, or listening to a few friends whom I have contrived to make,—I think, if I can boast of any progress at all, the books have the smaller share in it."

"You would, then, prefer an active life to a studious one?"

"Oh, yes—yes."

"Dinner is served," said the decorous Mr. Mills, throwing open the door.

CHAPTER III.

In our happy country every man's house is his castle. But however stoutly he fortify it, Care enters, as surely as she did in Horace's time, through the porticos of a Roman's villa. Nor, whether

ceilings be fretted with gold and ivory, or whether only coloured with whitewash, does it matter to Care any more than it does to a house-fly. But every tree, be it cedar or blackthorn, can harbour its singing-bird; and few are the homes in which, from nooks least suspected, there starts not a music. Is it quite true that, "non avium citharaeque cantus somnum reducent"? Would not even Damocles himself have forgotten the sword, if the lute-player had chanced on the notes that lull?

The dinner was simple enough, but well dressed and well served. One footman, in plain livery, assisted Mr. Mills. Darrell ate sparingly, and drank only water, which was placed by his side iced, with a single glass of wine at the close of the repast, which he drank on bending his head to Lionel, with a certain knightly grace, and the prefatory words of "Welcome here to a Haughton." Mr. Fairthorn was less abstemious; tasted of every dish, after examining it long through a pair of tortoise-shell spectacles, and drank leisurely through a bottle of port, holding up every glass to the light. Darrell talked with his usual cold but not uncourteous indifference. A remark of Lionel on the portraits in the room turned the conversation chiefly upon pictures, and the host showed himself thoroughly accomplished in the attributes of the various schools and masters. Lionel, who was very fond of the art, and indeed painted well for a youthful amateur, listened with great delight.

"Surely, sir," said he, struck much with a very subtle observation upon the causes why the Italian masters admit of copyists with greater facility than the Flemish,—surely, sir, you yourself must have practised the art of painting?"

"Not I; but I instructed myself as a judge of pictures, because at one time I was a collector."

Fairthorn, speaking for the first time: "The rarest collection,—such Albert Durers! such Holbeins! and that head by Leonardo da Vinci!" He stopped; looked extremely frightened; helped himself to the port, turning his back upon his host, to hold, as usual, the glass to the light.

"Are they here, sir?" asked Lionel.

Darrell's face darkened, and he made no answer; but his head sank on his breast, and he seemed suddenly absorbed in gloomy thought. Lionel felt that he had touched a wrong chord, and glanced timidly towards Fairthorn; but that gentleman cautiously held up his finger, and then rapidly put it to his lip, and as rapidly drew it away. After that signal the boy did not dare to break the silence, which now lasted uninterruptedly till Darrell rose, and with the formal and superfluous question, "Any more wine?" led the way back to the library. There he ensconced himself in an easy-chair, and saying, "Will you find a book for yourself, Lionel?" took a volume at random from the nearest shelf, and soon seemed absorbed in its contents. The room, made irregular by baywindows, and shelves

that projected as in public libraries, abounded with nook and recess. To one of these Fairthorn sidled himself, and became invisible. Lionel looked round the shelves. No belles lettres of our immediate generation were found there; none of those authors most in request in circulating libraries and literary institutes. The shelves disclosed no poets, no essayists, no novelists, more recent than the Johnsonian age. Neither in the lawyer's library were to be found any law books; no, nor the pamphlets and parliamentary volumes that should have spoken of the once eager politician. But there were superb copies of the ancient classics. French and Italian authors were not wanting, nor such of the English as have withstood the test of time. The larger portions of the shelves seemed, however, devoted to philosophical works. Here alone was novelty admitted, the newest essays on science, or the best editions of old works thereon. Lionel at length made his choice,—a volume of the "Faerie Queene." Coffee was served; at a later hour tea. The clock struck ten. Darrell laid down his book.

"Mr. Fairthorn, the flute!"

From the recess a mutter; and presently—the musician remaining still hidden—there came forth the sweetest note,—so dulcet, so plaintive! Lionel's ear was ravished. The music suited well with the enchanted page through which his fancy had been wandering dreamlike,—the flute with the "Faerie Queene." As the air flowed liquid on, Lionel's eyes filled with tears. He did not observe that Darrell was intently watching him. When the music stopped, he turned aside to wipe the tears from his eyes. Somehow or other, what with the poem, what with the flute, his thoughts had wandered far, far hence to the green banks and blue waves of the Thames,—to Sophy's charming face, to her parting childish gift! And where was she now? Whither passing away, after so brief a holiday, into the shadows of forlorn life? Darrell's bell-like voice smote his ear.

"Spenser; you love him! Do you write poetry?" "No, sir: I only feel it!"

"Do neither!" said the host, abruptly. Then, turning away, he lighted his candle, murmured a quick good-night, and disappeared through a side-door which led to his own rooms.

Lionel looked round for Fairthorn, who now emerged /ab anqulo/ from his nook.

"Oh, Mr. Fairthorn, how you have enchanted me! I never believed the flute could have been capable of such effects!"

Mr. Fairthorn's grotesque face lighted up. He took off his spectacles, as if the better to contemplate the face of his eulogist. "So you were pleased! really?" he said, chuckling a strange, grim chuckle, deep in his inmost self.

"Pleased! it is a cold word! Who would not be more than pleased?"

"You should hear me in the open air."

"Let me do so-to-morrow."

"My dear young sir, with all my heart. Hist!"—gazing round as if haunted,—"I like you. I wish him to like you. Answer all his questions as if you did not care how he turned you inside out. Never ask him a question, as if you sought to know what he did not himself confide. So there is some thing, you think, in a flute, after all? There are people who prefer the fiddle."

"Then they never heard your flute, Mr. Fairthorn." The musician again emitted his discordant chuckle, and, nodding his head nervously and cordially, shambled away without lighting a candle, and was engulfed in the shadows of some mysterious corner.

CHAPTER IV.

The old world and the new.

It was long before Lionel could sleep. What with the strange house and the strange master, what with the magic flute and the musician's admonitory caution, what with tender and regretful reminiscences of Sophy, his brain had enough to work on. When he slept at last, his slumber was deep and heavy, and he did not wake till gently shaken by the well-bred arm of Mr. Mills. "I humbly beg pardon: nine o'clock, sir, and the breakfast-bell going to ring." Lionel's toilet was soon hurried over; Mr. Darrell and Fairthorn were talking together as he entered the breakfast-room,—the same room as that in which they had dined.

"Good morning, Lionel," said the host. "No leave-taking to-day, as you threatened. I find you have made an appointment with Mr. Fairthorn, and I shall place you under his care. You may like to look over the old house, and make yourself"—Darrell paused—"at home," jerked out Mr. Fairthorn, filling up the hiatus. Darrell turned his eye towards the speaker, who evidently became much frightened, and, after looking in vain for a corner, sidled away to the window and poked himself behind the curtain. "Mr. Fairthorn, in the capacity of my secretary, has learned to find me thoughts, and put them in his own words," said Darrell, with a coldness almost icy. He then seated himself at the breakfast-table; Lionel followed his example, and Mr. Fairthorn, courageously emerging, also took a chair and a roll. "You are a true diviner, Mr. Darrell," said Lionel; "it is a glorious day."

"But there will be showers later. The fish are at play on the surface of the lake," Darrell added, with a softened glance towards Fairthorn, who was looking the picture of misery. "After twelve, it will be just the weather for trout to rise; and if you fish, Mr. Fairthorn will lend you a rod. He is a worthy successor of Izaak Walton, and loves a companion as Izaak did, but more rarely gets one."

"Are there trout in your lake, sir?"

"The lake! You must not dream of invading that sacred water. The inhabitants of rivulets and brooks not within my boundary are beyond the pale of Fawley civilization, to be snared and slaughtered like Caifres, red men, or any other savages, for whom we bait with a missionary and whom we impale on a bayonet. But I regard my lake as a politic community, under the protection of the law, and leave its denizens to devour each other, as Europeans, fishes, and other cold-blooded creatures wisely do, in order to check the overgrowth of population. To fatten one pike it takes a great many minnows. Naturally I support the vested rights of pike. I have been a lawyer."

It would be in vain to describe the manner in which Mr. Darrell vented this or similar remarks of mocking irony or sarcastic spleen. It was not bitter nor sneering, but in his usual mellifluous level tone and passionless tranquillity.

The breakfast was just over as a groom passed in front of the windows with a led horse. "I am going to leave you, Lionel," said the host, "to make friends with Mr. Fairthorn, and I thus complete, according to my own original intention, the sentence which he diverted astray." He passed across the hall to the open house-door, and stood by the horse, stroking its neck and giving some directions to the groom. Lionel and Fairthorn followed to the threshold, and the beauty of the horse provoked the boy's admiration: it was a dark muzzled brown, of that fine old-fashioned breed of English roadster which is now so seldom seen,—showy, bownecked, long-tailed, stumbling, reedy hybrids, born of bad barbs, ill-mated, having mainly supplied their place. This was, indeed, a horse of great power, immense girth of loin, high shoulder, broad hoof; and such a head! the ear, the frontal, the nostril! you seldom see a human physiognomy half so intelligent, half so expressive of that high spirit and sweet generous temper, which, when united, constitute the ideal of thorough-breeding, whether in horse or man. The English rider was in harmony with the English steed. Darrell at this moment was resting his arm lightly on the animal's shoulder, and his head still uncovered. It has been said before that he was, of imposing presence; the striking attribute of his person, indeed, was that of unconscious grandeur; yet, though above the ordinary height, he was not very tall—five feet eleven at the utmost—and far from being very erect. On the contrary, there was that habitual bend in his proud neck which men who meditate much and live alone almost invariably contract. But there was, to use an expression common with our older writers, that "great air" about him which filled

the eye, and gave him the dignity of elevated stature, the commanding aspect that accompanies the upright carriage. His figure was inclined to be slender, though broad of shoulder and deep of chest; it was the figure of a young man and probably little changed from what it might have been at five-and-twenty. A certain youthfulness still lingered even on the countenance,—strange, for sorrow is supposed to expedite the work of age; and Darrell had known sorrow of a kind most adapted to harrow his peculiar nature, as great in its degree as ever left man's heart in ruins. No gray was visible in the dark brown hair, that, worn short behind, still retained in front the large Jove-like curl. No wrinkle, save at the corner of the eyes, marred the pale bronze of the firm cheek; the forehead was smooth as marble, and as massive. It was that forehead which chiefly contributed to the superb expression of his whole aspect. It was high to a fault; the perceptive organs, over a dark, strongly-marked, arched eyebrow, powerfully developed, as they are with most eminent lawyers; it did not want for breadth at the temples; yet, on the whole, it bespoke more of intellectual vigour and dauntless will than of serene philosophy or all-embracing benevolence. It was the forehead of a man formed to command and awe the passions and intellect of others by the strength of passions in himself, rather concentrated than chastised, and by an intellect forceful from the weight of its mass rather than the niceness of its balance. The other features harmonized with that brow; they were of the noblest order of aquiline, at once high and delicate. The lip had a rare combination of exquisite refinement and inflexible resolve. The eye, in repose, was cold, bright, unrevealing, with a certain absent, musing, self-absorbed expression, that often made the man's words appear as if spoken mechanically, and assisted towards that seeming of listless indifference to those whom he addressed, by which he wounded vanity without, perhaps, any malice prepense. But it was an eye in which the pupil could suddenly expand, the hue change from gray to dark, and the cold still brightness flash into vivid fire. It could not have occurred to any one, even to the most commonplace woman, to have described Darrell's as a handsome face; the expression would have seemed trivial and derogatory; the words that would have occurred to all, would have been somewhat to this effect: "What a magnificent countenance! What a noble head!" Yet an experienced physiognomist might have noted that the same lineaments which bespoke a virtue bespoke also its neighbouring vice; that with so much will there went stubborn obstinacy; that with that power of grasp there would be the tenacity in adherence which narrows, in astringing, the intellect; that a prejudice once conceived, a passion once cherished, would resist all rational argument for relinquishment. When men of this mould do relinquish prejudice or passion, it is by their own impulse, their own sure conviction that what they hold is worthless: then they do not yield it graciously; they fling it from them in scorn, but not a scorn that consoles. That which they thus wrench away had "grown a living part of themselves;" their own flesh bleeds; the wound seldom or never heals. Such men rarely fail in the achievement of what they covet, if the gods are neutral; but, adamant against the world, they are vulnerable through their affections. Their love is intense, but undemonstrative; their hatred implacable, but

unrevengeful,—too proud to revenge, too galled to pardon.

There stood Guy Darrell, to whom the bar had destined its highest honours, to whom the senate had accorded its most rapturous cheers; and the more you gazed on him as he there stood, the more perplexed became the enigma,—how with a career sought with such energy, advanced with such success, the man had abruptly subsided into a listless recluse, and the career had been voluntarily resigned for a home without neighbours, a hearth without children.

"I had no idea," said Lionel, as Darrell rode slowly away, soon lost from sight amidst the thick foliage of summer trees,—"I had no idea that my cousin was so young!"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Fairthorn; "he is only a year older than I am!"

"Older than you!" exclaimed Lionel, staring in blunt amaze at the elderly-looking personage beside him; "yet true, he told me so himself."

"And I am fifty-one last birthday." "Mr. Darrell fifty-two! Incredible!"

"I don't know why we should ever grow old, the life we lead," observed Mr. Fairthorn, readjusting his spectacles. "Time stands so still! Fishing, too, is very conducive to longevity. If you will follow me, we will get the rods; and the flute,—you are quite sure you would like the flute? Yes! thank you, my dear young sir. And yet there are folks who prefer the fiddle!"

"Is not the sun a little too bright for the fly at present; and will you not, in the meanwhile, show me over the house?"

"Very well; not that this house has much worth seeing. The other indeed would have had a music-room! But, after all, nothing like the open air for the flute. This way."

I spare thee, gentle reader, the minute inventory of Fawley Manor House. It had nothing but its antiquity to recommend it. It had a great many rooms, all, except those used as the dining-room and library, very small, and very low,—innumerable closets, nooks,—unexpected cavities, as if made on purpose for the venerable game of hide-and-seek. Save a stately old kitchen, the offices were sadly defective even for Mr. Darrell's domestic establishment, which consisted but of two men and four maids (the stablemen not lodging in the house). Drawing-room properly speaking that primitive mansion had none. At some remote period a sort of gallery under the gable roofs (above the first floor), stretching from end to end of the house, might have served for the reception of guests on grand occasions; for fragments of mouldering tapestry still here and there clung to the walls; and a high chimney-piece, whereon, in plaster relief, was commemorated the memorable fishing party of Antony and Cleopatra, retained patches of colour and gilding, which must when fresh have made

the Egyptian queen still more appallingly hideous, and the fish at the end of Antony's hook still less resembling any creature known to ichthyologists.

The library had been arranged into shelves from floor to roof by Mr. Darrell's father, and subsequently, for the mere purpose of holding as many volumes as possible, brought out into projecting wings (college-like) by Darrell himself, without any pretension to mediaeval character. With this room communicated a small reading-closet, which the host reserved to himself; and this, by a circular stair cut into the massive wall, ascended first into Mr. Darrell's sleeping-chamber, and thence into a gable recess that adjoined the gallery, and which the host had fitted up for the purpose of scientific experiments in chemistry or other branches of practical philosophy. These more private rooms Lionel was not permitted to enter. Altogether the house was one of those cruel tenements which it would be a sin to pull down, or even materially to alter, but which it would be an hourly inconvenience for a modern family to inhabit. It was out of all character with Mr. Darrell's former position in life, or with the fortune which Lionel vaguely supposed him to possess, and considerably underrated. Like Sir Nicholas Bacon, the man had grown too large for his habitation.

"I don't wonder," said Lionel, as, their wanderings over, he and Fairthorn found themselves in the library, "that Mr. Darrell began to build a new house. But it would have been a great pity to pull down this for it."

"Pull down this! Don't hint at such an idea to Mr. Darrell. He would as soon have pulled down the British Monarchy! Nay, I suspect, sooner."

"But the new building must surely have swallowed up the old one?"

"Oh, no; Mr. Darrell had a plan by which he would have enclosed this separately in a kind of court, with an open screen-work or cloister; and it was his intention to appropriate it entirely to mediaeval antiquities, of which he has a wonderful collection. He had a notion of illustrating every earlier reign in which his ancestors flourished,—different apartments in correspondence with different dates. It would have been a chronicle of national manners."

"But, if it be not an impertinent question, where is this collection? In London?"

"Hush! hush! I will give you a peep of some of the treasures, only don't betray me."

Fairthorn here, with singular rapidity, considering that he never moved in a straightforward direction, undulated into the open air in front of the house, described a rhomboid towards a side-buttress in the new building, near to which was a postern-door; unlocked that door from a key

in his pocket, and, motioning Lionel to follow him, entered within the ribs of the stony skeleton. Lionel followed in a sort of supernatural awe, and beheld, with more substantial alarm, Mr. Fairthorn winding up an inclined plank which he embraced with both arms, and by which he ultimately ascended to a timber joist in what should have been an upper floor, only flooring there was none. Perched there, Fairthorn glared down on Lionel through his spectacles. "Dangerous," he said whisperingly; "but one gets used to everything! If you feel afraid, don't venture!"

Lionel, animated by that doubt of his courage, sprang up the plank, balancing himself schoolboy fashion, with outstretched arms, and gained the side of his guide.

"Don't touch me!" exclaimed Mr. Fairthorn, shrinking, "or we shall both be over. Now observe and imitate." Dropping himself, then, carefully and gradually, till he dropped on the timber joist as if it were a velocipede, his long legs dangling down, he with thigh and hand impelled himself onward till he gained the ridge of a wall, on which he delivered his person, and wiped his spectacles.

Lionel was not long before he stood in the same place. "Here we are," said Fairthorn.

"I don't see the collection," answered Lionel, first peering down athwart the joists upon the rugged ground overspread with stones and rubbish, then glancing up through similar interstices above to the gaunt rafters.

"Here are some,—most precious," answered Fairthorn, tapping behind him. "Walled up, except where these boards, cased in iron, are nailed across, with a little door just big enough to creep through; but that is locked, —Chubb's lock, and Mr. Darrell keeps the key!—treasures for a palace! No, you can't peep through here—not a chink; but come on a little further,—mind your footing."

Skirting the wall, and still on the perilous ridge, Fairthorn crept on, formed an angle, and stopping short, clapped his eye to the crevice of some planks nailed rudely across a yawning aperture. Lionel found another crevice for himself, and saw, piled up in admired disorder, pictures, with their backs turned to a desolate wall, rare cabinets, and articles of curious furniture, chests, boxes, crates,—heaped pell-mell. This receptacle had been roughly floored in deal, in order to support its miscellaneous contents, and was lighted from a large window (not visible in front of the house), glazed in dull rough glass, with ventilators.

"These are the heavy things, and least costly things, that no one could well rob. The pictures here are merely curious as early specimens, intended for the old house, all spoiling and rotting; Mr. Darrell wishes them to do so, I believe! What he wishes must be done! my dear young sir: a prodigious mind; it is of granite!"

"I cannot understand it," said Lionel, aghast. "The last man I should have thought capriciously whimsical."

"Whimsical! Bless my soul! don't say such a word, don't, pray! or the roof will fall down upon us! Come away. You have seen all you can see. You must go first now; mind that loose stone there!"

Nothing further was said till they were out of the building; and Lionel felt like a knight of old who had been led into sepulchral halls by a wizard.

CHAPTER V.

The annals of empire are briefly chronicled in family records brought down to the present day, showing that the race of men is indeed "like leaves on trees, now green in youth, now withering on the ground." Yet to the branch the most bare will green leaves return, so long as the sap can remount to the branch from the root; but the branch which has ceased to take life from the root—hang it high, hang it low—is a prey to the wind and the woodman.

It was mid-day. The boy and his new friend were standing apart, as becomes silent anglers, on the banks of a narrow brawling rivulet, running through green pastures, half a mile from the house. The sky was overcast, as Darrell had predicted, but the rain did not yet fall. The two anglers were not long before they had filled a basket with small trout. Then Lionel, who was by no means fond of fishing, laid his rod on the bank, and strolled across the long grass to his companion.

"It will rain soon," said he. "Let us take advantage of the present time, and hear the flute, while we can yet enjoy the open air. No, not by the margin, or you will be always looking after the trout. On the rising ground, see that old thorn tree; let us go and sit under it. The new building looks well from it. What a pile it would have been! I may not ask you, I suppose, why it is left uncompleted. Perhaps it would have cost too much, or would have been disproportionate to the estate."

"To the present estate it would have been disproportioned, but not to the estate Mr. Darrell intended to add to it. As to cost, you don't know him. He would never have undertaken what he could not afford to complete; and what he once undertook, no thoughts of the cost would have scared him from finishing. Prodigious mind,—granite! And so rich!" added Fairthorn, with an air of great pride. "I ought to know; I write all his letters on money matters. How much do you think he has, without counting land?"

"I cannot guess."

"Nearly half a million; in two years it will be more than half a million. And he had not three hundred a year when he began life; for Fawley was sadly mortgaged."

"Is it possible! Could any lawyer make half a million at the bar?"

"If any man could, Mr. Darrell would. When he sets his mind on a thing, the thing is done; no help for it. But his fortune was not all made at the bar, though a great part of it was. An old East Indian bachelor of the same name, but who had never been heard of hereabouts till he wrote from Calcutta to Mr. Darrell (inquiring if they were any relation, and Mr. Darrell referred him to the College-at-Arms, which proved that they came from the same stock ages ago), left him all his money. Mr. Darrell was not dependent on his profession when he stood up in Parliament. And since we have been here, such savings! Not that Mr. Darrell is avaricious, but how can he spend money in this place? You should have seen the establishment we kept in Carlton Gardens. Such a cook too, —a French gentleman, looked like a marquis. Those were happy days, and proud ones! It is true that I order the dinner here, but it can't be the same thing. Do you like fillet of veal?—we have one to-day."

"We used to have fillet of veal at school on Sundays. I thought it good then."

"It makes a nice mince," said Mr. Fairthorn, with a sensual movement of his lips. "One must think of dinner when one lives in the country: so little else to think of! Not that Mr. Darrell does, but then he is granite!"

"Still," said Lionel, smiling, "I do not get my answer. Why was the house uncompleted? and why did Mr. Darrell retire from public life?"

"He took both into his head; and when a thing once gets there, it is no use asking why. But," added Fairthorn, and his innocent ugly face changed into an expression of earnest sadness,—"but no doubt he had his reasons. He has reasons for all he does, only they lie far, far away from what appears on the surface,—far as that rivulet lies from its source! My dear young sir, Mr. Darrell has known griefs on which it does not become you and me to talk. He never talks of them. The least I can do for my benefactor is not to pry into his secrets, nor babble them out. And he is so kind, so good, never gets into a passion; but it is so awful to wound him,—it gives him such pain; that's why he frightens me,—frightens me horribly; and so he will you when you come to know him. Prodigious mind!—granite,—overgrown with sensitive plants. Yes, a little music will do us both good."

Mr. Fairthorn screwed his flute, an exceedingly handsome one. He pointed

out its beauties to Lionel—a present from Mr. Darrell last Christmas—and then he began. Strange thing, Art! especially music. Out of an art, a man may be so trivial you would mistake him for an imbecile,—at best a grown infant. Put him into his art, and how high he soars above you! How quietly he enters into a heaven of which he has become a denizen, and unlocking the gates with his golden key, admits you to follow, a humble reverent visitor.

In his art, Fairthorn was certainly a master, and the air he now played was exquisitely soft and plaintive; it accorded with the clouded yet quiet sky, with the lone but summer landscape, with Lionel's melancholic but not afflicted train of thought. The boy could only murmur "Beautiful!" when the musician ceased.

"It is an old air," said Fairthorn; "I don't think it is known. I found its scale scrawled down in a copy of the 'Eikon Basilike,' with the name of 'Joannes Darrell, Esq., Aurat,' written under it. That, by the date, was Sir John Darrell, the cavalier who fought for Charles I., father of the graceless Sir Ralph, who flourished under Charles II. Both their portraits are in the dining-room."

"Tell me something of the family; I know so little about it,—not even how the Haughtons and Darrells seem to have been so long connected. I see by the portraits that the Haughton name was borne by former Darrells, then apparently dropped, now it is borne again by my cousin."

"He bears it only as a Christian name. Your grandfather was his sponsor. But he is nevertheless the head of your family."

"So he says. How?"

Fairthorn gathered himself up, his knees to his chin, and began in the tone of a guide who has got his lesson by heart; though it was not long before he warmed into his subject.

"The Darrells are supposed to have got their name from a knight in the reign of Edward III., who held the lists in a joust victoriously against all comers, and was called, or called himself, John the Dare-all; or, in old spelling, the Der-all. They were amongst the most powerful families in the country; their alliances were with the highest houses,—Montfichets, Nevilles, Mowbrays; they descended through such marriages from the blood of Plantagenet kings. You'll find their names in chronicles in the early French wars. Unluckily they attached themselves to the fortunes of Earl Warwick, the king-maker, to whose blood they were allied; their representative was killed in the fatal field of Barnet; their estates were of course confiscated; the sole son and heir of that ill-fated politician passed into the Low Countries, where he served as a soldier. His son and grandson followed the same calling under foreign banners. But they must have kept up the love of the old land; for in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII., the last male Darrell returned

to England with some broad gold pieces saved by himself or his exiled fathers, bought some land in this county, in which the ancestral possessions had once been large, and built the present house, of a size suited to the altered fortunes of a race that in a former age had manned castles with retainers. The baptismal name of the soldier who thus partially refounded the old line in England was that now borne by your cousin, Guy,—a name always favoured by Fortune in the family annals; for in Elizabeth's time, from the rank of small gentry, to which their fortune alone lifted them since their return to their native land, the Darrells rose once more into wealth and eminence under a handsome young Sir Guy,—we have his picture in black flowered velvet,—who married the heiress of the Haughtons, a family that had grown rich under the Tudors, and was in high favour with the Maiden-Queen. This Sir Guy was befriended by Essex and knighted by Elizabeth herself. Their old house was then abandoned for the larger mansion of the Haughtons, which had also the advantage of being nearer to the Court, The renewed prosperity of the Darrells was of short duration. The Civil Wars came on, and Sir John Darrell took the losing side. He escaped to France with his only son. He is said to have been an accomplished, melancholy man; and my belief is, that he composed that air which you justly admire for its mournful sweetness. He turned Roman Catholic and died in a convent. But the son, Ralph, was brought up in France with Charles II, and other gay roisterers. On the return of the Stuart, Ralph ran off with the daughter of the Roundhead to whom his estates had been given, and, after getting them back, left his wife in the country, and made love to other men's wives in town. Shocking profligate! no fruit could thrive upon such a branch. He squandered all he could squander, and would have left his children beggars, but that he was providentially slain in a tavern brawl for boasting of a lady's favours to her husband's face. The husband suddenly stabbed him,—no fair duello, for Sir Ralph was invincible with the small sword. Still the family fortune was much dilapidated, yet still the Darrells lived in the fine house of the Haughtons, and left Fawley to the owls. But Sir Ralph's son, in his old age, married a second time, a young lady of high rank, an earl's daughter. He must have been very much in love with her, despite his age, for to win her consent or her father's he agreed to settle all the Haughton estates on her and the children she might bear to him. The smaller Darrell property had already been entailed on his son by his first marriage. This is how the family came to split. Old Darrell had children by his second wife; the eldest of those children took the Haughton name and inherited the Haughton property. The son by the first marriage had nothing but Fawley and the scanty domain round it. You descend from the second marriage, Mr. Darrell from the first. You understand now, my dear young sir?"

"Yes, a little; but I should very much like to know where those fine Haughton estates are now?"

"Where they are now? I can't say. They were once in Middlesex. Probably much of the land, as it was sold piecemeal, fell into small allotments, constantly changing hands. But the last relics of the property were, I know, bought on speculation by Cox the distiller; for,

when we were in London, by Mr. Darrell's desire I went to look after them, and inquire if they could be repurchased. And I found that so rapid in a few years has been the prosperity of this great commercial country, that if one did buy them back, one would buy twelve villas, several streets, two squares, and a paragon! But as that symptom of national advancement, though a proud thought in itself, may not have any pleasing interest for you, I return to the Darrells. From the time in which the Houghton estate had parted from them, they settled back in their old house of Fawley. But they could never again hold up their heads with the noblemen and great squires in the county. As much as they could do to live at all upon the little patrimony; still the reminiscence of what they had been made them maintain it jealously and entail it rigidly. The eldest son would never have thought of any profession or business; the younger sons generally became soldiers, and being always a venturesome race, and having nothing particular to make them value their existence, were no less generally killed off betimes. The family became thoroughly obscure, slipped out of place in the county, seldom rose to be even justices of the peace, never contrived to marry heiresses again, but only the daughters of some neighbouring parson or squire as poor as themselves, but always of gentle blood. Oh, they were as proud as Spaniards in that respect! So from father to son, each generation grew obscurer and poorer; for, entail the estate as they might, still some settlements on it were necessary, and no settlements were ever brought into it; and thus entails were cut off to admit some new mortgage, till the rent-roll was somewhat less than L300 a year when Mr. Darrell's father came into possession. Yet somehow or other he got to college, where no Darrell had been since the time of the Glorious Revolution, and was a learned man and an antiquary,—A GREAT ANTIQUARY! You may have read his works. I know there is one copy of them in the British Museum, and there is another here, but that copy Mr. Darrell keeps under lock and key."

"I am ashamed to say I don't even know the titles of those works."

"There were 'Popular Ballads on the Wars of the Roses;' 'Darrelliana,' consisting of traditional and other memorials of the Darrell family; 'Inquiry into the Origin of Legends Connected with Dragons;' 'Hours amongst Monumental Brasses,' and other ingenious lucubrations above the taste of the vulgar; some of them were even read at the Royal Society of Antiquaries. They cost much to print and publish. But I have heard my father, who was his bailiff, say that he was a pleasant man, and was fond of reciting old scraps of poetry, which he did with great energy; indeed, Mr. Darrell declares that it was the noticing, in his father's animated and felicitous elocution, the effects that voice, look, and delivery can give to words, which made Mr. Darrell himself the fine speaker he is. But I can only recollect the antiquary as a very majestic gentleman, with a long pigtail—awful, rather, not so much so as his son, but still awful—and so sad-looking; you would not have recovered your spirits for a week if you had seen him, especially when the old house wanted repairs, and he was thinking how he could pay for them!"

"Was Mr. Darrell, the present one, an only child?"

"Yes, and much with his father, whom he loved most dearly, and to this day he sighs if he has to mention his father's name! He has old Mr. Darrell's portrait over the chimney-piece in his own reading-room; and he had it in his own library in Carlton Gardens. Our Mr. Darrell's mother was very pretty, even as I remember her: she died when he was about ten years old. And she too was a relation of yours,—a Haughton by blood,—but perhaps you will be ashamed of her, when I say she was a governess in a rich mercantile family. She had been left an orphan. I believe old Mr. Darrell (not that he was old then) married her because the Haughtons could or would do nothing for her, and because she was much snubbed and put upon, as I am told governesses usually are,—married her because, poor as he was, he was still the head of both families, and bound to do what he could for decayed scions. The first governess a Darrell, ever married; but no true Darrell would have called that a mesalliance since she was still a Haughton and 'Fors non mutat genus,'—Chance does not change race."

"But how comes it that the Haughtons, my grandfather Haughton, I suppose, would do nothing for his own kinswoman?"

"It was not your grandfather Robert Haughton, who was a generous man,—he was then a mere youngster, hiding himself for debt,—but your great-grandfather, who was a hard man and on the turf. He never had money to give,—only money for betting. He left the Haughton estates sadly clipped. But when Robert succeeded, he came forward, was godfather to our Mr. Darrell, insisted on sharing the expense of sending him to Eton, where he became greatly distinguished; thence to Oxford, where he increased his reputation; and would probably have done more for him, only Mr. Darrell, once his foot on the ladder, wanted no help to climb to the top."

"Then my grandfather, Robert, still had the Haughton estates? Their last relics had not been yet transmuted by Mr. Cox into squares and a paragon?"

"No; the grand old mansion, though much dilapidated, with its park, though stripped of salable timber, was still left with a rental from farms that still appertained to the residence, which would have sufficed a prudent man for the luxuries of life, and allowed a reserve fund to clear off the mortgages gradually. Abstinence and self-denial for one or two generations would have made a property, daily rising in value as the metropolis advanced to its outskirts, a princely estate for a third. But Robert Haughton, though not on the turf, had a grand way of living; and while Guy Darrell went into the law to make a small patrimony a large fortune, your father, my dear young sir, was put into the Guards to reduce a large patrimony—into Mr. Cox's distillery."

Lionel coloured, but remained silent.

Fairthorn, who was as unconscious in his zest of narrator that he was giving pain as an entomologist in his zest for collecting when he pins a live moth in his cabinet, resumed: "Your father and Guy Darrell were warm friends as boys and youths. Guy was the elder of the two, and Charlie Haughton (I beg your pardon, he was always called Charlie) looked up to him as to an elder brother. Many's the scrape Guy got him out of; and many a pound, I believe, when Guy had some funds of his own, did Guy lend to Charlie."

"I am very sorry to hear that," said Lionel, sharply. Fairthorn looked frightened. "I 'm afraid I have made a blunder. Don't tell Mr. Darrell."

"Certainly not; I promise. But how came my father to need this aid, and how came they at last to quarrel?"

Your father Charlie became a gay young man about town, and very much the fashion. He was like you in person, only his forehead was lower, and his eye not so steady. Mr. Darrell studied the law in chambers. When Robert Haughton died, what with his debts, what with his father's, and what with Charlie's post-obits and I O U's, there seemed small chance indeed of saving the estate to the Haughtons. But then Mr. Darrell looked close into matters, and with such skill did he settle them that he removed the fear of foreclosure; and what with increasing the rental here and there, and replacing old mortgages by new at less interest, he contrived to extract from the property an income of nine hundred pounds a year to Charlie (three times the income Darrell had inherited himself), where before it had seemed that the debts were more than the assets. Foreseeing how much the land would rise in value, he then earnestly implored Charlie (who unluckily had the estate in fee-simple, as Mr. Darrell has this, to sell if he pleased) to live on his income, and in a few years a part of the property might be sold for building purposes, on terms that would save all the rest, with the old house in which Darrells and Haughtons both had once reared generations. Charlie promised, I know, and I've no doubt, my dear young sir, quite sincerely; but all men are not granite! He took to gambling, incurred debts of honour, sold the farms one by one, resorted to usurers, and one night, after playing six hours at piquet, nothing was left for him but to sell all that remained to Mr. Cox the distiller, unknown to Mr. Darrell, who was then married himself, working hard, and living quite out of news of the fashionable world. Then Charlie Haughton sold out of the Guards, spent what he got for his commission, went into the Line; and finally, in a country town, in which I don't think he was quartered, but having gone there on some sporting speculation, was unwillingly detained, married—"

"My mother!" said Lionel, haughtily; "and the best of women she is.

What then?"

"Nothing, my dear young sir,—nothing, except that Mr. Darrell never forgave it. He has his prejudices: this marriage shocked one of them."

"Prejudice against my poor mother! I always supposed so! I wonder why? The most simple-hearted, inoffensive, affectionate woman."

"I have not a doubt of it; but it is beginning to rain. Let us go home. I should like some luncheon: it breaks the day."

"Tell me first why Mr. Darrell has a prejudice against my mother. I don't think that he has even seen her. Unaccountable caprice! Shocked him, too,—what a word! Tell me—I beg—I insist."

"But you know," said Fairthorn, half piteously, half snappishly, "that Mrs. Haughton was the daughter of a linendraper, and her father's money got Charlie out of the county jail; and Mr. Darrell said, 'Sold even your name!' My father heard him say it in the hall at Fawley. Mr. Darrell was there during a long vacation, and your father came to see him. Your father fired up, and they never saw each other, I believe, again."

Lionel remained still as if thunder-stricken. Something in his mother's language and manner had at times made him suspect that she was not so well born as his father. But it was not the discovery that she was a tradesman's daughter that galled him; it was the thought that his father was bought for the altar out of the county jail! It was those cutting words, "Sold even your name." His face, before very crimson, became livid; his head sank on his breast. He walked towards the old gloomy house by Fairthorn's side, as one who, for the first time in life, feels on his heart the leaden weight of an hereditary shame.

CHAPTER VI.

Showing how sinful it is in a man who does not care for his honour to beget children.

When Lionel saw Mr. Fairthorn devoting his intellectual being to the contents of a cold chicken-pie, he silently stepped out of the room and slunk away into a thick copse at the farthest end of the paddock. He longed to be alone. The rain descended, not heavily, but in penetrating drizzle; he did not feel it, or rather he felt glad that there was no gaudy mocking sunlight. He sat down forlorn in the hollows of a glen which the copse covered, and buried his face in his clasped hands.

Lionel Haughton, as the reader may have noticed, was no premature man,—

a manly boy, but still a habitant of the twilight, dreamy, shadow-land of boyhood. Noble elements were stirring fitfully within him, but their agencies were crude and undeveloped. Sometimes, through the native acuteness of his intellect, he apprehended truths quickly and truly as a man; then, again, through the warm haze of undisciplined tenderness, or the raw mists of that sensitive pride in which objects, small in themselves, loom large with undetected outlines, he fell back into the passionate dimness of a child's reasoning. He was intensely ambitious; Quixotic in the point of honour; dauntless in peril: but morbidly trembling at the very shadow of disgrace, as a foal, destined to be the war-horse and trample down levelled steel, starts in its tranquil pastures at the rustling of a leaf. Glowingly romantic, but not inclined to vent romance in literary creations, his feelings were the more high-wrought and enthusiastic because they had no outlet in poetic channels. Most boys of great ability and strong passion write verses—it is Nature's relief to brain and heart at the critical turning age. Most boys thus gifted do so; a few do not, and out of those few Fate selects the great men of action,—those large luminous characters that stamp poetry on the world's prosaic surface. Lionel had in him the pith and substance of Fortune's grand nobodies, who become Fame's abrupt somebodies when the chances of life throw suddenly in their way a noble something, to be ardently coveted and boldly won. But I repeat, as yet he was a boy; so he sat there, his hands before his face, an unreasoning self-torturer. He knew now why this haughty Darrell had written with so little tenderness and respect to his beloved mother. Darrell looked on her as the cause of his ignoble kinsman's "sale of name;" nay, most probably ascribed to her not the fond girlish love which levels all disparities of rank, but the vulgar cold-blooded design to exchange her father's bank-notes for a marriage beyond her station. And he was the debtor to this supercilious creditor, as his father had been before him. His father! till then he had been so proud of that relationship! Mrs. Haughton had not been happy with her captain; his confirmed habits of wild dissipation had embittered her union, and at last worn away her wifely affections. But she had tended and nursed him in his last illness as the lover of her youth; and though occasionally she hinted at his faults, she ever spoke of him as the ornament of all society,—poor, it is true, harassed by unfeeling creditors, but the finest of fine gentlemen. Lionel had never heard from her of the ancestral estates sold for a gambling debt; never from her of the county jail nor the mercenary misalliance. In boyhood, before we have any cause to be proud of ourselves, we are so proud of our fathers, if we have a decent excuse for it. Of his father could Lionel Haughton be proud now? And Darrell was cognizant of his paternal disgrace, had taunted his father in yonder old hall—for what?—the marriage from which Lionel sprang! The hands grew tighter and tighter before that burning face. He did not weep, as he had done in Vance's presence at a thought much less galling. Not that tears would have misbecome him. Shallow judges of human nature are they who think that tears in themselves ever misbecome boy or even man. Well did the sternest of Roman writers place the arch distinction of humanity aloft from all meaner of Heaven's creatures, in the prerogative of tears!

Sooner mayst thou trust thy purse to a professional pickpocket than give loyal friendship to the man who boasts of eyes to which the heart never mounts in dew! Only, when man weeps he should be alone,—not because tears are weak, but because they should be sacred. Tears are akin to prayers. Pharisees parade prayer! impostors parade tears. O Pegasus, Pegasus,—softly, softly,—thou hast hurried me off amidst the clouds: drop me gently down—there, by the side of the motionless boy in the shadowy glen.

CHAPTER VII.

Lionel Haughton, having hitherto much improved his chance of fortune, decides the question, "What will he do with it?"

"I have been seeking you everywhere," said a well-known voice; and a hand rested lightly on Lionel's shoulder. The boy looked up, startled, but yet heavily, and saw Guy Darrell, the last man on earth he could have desired to see. "Will you come in for a few minutes? you are wanted."

"What for? I would rather stay here. Who can want me?"

Darrell, struck by the words and the sullen tone in which they were uttered, surveyed Lionel's face for an instant, and replied in a voice involuntarily more kind than usual,—

"Some one very commonplace, but since the Picts went out of fashion, very necessary to mortals the most sublime. I ought to apologize for his coming. You threatened to leave me yesterday because of a defect in your wardrobe. Mr. Fairthorn wrote to my tailor to hasten hither and repair it. He is here. I commend him to your custom! Don't despise him because he makes for a man of my remote generation. Tailors are keen observers and do not grow out of date so quickly as politicians."

The words were said with a playful good-humour very uncommon to Mr. Darrell. The intention was obviously kind and kinsmanlike. Lionel sprang to his feet; his lip curled, his eye flashed, and his crest rose.

"No, sir; I will not stoop to this! I will not be clothed by your charity,—yours! I will not submit to an implied taunt upon my poor mother's ignorance of the manners of a rank to which she was not born! You said we might not like each other, and, if so, we should part forever. I do not like you, and I will go!" He turned abruptly, and walked to the house—magnanimous. If Mr. Darrell had not been the most singular of men, he might well have been offended. As it was, though few were less accessible to surprise, he was surprised. But offended? Judge for yourself. "I declare," muttered Guy Darrell, gazing on the boy's

receding figure, "I declare that I almost feel as if I could once again be capable of an emotion! I hope I am not going to like that boy! The old Darrell blood in his veins, surely. I might have spoken as he did at his age, but I must have had some better reason for it. What did I say to justify such an explosion?"

"/Quid feci?—ubi lapsus?/ Gone, no doubt, to pack up his knapsack, and take the Road to Ruin! Shall I let him go? Better for me, if I am really in danger of liking him; and so be at his mercy to sting—what? my heart! I defy him; it is dead. No; he shall not go thus. I am the head of our joint houses. Houses! I wish he had a house, poor boy! And his grandfather loved me. Let him go? I will beg his pardon first; and he may dine in his drawers if that will settle the matter."

Thus, no less magnanimous than Lionel, did this misanthropical man follow his ungracious cousin. "Ha!" cried Darrell, suddenly, as, approaching the threshold, he saw Mr. Fairthorn at the dining-room window occupied in nibbling a pen upon an ivory thumb-stall—"I have hit it! That abominable Fairthorn has been shedding its prickles! How could I trust flesh and blood to such a bramble? I'll know what it was this instant!" Vain menace! No sooner did Mr. Fairthorn catch glimpse of Darrell's countenance within ten yards of the porch, than, his conscience taking alarm, he rushed incontinent from the window, the apartment, and, ere Darrell could fling open the door, was lost in some lair—"nullis penetrabilis astris"—in that sponge-like and cavernous abode wherewith benignant Providence had suited the locality to the creature.

CHAPTER VIII.

New imbroglio in that ever-recurring, never-to-be-settled question, "What will he do with it?"

With a disappointed glare and a baffled shrug of the shoulder, Mr. Darrell turned from the dining-room, and passed up the stairs to Lionel's chamber, opened the door quickly, and extending his hand said, in that tone which had disarmed the wrath of ambitious factions, and even (if fame lie not) once seduced from the hostile Treasury-bench a placeman's vote, "I must have hurt your feelings, and I come to beg your pardon!"

But before this time Lionel's proud heart, in which ungrateful anger could not long find room, had smitten him for so ill a return to well-meant and not indelicate kindness. And, his wounded egotism appeased by its very outburst, he had called to mind Fairthorn's allusions to Darrell's secret griefs,—griefs that must have been indeed stormy so to have revulsed the currents of a life. And, despite those griefs, the great man had spoken playfully to him,—playfully in order to make light

of obligations. So when Guy Darrell now extended that hand, and stooped to that apology, Lionel was fairly overcome. Tears, before refused, now found irresistible way. The hand he could not take, but, yielding to his yearning impulse, he threw his arms fairly round his host's neck, leaned his young cheek upon that granite breast, and sobbed out incoherent words of passionate repentance, honest, venerating affection. Darrell's face changed, looking for a moment wondrous soft; and then, as by an effort of supreme self-control, it became severely placid. He did not return that embrace, but certainly he in no way repelled it; nor did he trust himself to speak till the boy had exhausted the force of his first feelings, and had turned to dry his tears.

Then he said, with a soothing sweetness: "Lionel Haughton, you have the heart of a gentleman that can never listen to a frank apology for unintentional wrong but what it springs forth to take the blame to itself and return apology tenfold. Enough! A mistake no doubt, on both sides. More time must elapse before either can truly say that he does not like the other. Meanwhile," added Darrell, with almost a laugh,—and that concluding query showed that even on trifles the man was bent upon either forcing or stealing his own will upon others,—"meanwhile must I send away the tailor?" I need not repeat Lionel's answer.

CHAPTER IX.

DARRELL—mystery in his past life—What has he done with it?

Some days passed, each day varying little from the other. It was the habit of Darrell if he went late to rest to rise early. He never allowed himself more than five hours sleep. A man greater than Guy Darrell—Sir Walter Raleigh—carved from the solid day no larger a slice for Morpheus. And it was this habit perhaps, yet more than temperance in diet, which preserved to Darrell his remarkable youthfulness of aspect and frame, so that at fifty-two he looked, and really was, younger than many a strong man of thirty-five. For, certain it is, that on entering middle life, he who would keep his brain clear, his step elastic, his muscles from fleshiness, his nerves from tremor,—in a word, retain his youth in spite of the register,—should beware of long slumbers. Nothing ages like laziness. The hours before breakfast Darrell devoted first to exercise, whatever the weather; next to his calm scientific pursuits. At ten o'clock punctually he rode out alone and seldom returned till late in the afternoon. Then he would stroll forth with Lionel into devious woodlands, or lounge with him along the margin of the lake, or lie down on the tedded grass, call the boy's attention to the insect populace which sports out its happy life in the summer months, and treat of the ways and habits of each varying species, with a quaint learning, half humorous, half grave. He was a minute observer and an accomplished

naturalist. His range of knowledge was, indeed, amazingly large for a man who has had to pass his best years in a dry and absorbing study: necessarily not so profound in each section as that of a special professor; but if the science was often on the surface, the thoughts he deduced from what he knew were as often original and deep. A maxim of his, which he dropped out one day to Lionel in his careless manner, but pointed diction, may perhaps illustrate his own practice and its results "Never think it enough to have solved the problem started by another mind till you have deduced from it a corollary of your own."

After dinner, which was not over till past eight o'clock, they always adjourned to the library, Fairthorn vanishing into a recess, Darrell and Lionel each with his several book, then an air on the flute, and each to his own room before eleven. No life could be more methodical; yet to Lionel it had an animating charm, for his interest in his host daily increased, and varied his thoughts with perpetual occupation. Darrell, on the contrary, while more kind and cordial, more cautiously on his guard not to wound his young guest's susceptibilities than he had been before the quarrel and its reconciliation, did not seem to feel for Lionel the active interest which Lionel felt for him. He did not, as most clever men are apt to do in their intercourse with youth, attempt to draw him out, plumb his intellect, or guide his tastes. If he was at times instructive, it was because talk fell on subjects on which it pleased himself to touch, and in which he could not speak without involuntarily instructing. Nor did he ever allure the boy to talk of his school-days, of his friends, of his predilections, his hopes, his future. In short, had you observed them together, you would have never supposed they were connections, that one could and ought to influence and direct the career of the other. You would have said the host certainly liked the guest, as any man would like a promising, warm-hearted, high-spirited, graceful boy, under his own roof for a short time, but who felt that that boy was nothing to him; would soon pass from his eye; form friends, pursuits, aims, with which he could be in no way commingled, for which he should be wholly irresponsible. There was also this peculiarity in Darrell's conversation; if he never spoke of his guest's past and future, neither did he ever do more than advert in the most general terms to his own. Of that grand stage on which he had been so brilliant an actor he imparted no reminiscences; of those great men, the leaders of his age, with whom he had mingled familiarly, he told no anecdotes. Equally silent was he as to the earlier steps in his career, the modes by which he had studied, the accidents of which he had seized advantage, —silent there as upon the causes he had gained, or the debates he had adorned. Never could you have supposed that this man, still in the prime of public life, had been the theme of journals and the boast of party. Neither did he ever, as men who talk easily at their own hearths are prone to do, speak of projects in the future, even though the projects be no vaster than the planting of a tree or the alteration of a parterre,—projects with which rural life so copiously and so innocently teems. The past seemed as if it had left to him no memory, the future as if it stored for him no desire. But did the past leave no memory? Why then

at intervals would the book slide from his eye, the head sink upon the breast, and a shade of unutterable dejection darken over the grand beauty of that strong stern countenance? Still that dejection was not morbidly fed and encouraged, for he would fling it from him with a quick impatient gesture of the head, resume the book resolutely, or change it for another which induced fresh trains of thought, or look over Lionel's shoulder, and make some subtle comment on his choice, or call on Fairthorn for the flute; and in a few minutes the face was severely serene again. And be it here said, that it is only in the poetry of young gentlemen, or the prose of lady novelists, that a man in good health and of sound intellect wears the livery of unvarying gloom. However great his causes of sorrow, he does not forever parade its ostentatious mourning, nor follow the hearse of his hopes with the long face of an undertaker. He will still have his gleams of cheerfulness, his moments of good humour. The old smile will sometimes light the eye, and awake the old playfulness of the lip. But what a great and critical sorrow does leave behind is often far worse than the sorrow itself has been. It is a change in the inner man, which strands him, as Guy Darrell seemed stranded, upon the shoal of the Present; which the more he strives manfully to bear his burden warns him the more from dwelling on the Past; and the more impressively it enforces the lesson of the vanity of human wishes strikes the more from his reckoning illusive hopes in the Future. Thus out of our threefold existence two parts are annihilated,—the what has been, the what shall be. We fold our arms, stand upon the petty and steep cragstone, which alone looms out of the Measureless Sea, and say to ourselves, looking neither backward nor beyond, "Let us bear what is;" and so for the moment the eye can lighten and the lip can smile.

Lionel could no longer glean from Mr. Fairthorn any stray hints upon the family records. That gentleman had evidently been reprimanded for indiscretion, or warned against its repetition, and he became as reserved and mum as if he had just emerged from the cave of Trophonius. Indeed he shunned trusting himself again alone to Lionel, and affecting a long arrear of correspondence on behalf of his employer, left the lad during the forenoons to solitary angling, or social intercourse with the swans and the tame doe. But from some mystic concealment within doors would often float far into the open air the melodies of that magic flute; and the boy would glide back, along the dark-red mournful walls of the old house, or the futile pomp of pilastered arcades in the uncompleted new one, to listen to the sound: listening, he, blissful boy, forgot the present; he seized the unchallenged royalty of his years. For him no rebels in the past conspired with poison to the wine-cup, murder to the sleep. No deserts in the future, arresting the march of ambition, said, "Here are sands for a pilgrim, not fields for a conqueror."

CHAPTER X.

In which chapter the history quietly moves on to the next.

Thus nearly a week had gone, and Lionel began to feel perplexed as to the duration of his visit. Should he be the first to suggest departure? Mr. Darrell rescued him from that embarrassment. On the seventh day, Lionel met his host in a lane near the house, returning from his habitual ride. The boy walked home by the side of the horseman, patting the steed, admiring its shape, and praising the beauty of another saddle-horse, smaller and slighter, which he had seen in the paddock exercised by a groom. "Do you ever ride that chestnut? I think it even handsomer than this."

"Half our preferences are due to the vanity they flatter. Few can ride this horse; any one, perhaps, that."

"There speaks the Dare-all!" said Lionel, laughing. The host did not look displeased.

"Where no difficulty, there no pleasure," said he in his curt laconic diction. "I was in Spain two years ago. I had not an English horse there, so I bought that Andalusian jennet. What has served him at need, no /preux chevalier/ would leave to the chance of ill-usage. So the jennet came with me to England. You have not been much accustomed to ride, I suppose?"

"Not much; but my dear mother thought I ought to learn. She pinched for a whole year to have me taught at a riding-school during one school vacation."

"Your mother's relations are, I believe, well off. Do they suffer her to pinch?"

"I do not know that she has relations living; she never speaks of them."

"Indeed!" This was the first question on home matters that Darrell had ever directly addressed to Lionel. He there dropped the subject, and said, after a short pause, "I was not aware that you are a horseman, or I would have asked you to accompany me; will you do so to-morrow, and mount the jennet?"

"Oh, thank you; I should like it so much."

Darrell turned abruptly away from the bright, grateful eyes. "I am only sorry," he added, looking aside, "that our excursions can be but few. On Friday next I shall submit to you a proposition; if you accept it, we shall part on Saturday,—liking each other, I hope: speaking for myself,

the experiment has not failed; and on yours?"

"On mine!—oh, Mr. Darrell, if I dared but tell you what recollections of yourself the experiment will bequeath to me!"

"Do not tell me, if they imply a compliment," answered Darrell, with the low silvery laugh which so melodiously expressed indifference and repelled affection. He entered the stable-yard, dismounted; and on returning to Lionel, the sound of the flute stole forth, as if from the eaves of the gabled roof. "Could the pipe of Horace's Faunus be sweeter than that flute?" said Darrell,

"'Utcunque dulci, Tyndare, fistula,
Valles,' etc.

What a lovely ode that is! What knowledge of town life! what susceptibility to the rural! Of all the Latins, Horace is the only one with whom I could wish to have spent a week. But no! I could not have discussed the brief span of human life with locks steeped in Malobathran balm and wreathed with that silly myrtle. Horace and I would have quarrelled over the first heady bowl of Massie. We never can quarrel now! Blessed subject and poet-laureate of Queen Proserpine, and, I dare swear, the most gentlemanlike poet she ever received at court; henceforth his task is to uncoil the asps from the brows of Alecto, and arrest the ambitious Orion from the chase after visionary lions."

CHAPTER XI.

Showing that if a good face is a letter of recommendation, a good heart is a letter of credit.

The next day they rode forth, host and guest, and that ride proved an eventful crisis in the fortune of Lionel Haughton. Hitherto I have elaborately dwelt on the fact that whatever the regard Darrell might feel for him, it was a regard apart from that interest which accepts a responsibility and links to itself a fate. And even if, at moments, the powerful and wealthy man had felt that interest, he had thrust it from him. That he meant to be generous was indeed certain, and this he had typically shown in a very trite matter-of-fact way. The tailor, whose visit had led to such perturbation, had received instructions beyond the mere supply of the raiment for which he had been summoned; and a large patent portmanteau, containing all that might constitute the liberal outfit of a young man in the rank of gentleman, had arrived at Fawley, and amazed and moved Lionel, whom Darrell had by this time thoroughly reconciled to the acceptance of benefits. The gift denoted this: "In recognizing you as kinsman, I shall henceforth provide for you as

gentleman." Darrell indeed meditated applying for an appointment in one of the public offices, the settlement of a liberal allowance, and a parting shake of the hand, which should imply, "I have now behaved as becomes me: the rest belongs to you. We may never meet again. There is no reason why this good-by may not be forever."

But in the course of that ride, Darrell's intentions changed. Wherefore? You will never guess! Nothing so remote as the distance between cause and effect, and the cause for the effect here was—poor little Sophy.

The day was fresh, with a lovely breeze, as the two riders rode briskly over the turf of rolling commons, with the feathery boughs of neighbouring woodlands tossed joyously to and fro by the sportive summer wind. The exhilarating exercise and air raised Lionel's spirits, and released his tongue from all trammels; and when a boy is in high spirits, ten to one but he grows a frank egotist, feels the teeming life of his individuality, and talks about himself. Quite unconsciously, Lionel rattled out gay anecdotes of his school-days; his quarrel with a demoniacal usher; how he ran away; what befell him; how the doctor went after, and brought him back; how splendidly the doctor behaved,—neither flogged nor expelled him, but after patiently listening, while he rebuked the pupil, dismissed the usher, to the joy of the whole academy; how he fought the head boy in the school for calling the doctor a sneak; how, licked twice, he yet fought that head boy a third time, and licked him; how, when head boy himself, he had roused the whole school into a civil war, dividing the boys into Cavaliers and Roundheads; how clay was rolled out into cannon-balls and pistol-shots, sticks shaped into swords, the playground disturbed to construct fortifications; how a slovenly stout boy enacted Cromwell; how he himself was elevated into Prince Rupert; and how, reversing all history, and infamously degrading Cromwell, Rupert would not consent to be beaten; and Cromwell at the last, disabled by an untoward blow across the knuckles, ignominiously yielded himself prisoner, was tried by a court-martial, and sentenced to be shot! To all this rubbish did Darrell incline his patient ear,—not encouraging, not interrupting, but sometimes stifling a sigh at the sound of Lionel's merry laugh, or the sight of his fair face, with heightened glow on his cheeks, and his long silky hair, worthy the name of lovelocks, blown by the wind from the open loyal features, which might well have graced the portrait of some youthful Cavalier. On bounded the Spanish jennet, on rattled the boy rider. He had left school now, in his headlong talk; he was describing his first friendship with Frank Vance, as a lodger at his mother's; how example fired him, and he took to sketch-work and painting; how kindly Vance gave him lessons; how at one time he wished to be a painter; how much the mere idea of such a thing vexed his mother, and how little she was moved when he told her that Titian was of a very ancient family, and that Francis I., archetype of gentleman, visited Leonardo da Vinci's sick-bed; and that Henry VIII. had said to a pert lord who had snubbed Holbein, "I can make a lord any day, but I cannot make a Holbein!" how Mrs. Haughton still confounded all painters in the general image of the painter and the plumber who had cheated her so shamefully in

the renewed window-sashes and redecorated walls, which Time and the four children of an Irish family had made necessary to the letting of the first floor. And these playful allusions to the maternal ideas were still not irreverent, but contrived so as rather to prepossess Darrell in Mrs. Haughton's favour by bringing out traits of a simple natural mother, too proud, perhaps, of her only son, not caring what she did, how she worked, so that he might not lose caste as a born Haughton. Darrell understood, and nodded his head approvingly. "Certainly," he said, speaking almost for the first time, "Fame confers a rank above that of gentlemen and of kings; and as soon as she issues her patent of nobility, it matters not a straw whether the recipient be the son of a Bourbon or of a tallow-chandler. But if Fame withhold her patent; if a well-born man paint aldermen, and be not famous (and I dare say you would have been neither a Titian nor a Holbein),—why, he might as well be a painter and plumber, and has a better chance even of bread and cheese by standing to his post as gentleman. Mrs. Haughton was right, and I respect her."

"Quite right. If I lived to the age of Methuselah, I could not paint a head like Frank Vance."

"And even he is not famous yet. Never heard of him."

"He will be famous: I am sure of it; and if you lived in London, you would hear of him even now. Oh, sir! such a portrait as he painted the other day! But I must tell you all about it." And therewith Lionel plunged at once, *medias res*, into the brief broken epic of little Sophy, and the eccentric infirm Belisarius for whose sake she first toiled and then begged; with what artless eloquence he brought out the colours of the whole story,—now its humour, now its pathos; with what beautifying sympathy he adorned the image of the little vagrant girl, with her mien of gentlewoman and her simplicity of child; the river excursion to Hampton Court; her still delight; how annoyed he felt when Vance seemed ashamed of her before those fine people; the orchard scene in which he had read Darrell's letter, that, for the time, drove her from the foremost place in his thoughts; the return home, the parting, her wistful look back, the visit to the Cobbler's next day; even her farewell gift, the nursery poem, with the lines written on the fly-leaf, he had them by heart! Darrell, the grand advocate, felt he could not have produced on a jury, with those elements, the effect which that boy-narrator produced on his granite self.

"And, oh, sir!" cried Lionel, checking his horse, and even arresting Darrell's with bold right hand—"oh," said he, as he brought his moist and pleading eyes in full battery upon the shaken fort to which he had mined his way—"oh, sir! you are so wise and rich and kind, do rescue that poor child from the penury and hardships of such a life! If you could but have seen and heard her! She could never have been born to it! You look away: I offend you! I have no right to tax your benevolence for others; but, instead of showering favours upon me, so little would suffice for her!—if she were but above positive want, with that old man

(she would not be happy without him), safe in such a cottage as you give to your own peasants! I am a man, or shall be one soon; I can wrestle with the world, and force my way somehow; but that delicate child, a village show, or a beggar on the high road!—no mother, no brother, no one but that broken-down cripple, leaning upon her arm as his crutch. I cannot bear to think of it. I am sure I shall meet her again somewhere; and when I do, may I not write to you, and will you not come to her help? Do speak; do say 'Yes,' Mr. Darrell."

The rich man's breast heaved slightly; he closed his eyes, but for a moment. There was a short and sharp struggle with his better self, and the better self conquered.

"Let go my reins; see, my horse puts down his ears; he may do you a mischief. Now canter on: you shall be satisfied. Give me a moment to—to unbutton my coat: it is too tight for me."

CHAPTER XII.

Guy Darrell gives way to an impulse, and quickly decides what he will do with it.

"Lionel Haughton," said Guy Darrell, regaining his young cousin's side, and speaking in a firm and measured voice, "I have to thank you for one very happy minute; the sight of a heart so fresh in the limpid purity of goodness is a luxury you cannot comprehend till you have come to my age; journeyed, like me, from Dan to Beersheba, and found all barren. Heed me: if you had been half-a-dozen years older, and this child for whom you plead had been a fair young woman, perhaps just as innocent, just as charming,—more in peril,—my benevolence would have lain as dormant as a stone. A young man's foolish sentiment for a pretty girl,—as your true friend, I should have shrugged my shoulders and said, 'Beware!' Had I been your father, I should have taken alarm and frowned. I should have seen the sickly romance which ends in dupes and deceivers. But at your age, you, hearty, genial, and open-hearted boy,—you, caught but by the chivalrous compassion for helpless female childhood,—oh, that you were my son,—oh, that my dear father's blood were in those knightly veins! I had a son once! God took him;" the strong man's lips quivered: he hurried on. "I felt there was manhood in you, when you wrote to fling my churlish favours in my teeth; when you would have left my roof-tree in a burst of passion which might be foolish, but was nobler than the wisdom of calculating submission, manhood, but only perhaps man's pride as man,—man's heart not less cold than winter. To-day you have shown me something far better than pride; that nature which constitutes the heroic temperament is completed by two attributes,—unflinching purpose, disinterested humanity. I know not yet if you have the first; you reveal

to me the second. Yes! I accept the duties you propose to me; I will do more than leave to you the chance of discovering this poor child. I will direct my solicitor to take the right steps to do so. I will see that she is safe from the ills you feel for her. Lionel, more still, I am impatient till I write to Mrs. Haughton. I did her wrong. Remember, I have never seen her. I resented in her the cause of my quarrel with your father, who was once dear to me. Enough of that. I disliked the tone of her letters to me. I disliked it in the mother of a boy who had Darrell blood; other reasons too,—let them pass. But in providing for your education; I certainly thought her relations provided for her support. She never asked me for help there; and, judging of her hastily, I thought she would not have scrupled to do so, if my help there had not been forestalled. You have made me understand her better; and, at all events, three-fourths of what we are in boyhood most of us owe to our mothers! You are frank, fearless, affectionate, a gentleman. I respect the mother who has such a son.”

Certainly praise was rare upon Darrell’s lips; but when he did praise, he knew how to do it! And no man will ever command others who has not by nature that gift! It cannot be learned. Art and experience can only refine its expression.

CHAPTER XIII.

He who sees his heir in his own child, carries his eye over hopes and possessions lying far beyond his gravestone, viewing his life, even here, as a period but closed with a comma. He who sees his heir in another man’s child, sees the full stop at the end of the sentence.

Lionel’s departure was indefinitely postponed; nothing more was said of it. Meanwhile Darrell’s manner towards him underwent a marked change. The previous indifference the rich kinsman had hitherto shown as to the boy’s past life, and the peculiarities of his intellect and character, wholly vanished. He sought now, on the contrary, to plumb thoroughly the more hidden depths which lurk in the nature of every human being, and which, in Lionel, were the more difficult to discern from the vivacity and candour which covered with so smooth and charming a surface a pride tremulously sensitive, and an ambition that startled himself in the hours when solitude and reverie reflect upon the visions of youth the giant outline of its own hopes.

Darrell was not dissatisfied with the results of his survey; yet often, when perhaps most pleased, a shade would pass over his countenance; and had a woman who loved him been by to listen, she would have heard the short slight sigh which came and went too quickly for the duller sense of man’s friendship to recognize it as the sound of sorrow.

In Darrell himself, thus insensibly altered, Lionel daily discovered more to charm his interest and deepen his affection. In this man's nature there were, indeed, such wondrous under-currents of sweetness, so suddenly gushing forth, so suddenly vanishing again! And exquisite in him were the traits of that sympathetic tact which the world calls fine breeding, but which comes only from a heart at once chivalrous and tender, the more bewitching in Darrell from their contrast with a manner usually cold, and a bearing so stamped with masculine, self-willed, haughty power. Thus—days went on as if Lionel had become a very child of the house. But his sojourn was in truth drawing near to a close not less abrupt and unexpected than the turn in his host's humours to which he owed the delay of his departure.

One bright afternoon, as Darrell was standing at the window of his private study, Fairthorn, who had crept in on some matter of business, looked at his countenance long and wistfully, and then, shambling up to his side, put one hand on his shoulder with a light timid touch, and, pointing with the other to Lionel, who was lying on the grass in front of the casement reading the "Faerie Queene," said, "Why do you take him to your heart if he does not comfort it?"

Darrell winced and answered gently, "I did not know you were in the room. Poor Fairthorn; thank you!"

"Thank me!—what for?"

"For a kind thought. So, then, you like the boy?"

"Mayn't I like him?" asked Fairthorn, looking rather frightened; "surely you do!"

"Yes, I like him much; I am trying my best to love him. But, but"—Darrell turned quickly, and the portrait of his father over the mantelpiece came full upon his sight,—an impressive, a haunting face, —sweet and gentle, yet with the high narrow brow and arched nostril of pride, with restless melancholy eyes, and an expression that revealed the delicacy of intellect, but not its power. There was something forlorn, but imposing, in the whole effigy. As you continued to look at the countenance, the mournful attraction grew upon you. Truly a touching and a most lovable aspect. Darrell's eyes moistened.

"Yes, my father, it is so!" he said softly. "All my sacrifices were in vain. The race is not to be rebuilt! No grandchild of yours will succeed me,—me, the last of the old line! Fairthorn, how can I love that boy? He may be my heir, and in his veins not a drop of my father's blood!"

"But he has the blood of your father's ancestors; and why must you think of him as your heir?—you, who, if you would but go again into the world,

might yet find a fair wi—”

With such a stamp came Darrell’s foot upon the floor that the holy and conjugal monosyllable dropping from Fairthorn’s lips was as much cut in two as if a shark had snapped it. Unspeakably frightened, the poor man sidled away, thrust himself behind a tall reading-desk, and, peering aslant from that covert, whimpered out, ”Don’t, don’t now, don’t be so awful; I did not mean to offend, but I’m always saying something I did not mean; and really you look so young still ”(coaxingly), ”and, and—”

Darrell, the burst of rage over, had sunk upon a chair, his face bowed over his hands, and his breast heaving as if with suppressed sobs.

The musician forgot his fear; he sprang forward, almost upsetting the tall desk; he flung himself on his knees at Darrell’s feet, and exclaimed in broken words, ”Master, master, forgive me! Beast that I was! Do look up—do smile or else beat me—kick me.”

Darrell’s right hand slid gently from his face, and fell into Fairthorn’s clasp.

”Hush, hush,” muttered the man of granite; ”one moment, and it will be over.”

One moment! That might be but a figure of speech; yet before Lionel had finished half the canto that was plunging him into fairyland, Darrell was standing by him with his ordinary tranquil mien; and Fairthorn’s flute from behind the boughs of a neighbouring lime-tree was breathing out an air as dulcet as if careless Fauns still piped in Arcady, and Grief were a far dweller on the other side of the mountains, of whom shepherds, reclining under summer leaves, speak as we speak of hydras and unicorns, and things in fable.

On, on swelled the mellow, mellow, witching music; and now the worn man with his secret sorrow, and the boy with his frank glad laugh, are passing away, side by side, over the turf, with its starry and golden wild-flowers, under the boughs in yon Druid copse, from which they start the ringdove,—farther and farther, still side by side, now out of sight, as if the dense green of the summer had closed around them like waves. But still the flute sounds on, and still they hear it, softer and softer as they go. Hark! do you not hear it—you?

CHAPTER XIV.

There are certain events which to each man’s life are as comets to the earth, seemingly strange and erratic portents; distinct from the

ordinary lights which guide our course and mark our seasons, yet true to their own laws, potent in their own influences. Philosophy speculates on their effects, and disputes upon their uses; men who do not philosophize regard them as special messengers and bodes of evil.

They came out of the little park into a by-lane; a vast tract of common land, yellow with furze and undulated with swell and hollow, spreading in front; to their right the dark beechwoods, still beneath the weight of the July noon. Lionel had been talking about the "Faerie Queene," knight-errantry, the sweet impossible dream-life that, safe from Time, glides by bower and hall, through magic forests and by witching eaves in the world of poet-books. And Darrell listened, and the flute-notes mingled with the atmosphere faint and far off, like voices from that world itself.

Out then they came, this broad waste land before them; and Lionel said merrily,–

"But this is the very scene! Here the young knight, leaving his father's hall, would have checked his destrier, glancing wistfully now over that green wild which seems so boundless, now to the 'umbrageous horror' of those breathless woodlands, and questioned himself which way to take for adventure."

"Yes," said Darrell, coming out from his long reserve on all that concerned his past life,—"Yes, and the gold of the gorse-blossoms tempted me; and I took the waste land." He paused a moment, and renewed: "And then, when I had known cities and men, and snatched romance from dull matter-of-fact, then I would have done as civilization does with romance itself,—I would have enclosed the waste land for my own aggrandizement. Look," he continued, with a sweep of the hand round the width of prospect, "all that you see to the verge of the horizon, some fourteen years ago, was to have been thrown into the pretty paddock we have just quitted, and serve as park round the house I was then building. Vanity of human wishes! What but the several proportions of their common folly distinguishes the baffled squire from the arrested conqueror? Man's characteristic cerebral organ must certainly be acquisitiveness."

"Was it his organ of acquisitiveness that moved Themistocles to boast that 'he could make a small state great'?" "Well remembered,—ingeniously quoted," returned Darrell, with the polite bend of his stately head. "Yes, I suspect that the coveting organ had much to do with the boast. To build a name was the earliest dream of Themistocles, if we are to accept the anecdote that makes him say, 'The trophies of Miltiades would not suffer him to sleep,' To build a name, or to create a fortune, are but varying applications of one human passion. The desire of something we have not is the first of our childish remembrances: it matters not what form it takes, what object it longs for; still it is to acquire! it never deserts us while we live."

"And yet, if I might, I should like to ask, what you now desire that you do not possess?"

"I—nothing; but I spoke of the living! I am dead. Only," added Darrell, with his silvery laugh, "I say, as poor Chesterfield said before me, 'It is a secret: keep it.'"

Lionel made no reply; the melancholy of the words saddened him: but Darrell's manner repelled the expression of sympathy or of interest; and the boy fell into conjecture, what had killed to the world this man's intellectual life?

And thus silently they continued to wander on till the sound of the flute had long been lost to their ears. Was the musician playing still?

At length they came round to the other end of Fawley village, and Darrell again became animated.

"Perhaps," said he, returning to the subject of talk that had been abruptly suspended,—perhaps the love of power is at the origin of each restless courtship of Fortune: yet, after all, who has power with less alloy than the village thane? With so little effort, so little thought, the man in the manor-house can make men in the cottage happier here below and more fit for a hereafter yonder. In leaving the world I come from contest and pilgrimage, like our sires the Crusaders, to reign at home."

As he spoke, he entered one of the cottages. An old paralytic man was seated by the fire, hot though the July sun was out of doors; and his wife, of the same age, and almost as helpless, was reading to him a chapter in the Old Testament,—the fifth chapter in Genesis, containing the genealogy, age, and death of the patriarchs before the Flood. How the faces of the couple brightened when Darrell entered. "Master Guy!" said the old man, tremulously rising. The world-weary orator and lawyer was still Master Guy to him.

"Sit down, Matthew, and let me read you a chapter." Darrell took the Holy Book, and read the Sermon on the Mount. Never had Lionel heard anything like that reading; the feeling which brought out the depth of the sense, the tones, sweeter than the flute, which clothed the divine words in music. As Darrell ceased, some beauty seemed gone from the day. He lingered a few minutes, talking kindly and familiarly, and then turned into another cottage, where lay a sick woman. He listened to her ailments, promised to send her something to do her good from his own stores, cheered up her spirits, and, leaving her happy, turned to Lionel with a glorious smile, that seemed to ask, "And is there not power in this?"

Put it was the sad peculiarity of this remarkable man that all his moods were subject to rapid and seemingly unaccountable variations. It was as

if some great blow had fallen on the mainspring of his organization, and left its original harmony broken up into fragments each impressive in itself, but running one into the other with an abrupt discord, as a harp played upon by the winds. For, after this evident effort at self-consolation or self-support in soothing or strengthening others, suddenly Darrell's head fell again upon his breast, and he walked on, up the village lane, heeding no longer either the open doors of expectant cottagers or the salutation of humble passers-by. "And I could have been so happy here!" he said suddenly. "Can I not be so yet? Ay, perhaps, when I am thoroughly old,—tied to the world but by the thread of an hour. Old men do seem happy; behind them, all memories faint, save those of childhood and sprightly youth; before them, the narrow ford, and the sun dawning up through the clouds on the other shore. 'T is the critical descent into age in which man is surely most troubled; griefs gone, still rankling; nor-strength yet in his limbs, passion yet in his heart—reconciled to what loom nearest in the prospect,—the armchair and the palsied head. Well! life is a quaint puzzle. Bits the most incongruous join into each other, and the scheme thus gradually becomes symmetrical and clear; when, lo! as the infant claps his hands and cries, 'See! see! the puzzle is made out!' all the pieces are swept back into the box,—black box with the gilded nails. Ho! Lionel, look up; there is our village church, and here, close at my right, the churchyard!"

Now while Darrell and his young companion were directing their gaze to the right of the village lane, towards the small gray church,—towards the sacred burial-ground in which, here and there amongst humbler graves, stood the monumental stone inscribed to the memory of some former Darrell, for whose remains the living sod had been preferred to the family vault; while both slowly neared the funeral spot, and leaned, silent and musing, over the rail that fenced it from the animals turned to graze on the sward of the surrounding green,—a foot-traveller, a stranger in the place, loitered on the threshold of the small wayside inn, about fifty yards off to the left of the lane, and looked hard at the still figures of the two kinsmen.

Turning then to the hostess, who was standing somewhat within the threshold, a glass of brandy-and-water in her hand, the third glass that stranger had called for during his half hour's rest in the hostelry, quoth the man,

"The taller gentleman yonder is surely your squire, is he not? but who is the shorter and younger person?"

The landlady put forth her head.

"Oh! that is a relation of the squire down on a visit, sir. I heard coachman say that the squire's taken to him hugely; and they do think at the Hall that the young gentleman will be his heir."

"Aha!—indeed—his heir! What is the lad's name? What relation can he

be to Mr. Darrell?"

"I don't know what relation exactly, sir; but he is one of the Haughtons, and they've been kin to the Fawley folks time out of mind."

"Haughton?—aha! Thank you, ma'am. Change, if you please."

The stranger tossed off his dram, and stretched his hand for his change.

"Beg pardon, sir, but this must be forring money," said the landlady, turning a five-franc piece on her palm with suspicious curiosity.

"Foreign! Is it possible?" The stranger dived again into his pocket, and apparently with some difficulty hunted out half-a-crown.

"Sixpence more, if you please, sir; three brandies, and bread-and-cheese and the ale too, sir."

"How stupid I am! I thought that French coin was a five shilling piece. I fear I have no English money about me but this half-crown; and I can't ask you to trust me, as you don't know me."

"Oh, sir, 't is all one if you know the squire. You may be passing this way again."

"I shall not forget my debt when I do, you may be sure," said the stranger; and, with a nod, he walked away in the same direction as Darrell and Lionel had already taken, through a turnstile by a public path that, skirting the churchyard and the neighbouring parsonage, led along a cornfield to the demesnes of Fawley.

The path was narrow, the corn rising on either side, so that two persons could not well walk abreast. Lionel was some paces in advance, Darrell walking slow. The stranger followed at a distance: once or twice he quickened his pace, as if resolved to overtake Darrell; then apparently his mind misgave him, and he again fell back.

There was something furtive and sinister about the man. Little could be seen of his face, for he wore a large hat of foreign make, slouched deep over his brow, and his lips and jaw were concealed by a dark and full mustache and beard. As much of the general outline of the countenance as remained distinguishable was nevertheless decidedly handsome; but a complexion naturally rich in colour seemed to have gained the heated look which comes with the earlier habits of intemperance before it fades into the leaden hues of the later.

His dress bespoke pretension to a certain rank: but its component parts were strangely ill-assorted, out of date, and out of repair; pearl-coloured trousers, with silk braids down their sides; brodequins to match,—Parisian fashion three years back, but the trousers shabby, the

braiding discoloured, the brodequins in holes. The coat—once a black evening dress-coat—of a cut a year or two anterior to that of the trousers; satin facing,—cloth napless, satin stained. Over all, a sort of summer travelling-cloak, or rather large cape of a waterproof silk, once the extreme mode with the lions of the Chaussee d’Autin whenever they ventured to rove to Swiss cantons or German spas; but which, from a certain dainty effeminacy in its shape and texture, required the minutest elegance in the general costume of its wearer as well as the cleanliest purity in itself. Worn by this traveller, and well-nigh worn out too, the cape became a finery mournful as a tattered pennon over a wreck.

Yet in spite of this dress, however unbecoming, shabby, obsolete, a second glance could scarcely fail to note the wearer as a man wonderfully well-shaped,—tall, slender in the waist, long of limb, but with a girth of chest that showed immense power; one of those rare figures that a female eye would admire for grace, a recruiting sergeant for athletic strength.

But still the man’s whole bearing and aspect, even apart from the dismal incongruities of his attire, which gave him the air of a beggared spendthrift, marred the favourable effect that physical comeliness in itself produces. Difficult to describe how,—difficult to say why,—but there is a look which a man gets, and a gait which he contracts when the rest of mankind cut him; and this man had that look and that gait.

”So, so,” muttered the stranger. ”That boy his heir? so, so. How can I get to speak to him? In his own house he would not see me: it must be as now, in the open air; but how catch him alone? and to lurk in the inn, in his own village,—perhaps for a day,—to watch an occasion; impossible! Besides, where is the money for it? Courage, courage!” He quickened his pace, pushed back his hat. ”Courage! Why not now? Now or never!”

While the man thus mutteringly soliloquized, Lionel had reached the gate which opened into the grounds of Fawley, just in the rear of the little lake. Over the gate he swung himself lightly, and, turning back to Darrell cried, ”Here is the doe waiting to welcome you.”

Just as Darrell, scarcely heeding the exclamation, and with his musing eyes on the ground, approached the gate, a respectful hand opened it wide, a submissive head bowed low, a voice artificially soft faltered forth words, broken and, indistinct, but of which those most audible were—”Pardon, me; something to communicate,—important; hear me.”

Darrell started, just as the traveller almost touched him, started, recoiled, as one on whose path rises a wild beast. His bended head became erect, haughty, indignant, defying; but his cheek was pale, and his lip quivered. ”You here! You in England-at Fawley! You presume to accost me! You, sir,—you!”

Lionel just caught the sound of the voice as the doe had come timidly up to him. He turned round sharply, and beheld Darrell's stern, imperious countenance, on which, stern and imperious though it was, a hasty glance could discover, at once, a surprise that almost bordered upon fear. Of the stranger still holding the gate he saw but the back, and his voice he did not hear, though by the man's gesture he was evidently replying. Lionel paused a moment irresolute; but as the man continued to speak, he saw Darrell's face grow paler and paler, and in the impulse of a vague alarm he hastened towards him; but just within three feet of the spot, Darrell arrested his steps.

"Go home, Lionel; this person would speak to me in private." Then, in a lower tone, he said to the stranger, "Close the gate, sir; you are standing upon the land of my fathers. If you would speak with me, this way;" and, brushing through the corn, Darrell strode towards a patch of waste land that adjoined the field: the man followed him, and both passed from Lionel's eyes. The doe had come to the gate to greet her master; she now rested her nostrils on the bar, with a look disappointed and plaintive.

"Come," said Lionel, "come." The doe would not stir.

So the boy walked on alone, not much occupied with what had just passed. "Doubtless," thought he, "some person in the neighbourhood upon country business."

He skirted the lake, and seated himself on a garden bench near the house. What did he there think of?—who knows? Perhaps of the Great World; perhaps of little Sophy! Time fled on: the sun was receding in the west when Darrell hurried past him without speaking, and entered the house.

The host did not appear at dinner, nor all that evening. Mr. Mills made an excuse: Mr. Darrell did not feel very well.

Fairthorn had Lionel all to himself, and having within the last few days reindulged in open cordiality to the young guest, he was especially communicative that evening. He talked much on Darrell, and with all the affection that, in spite of his fear, the poor flute-player felt for his ungracious patron. He told many anecdotes of the stern man's tender kindness to all that came within its sphere. He told also anecdotes more striking of the kind man's sternness where some obstinate prejudice, some ruling passion, made him "granite."

"Lord, my dear young sir," said Fairthorn, "be his most bitter open enemy, and fall down in the mire, the first hand to help you would be Guy Darrell's; but be his professed friend, and betray him to the worth of a straw, and never try to see his face again if you are wise,—the most forgiving and the least forgiving of human beings. But—"

The study door noiselessly opened, and Darrell's voice called out,

"Fairthorn, let me speak with you."

CHAPTER XV.

Every street has two sides, the shady side and the sunny. When two men shake hands and part, mark which of the two takes the sunny side: he will be the younger man of the two.

The next morning, neither Darrell nor Fairthorn appeared at breakfast; but as soon as Lionel had concluded that meal, Mr. Mills informed him, with customary politeness, that Mr. Darrell wished to speak with him in the study. Study, across the threshold of which Lionel had never yet set footstep! He entered it now with a sentiment of mingled curiosity and awe. Nothing in it remarkable, save the portrait of the host's father over the mantelpiece. Books strewed tables, chairs, and floors in the disorder loved by habitual students. Near the window was a glass bowl containing gold-fish, and close by, in its cage, a singing-bird. Darrell might exist without companionship in the human species, but not without something which he protected and cherished,—a bird, even a fish.

Darrell looked really ill: his keen eye was almost dim, and the lines in his face seemed deeper. But he spoke with his usual calm, passionless melody of voice.

"Yes," he said, in answer to Lionel's really anxious inquiry; "I am ill. Idle persons like me give way to illness. When I was a busy man, I never did; and then illness gave way to me. My general plans are thus, if not actually altered, at least hurried to their consummation sooner than I expected. Before you came here, I told you to come soon, or you might not find me. I meant to go abroad this summer; I shall now start at once. I need the change of scene and air. You will return to London to-day."

"To-day! You are not angry with me?"

"Angry! boy and cousin—no!" resumed Darrell, in a tone of unusual tenderness. "Angry-fie! But since the parting must be, 't is well to abridge the pain of long farewell. You must wish, too, to see your mother, and thank her for rearing you up so that you may step from poverty into ease with a head erect. You will give to Mrs. Haughton this letter: for yourself, your inclinations seem to tend towards the army. But before you decide on that career, I should like you to see something more of the world. Call to-morrow on Colonel Morley, in Curzon Street: this is his address. He will receive by to-day's post a note from me, requesting him to advise you. Follow his counsels in what belongs to the world. He is a man of the world,—a distant connection of mine, who will

be kind to you for my sake. Is there more to say? Yes. It seems an ungracious speech; but I should speak it. Consider yourself sure from me of an independent income. Never let idle sycophants lead you into extravagance by telling you that you will have more. But indulge not the expectation, however plausible, that you will be my heir."

"Mr. Darrell—oh, sir—"

"Hush! the expectation would be reasonable; but I am a strange being. I might marry again,—have heirs of my own. Eh, sir,—why not?" Darrell spoke these last words almost fiercely, and fixed his eyes on Lionel as he repeated,—"Why not?" But seeing that the boy's face evinced no surprise, the expression of his own relaxed, and he continued calmly,—
"Enough; what I have thus rudely said was kindly meant. It is a treason to a young man to let him count on a fortune which at last is left away from him. Now, Lionel, go; enjoy your spring of life! Go, hopeful and light-hearted. If sorrow reach you, battle with it; if error mislead you, come fearlessly to me for counsel. Why, boy, what is this?—tears? Tut, tut."

"It is your goodness," faltered Lionel. "I cannot help it. And is there nothing I can do for you in return?"

Yes, much. Keep your name free from stain, and your heart open to such noble emotions as awakened tears like those. Ah, by the by, I heard from my lawyer to-day about your poor little protegee. Not found yet, but he seems sanguine of quick success. You shall know the moment I hear more."

"You will write to me, then, sir, and I may write to you?"

"As often as you please. Always direct to me here."

"Shall you be long abroad?"

Darrell's brows met. "I don't know," said he, curtly. "Adieu."

He opened the door as he spoke.

Lionel looked at him with wistful yearning, filial affection, through his swimming eyes. "God bless you, sir," he murmured simply, and passed away.

"That blessing should have come from me!" said Darrell to himself, as he turned back, and stood on his solitary hearth. "But they on whose heads I once poured a blessing, where are they,—where? And that man's tale, reviving the audacious fable which the other, and I verily believe the less guilty knave of the two, sought to palm on me years ago! Stop; let me weigh well what he said. If it were true! Oh, shame, shame!"

Folding his arms tightly on his breast, Darrell paced the room with slow, measured strides, pondering deeply. He was, indeed, seeking to suppress feeling, and to exercise only judgment; and his reasoning process seemed at length fully to satisfy him, for his countenance gradually cleared, and a triumphant smile passed across it. "A lie,—certainly a palpable and gross lie; lie it must and shall be. Never will I accept it as truth. Father" (looking full at the portrait over the mantel-shelf), "Father, fear not—never—never!"