NIGHT AND MORNING.

A Novel.

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NIGHT AND MORNING.

BOOK I.

„Noch in meines Lebens Lenze
War ich, und ich wandert' aus,
Und der Jugend frohe Tänze
Ließ ich in des Vaters Haus."
SCHILLER: *Der Pilgrim.*

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

"Now rests our vicar. They who knew him best,
Proclaim his life to have been entirely rest;
Nor one so old has left this world of sin,
More like the being that he entered in."
CRABBE.

IN one of the Welsh counties is a small village called A——. It is somewhat removed from the high-road, and is, therefore, but little known to those luxurious amateurs of the picturesque who view Nature through the windows of a carriage and four. Nor, indeed, is there any thing, whether of scenery or association, in the place itself, sufficient to allure the more sturdy enthusiast from the beaten tracks which tourists and guide books prescribe to those who search the sublime and beautiful amid the mountain homes of the ancient Britons. Still, on the whole, the village is not without its attractions. It is placed in a small valley, through which winds and leaps, down many a rocky fall, a clear, babbling, noisy rivulet, that affords excellent sport to the brethren of the angle. Thither, accordingly, in the summer season, occasionally resort the Waltons of the neighborhood—young farmers, retired traders, with now and then a stray artist, or a roving student from one of the Universities. Hence the solitary hostelry of A——, being somewhat more frequented, is also more clean and comfortable than could be reasonably anticipated from the insignificance and remoteness of the village.

At the time in which my narrative opens, the village boasted a sociable, agreeable, careless, half-starved parson, who never failed to introduce himself to any of the anglers who, during the summer months, passed a day or two in the little valley. The Reverend Mr. Caleb Price had been educated at the University of Cambridge, where he had contrived, in three years, to run through a little fortune of £3500, without gaining in return any more valuable mental acquisitions than those of making the most admirable milk-punch, and becoming the most redoubted boxer in his college; or any more desirable reputation than that of being one of the best-natured, rattling, open-hearted companions whom you could desire by your side in a tandem to Newmarket, or in a row with the bargemen. He had not failed, by the help of these gifts and accomplishments, to find favor while his money lasted, with the young aristocracy of the "Gentle Mother." And, though the very reverse of an ambitious or calculating man, he had certainly nourished the belief that some one of the hats or tinsel gowns—*i. e.*, young lords or fellow-commoners, with whom he was on such excellent terms, and who supped with him so often—would do something for him in the way of a living. But it so happened that when Mr. Caleb Price had, with a little difficulty, scrambled through his degree, and found himself a Bachelor of Arts, and at the end of his finances, his grand acquaintances parted from him to their various posts in the State Militant of Life. And, with the exception of one, joyous and reckless as himself, Mr. Caleb Price found that, when money makes itself wings, it flies away with our friends. As poor Price had earned no academical distinction, so he could expect no advancement from his college—no fellowship—no tutorship leading hereafter to livings, stalls and deaneries. Poverty began already to stare him in the face, when the only friend who, having shared his prosperity, remained true to his adverse fate—a friend, fortunately for him, of high connections and brilliant prospects—succeeded in obtaining for him the humble living of A——. To this primitive spot the once jovial roister cheerfully retired—contrived to live contented upon an income somewhat less than he had formerly given to his groom—preached very short sermons to a very scanty and ignorant congregation, some of whom only understood Welsh—did good to the poor and sick in his own careless, sloyenly way—and, uncheered or unvexed by wife and children, he rose in summer with the lark, and in winter went to bed at nine precisely, to save coals and candles. For the rest, he was the most skillful angler in the whole county; and so willing to communicate the results of his experience as to the most taking color of the flies and the most favored haunts of the trout, that he had given especial orders at the inn, that whenever any strange gentleman came to fish, Mr. Caleb Price should be immediately sent for. In this, to be sure, our worthy pastor had his usual recompense. First, if the stranger were tolerably liberal, Mr. Price was asked to dinner at the inn; and, secondly if this failed, from the poverty or churlishness of the obliged party, Mr. Price still had an opportunity to hear the last news—to talk about the great world—in a word, to exchange ideas, and perhaps to get an old newspaper or an odd number of a magazine.

Now it so happened that, one afternoon in October, when the periodical excursions of the anglers becoming rarer and more rare, had alto-

gether ceased, Mr. Caleb Price was summoned from his parlor, in which he had been employed in the fabrication of a net for his cabbages, by a little white-headed boy, who came to say there was a gentleman at the inn who wished immediately to see him: a strange gentleman, who had never been there before.

Mr. Price threw down his net, seized his hat, and in less than five minutes he was in the best room of the little inn.

The person there awaiting him was a man who, though plainly clad in a velveteen shooting-jacket, had an air and mien greatly above those common to the pedestrian visitors of A——. He was tall, and one of those athletic forms in which vigor in youth is too often purchased by corpulence in age. At this period, however, in the full prime of manhood, the ample chest and sinewy limbs, seen to full advantage in their simple and manly dress, could not fail to excite that popular admiration which is always given to strength in the one sex as to delicacy in the other. The stranger was walking impatiently to and fro the small apartment when Mr. Price entered; and then, turning to the clergyman a countenance handsome and striking, but yet more prepossessing from its expression of frankness than from the regularity of its features, he stopped short, held out his hand, and said, with a gay laugh, as he glanced over the parson's thread-bare and slovenly costume, "My poor Caleb! what a metamorphosis! I should not have known you again!"

"What! *you!* Is it possible, my dear fellow? How glad I am to see you! What on earth can bring you to such a place? No! not a soul would believe me if I said I had seen you in this miserable hole."

"That is precisely the reason why I am here. Sit down, Caleb, and we'll talk over matters as soon as our landlord has brought up the materials for—"

"The milk-punch," interrupted Mr. Price, rubbing his hands. "Ah, that will bring us back to old times indeed!"

In a few minutes the punch was prepared, and, after two or three preparatory glasses, the stranger thus commenced:

"My dear Caleb, I am in want of your assistance, and, above all, of your secrecy."

"I promise you both beforehand. It will make me happy the rest of my life to think I have served my patron—my benefactor—the only friend I possess."

"Tush, man! don't talk of that: we shall do better for you one of these days. But now to the point: I have come here to be married—married, old boy!—married!"

And the stranger threw himself back in his chair, and chuckled with the glee of a schoolboy.

"Humph!" said the parson, gravely. "It is a serious thing to do, and a very odd place to come to."

"I admit both propositions: this punch is superb. To proceed. You know that my uncle's immense fortune is at his own disposal; if I disobliged him, he would be capable of leaving all to my brother. I *should* disoblige him irrevocably if he knew that I had married a tradesman's daughter. I am going to marry a tradesman's daughter—a girl in a million! The ceremony must be as secret as possible. And in this church, with you for the priest, I do not see a chance of discovery."

"Do you marry by license?"

"No; my intended is not of age: and we keep the secret even from her father. In this village you will mumble over the bans without one of your congregation ever taking heed of the name. I shall stay here a month for the purpose. She is in London, on a visit to a relation in the city. The bans on her side will be published with equal privacy in a little church near the Tower, where my name will be no less unknown than here. Oh, I've contrived it famously!"

"But, my dear fellow, consider what you risk."

"I have considered all, and find every chance in my favor. The bride will arrive here on the day of our wedding: my servant will be one witness; some stupid old Welshman, as antediluvian as possible—I leave it to you to select him—shall be the other. My servant I shall dispose of, and the rest I can depend on."

"But—"

"I detest buts; if I had to make a language, I would not admit such a word in it. And now, before I run on upon Catharine, a subject quite inexhaustible, tell me, my dear friend, something about yourself."

* * * * *

Somewhat more than a month had elapsed since the arrival of the stranger at the village inn. He had changed his quarters for the Parsonage; went out but little, and then chiefly on foot-excursions among the sequestered hills in the neighborhood: he was, therefore, but partially known by sight even in the village; and the visit of some old college friend to the minister, though indeed it had never chanced before, was not, in itself, so remarkable an event as to excite any particular observation. The bans had been duly, and half inaudibly, hurried over, after the service was concluded, and while the scanty congregation were dispersing down the little aisle of the church, when one morning a chaise and pair arrived at the Parsonage. A servant out of livery leaped from the box. The stranger opened the door of the chaise, and, uttering a joyous exclamation, gave his arm to a lady, who, trembling and agitated, could scarcely, even with that stalwart support, descend the steps. "Ah!" she said, in a voice choked with tears, when they found themselves alone in the little parlor, "ah! if you knew how I have suffered!"

How is it that certain words, and those the homeliest—which the hand writes and the eye reads as trite and commonplace expressions—when *spoken*, convey so much—so many meanings complicated and refined? "Ah! if you knew how I have suffered!"

When the lover heard these words, his gay countenance fell—he drew back—his conscience smote him: in that complaint was the whole history of a clandestine love—not for both the parties, but for the woman—the painful secrecy—the remorseful deceit—the shame—the fear—the sacrifice. She who uttered those words was scarcely sixteen. It is an early age to leave childhood behind for ever!

"My own love! you have suffered indeed; but it is over now."

"Over! And what will they say of me—what will they think of me *at home?* Over! Ah!"

"It is but for a short time; in the course of nature, my uncle can not live long: all then will be explained. Our marriage once made public, all connected with you will be proud to own you. You will have wealth—station—a name among the first in the gentry of England. But, above all, you will have the happiness to think that your forbearance for a time has saved me, and, it may be, our children, sweet one! from poverty and—"

"It is enough," interrupted the girl, and the expression of her countenance became serene and elevated. "It is for you—for your sake. I know what you hazard: how much I must owe you! Forgive me; this is the last murmur you shall ever hear from these lips."

An hour after those words were spoken the marriage ceremony was concluded.

"Caleb," said the bridegroom, drawing the clergyman aside as they were about to re-enter the house, "you will keep your promise, I know; and you think I may depend implicitly upon the good faith of the witness you have selected?"

"Upon his good faith?—no," said Caleb, smiling; "but upon his deafness, his ignorance, and his age. My poor old clerk! he will have forgotten all about it before this day three months. Now, I have seen your lady, I no longer wonder that you incur so great a risk. I never beheld so lovely a countenance. You will be happy!" And the village priest sighed, and thought of the coming winter, and his own lonely hearth.

"My dear friend, you have only seen her beauty: it is her least charm. Heaven knows how often I have made love—and this is the only woman that I have ever really loved. Caleb, there is an excellent living that adjoins my uncle's house. The rector is old; when the house is mine, you will not be long without the living. We shall be neighbors, Caleb, and then you shall try and find a bride for yourself. Smith"—and the bridegroom turned to the servant who had accompanied his wife, and served as a second witness to the marriage—"tell the postboy to put-to the horses immediately."

"Yes, sir. May I speak a word with you?"

"Well, what?"

"Your uncle, sir, sent for me to come to him the day before we left town."

"Aha! indeed!"

"And I could just pick up among his servants that he had some suspicion—at least, that he had been making inquiries—and seemed very cross, sir."

"You went to him?"

"No, sir, I was afraid. He has such a way with him! Whenever his eye is fixed on mine, I always feel as if it was impossible to tell a lie; and—and—in short, I thought it was best not to go."

"You did right. Confound this fellow!" muttered the bridegroom, turning away; "he is honest, and loves me; yet, if my uncle sees him, he is clumsy enough to betray all. Well, I always meant to get him out of the way—the sooner the better. Smith!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You have often said that you should like, if you had some capital, to settle in Australia—your father is an excellent farmer—you are above the situation you hold with me—you are well educated, and have some knowledge of agriculture—you can scarcely fail to make a fortune as a settler; and, if you are of the same mind still, why, look you, I have just £1000 at my banker's; you shall have half if you like to sail by the first packet."

"Oh, sir, you are too generous."

"Nonsense—no thanks—I am more prudent than generous; for I agree with you that it is all up with me if my uncle gets hold of you. I dread my prying brother, too; in fact, the obligation is on my side: only stay abroad till I am a rich man and my marriage made public, and then you may ask of me what you will. It's agreed, then—order the horses—we'll go round by Liverpool, and learn about the vessels. By-the-way, my good fellow, I hope you see nothing now of that good-for-nothing brother of yours?"

"No, indeed, sir. It's a thousand pities he has turned out so ill, for he was the cleverest of the family, and could always twist me round his little finger."

"That's the very reason I mentioned him. If he learned our secret, he would take it to an excellent market. Where is he?"

"Hiding, I suspect, sir."

"Well, we shall put the sea between you: so now all's safe."

Caleb stood by the porch of his house as the bride and bridegroom entered their humble vehicle. Though then November, the day was exquisitely mild and calm, the sky without a cloud, and even the leafless trees seemed to smile beneath the cheerful sun. And the young bride wept no more; she was with him she loved—she was his forever. She forgot the rest. The hope—the heart of sixteen—spoke brightly out through the blushes that mantled over her fair cheeks. The bridegroom's frank and manly countenance was radiant with joy. As he waved his hand to Caleb from the window, the post-boy cracked his whip, the servant settled himself on the dickey, the horses started off in a brisk trot—the clergyman was left alone!

To be married is certainly an event in life; to marry other people is, for a priest, a very ordinary occurrence; and yet, from that day, a great change began to operate in the spirits and the habits of Caleb Price. Have you ever, my gentle reader, buried yourself for some time quietly in the lazy ease of a dull country life? Have you ever become gradually accustomed to its monotony and inured to its solitude; and, just at the time when you have half forgotten the great world—that *mare magnum* that frets and roars in the distance—have you ever received in your calm retreat some visitor, full of the busy and excited life which you imagined yourself contented to relinquish? If so, have you not perceived that, in proportion as his presence and communication either revived old memories, or brought before you new pictures of "the bright tumult" of that existence of which your guest made a part, you began to compare him curiously with yourself; you began to feel that what before was to rest is now to rot; that your years are gliding from you unenjoyed and wasted; that the contrast between the animal life of

passionate civilization and the vegetable torpor of motionless seclusion is one that, if you are still young, it tasks your philosophy to bear—feeling all the while that the torpor may be yours to your grave? And when your guest has left you, when you are again alone, is the solitude the same as it was before?

Our poor Caleb had for years rooted his thoughts to his village. His guest had been, like the bird in the fairy tale, settling upon the quiet branches, and singing so loudly and so gladly of the enchanted skies afar, that, when it flew away, the tree pined. nipped and withering in the sober sun in which before it had basked contented. The guest was, indeed, one of those men whose animal spirits exercise upon such as come within their circle the influence and power usually ascribed only to intellectual qualities. During the month he had sojourned with Caleb, he had brought back to the poor parson all the gayety of the brisk and noisy novitiate that preceded the solemn vow and the dull retreat: the social parties, the merry suppers, the open-handed, open-hearted fellowship of riotous, delightful, extravagant, thoughtless YOUTH. And Caleb was not a bookman—not a scholar; he had no resources in himself, no occupation but his indolent and ill-paid duties. The emotions, therefore, of the active man were easily aroused within him. But if this comparison between his past and present life rendered him restless and disturbed, how much more deeply and lastingly was he affected by a contrast between his own future and that of his friend! not in those points where he could never hope equality—wealth and station—the conventional distinctions to which, after all, a man of ordinary sense must sooner or later reconcile himself—but in that *one* respect wherein all, high and low, pretend to the same rights; rights which a man of moderate warmth of feeling can never willingly renounce, viz., a partner in a lot however obscure; a kind face by a hearth, no matter how mean it be! And his happier friend, like all men full of life, was full of himself—full of his love, of his future, of the blessings of home, and wife, and children. Then, too, the young bride seemed so fair, so confiding, and so tender; so formed to grace the noblest or to cheer the humblest home! And both were so happy, so all in all to each other, as they left that barren threshold! And the priest felt all this as, melancholy and envious, he turned from the door in that November day to find himself thoroughly alone. He now began seriously to muse upon those fancied blessings which men wearied with celibacy see springing heavenward behind the altar. A few weeks afterward a notable change was visible in the good man's exterior. He became more careful of his dress—he shaved every morning—he purchased a crop-eared Welsh cob—and it was soon known in the neighborhood that the only journey the cob was condemned to take was to the house of a certain squire, who, amid a family of all ages, boasted two very pretty, marriageable daughters. That was the second holyday-time of poor Caleb—the love romance of his life: it soon closed. On learning the amount of the pastor's stipend, the squire refused to receive his addresses; and, shortly after, the girl to whom he had attached himself made what the world calls a happy match. And perhaps it was one, for I never heard that she regretted the forsaken lover. Perhaps Caleb was not one of those whose place in a woman's heart is never to be supplied. The lady married, the world went round as before, the brook danced as merrily through the village, the poor worked the week-days, and the urchins gamboled round the gravestones on the Sabbath, and the curate's heart was broken. He languished gradually and silently away. The villagers observed that he had lost his old, good-humored smile—that he did not stop every Saturday evening at the carrier's gate, to ask if there were any news stirring in the town which the carrier weekly visited—that he did not come to borrow the stray newspapers that now and then found their way into the village—that, as he sauntered along the brook-side, his clothes hung loose on his limbs—and that he no longer "whistled as he went:" alas! he was no longer in want of thought. By degrees, the walks themselves were suspended: the parson was no longer visible: a stranger performed his duties.

One day—it might be some three years after the fatal visit I have commemorated—one very wild, rough day in early March, the postman who made the round of the district rung at the parson's bell. The single female servant, her red hair loose in her neck, replied to the call.

"And how is the master?"

"Very bad;" and the girl wiped her eyes.

"He should leave you something handsome," remarked the postman, kindly, as he pocketed the money for the letter.

The pastor was in bed: the boisterous wind rattled down the chimney, and shook the ill-fitting casement in its rotting frame. The clothes he had last worn were thrown carelessly about, unsmoothed, unbrushed; the scanty articles of furniture were out of their proper places; slovenly discomfort marked the death-chamber. And by the bedside stood a neighboring clergyman, a stout, rustic, homely, thoroughly Welsh priest, who might have sat for the portrait of Parson Adams.

"Here's a letter for you," said the visitor.

"For me!" echoed Caleb, feebly. "Ah! well; is it not very dark, or are my eyes failing?" The clergyman and the servant drew aside the curtains, and propped the sick man up: he read as follows, slowly, and with difficulty:

"DEAR CALEB,

"At last I can do something for you. A friend of mine has a living in his gift just vacant, worth, I understand, from three to four hundred a year; pleasant neighborhood—small parish. And my friend keeps the hounds! just the thing for you. He is, however, a very particular sort of person; wants a companion. and has a horror of any thing evangelical; wishes, therefore, to see you before he decides. If you can meet me in London some day next month, I'll present you to him, and I have no doubt it will be settled. You must think it strange I never wrote to you since we parted, but you know I never was a very good correspondent; and as I had nothing to communicate advantageous to you, I thought it a sort of insult to enlarge on my own happiness, and so forth. All I shall say on that score is, that I've sown my wild oats; and that you may take may word for it, there's nothing that can make a man know how large the heart is,

and how little the world, till he comes home (perhaps, after a hard day's hunting), and sees his own fireside, and hears one dear welcome; and—oh, by-the-way, Caleb, if you could but see my boy, the sturdiest little rogue! But enough of this. All that vexes me is, that I've never yet been able to declare my marriage; my uncle, however, suspects nothing: my wife bears up against all, like an angel as she is; still, in case of any accident, it occurs to me, now I'm writing to you, especially if you leave the place, that it may be as well to send me an examined copy of the register. In those remote places registers are often lost or mislaid; and it may be useful hereafter, when I proclaim the marriage, to clear up all doubt as to the fact.

"Good-by, old fellow,

"Yours, most truly," &c. &c.

"It comes too late," sighed Caleb, heavily, and the letter fell from his hands. There was a long pause. "Close the shutters," said the sick man, at last; "I think I could sleep: and—and—pick up that letter."

With a trembling, but eager gripe, he seized the paper as a miser would seize the deeds of an estate on which he has a mortgage. He smoothed the folds, looked complacently at the well-known hand, smiled—a ghastly smile! and then placed the letter under his pillow, and sank down: they left him alone. He did not wake for some hours, and that good clergyman, poor as himself, was again at his post. The only friendships that are really with us in the hour of need are those which are cemented by equality of circumstance. In the depth of home, in the hour of tribulation, by the bed of death, the rich and the poor are seldom found side by side. Caleb was evidently much feebler, but his sense seemed clearer than it had been, and the instincts of his native kindness were the last that left him.

"There is something he wants me to do for him," he muttered. "Ah! I remember: Jones, will you send for the parish register? It is somewhere in the vestry-room, I think—but nothing's kept properly. Better go yourself—it's important."

Mr. Jones nodded, and sallied forth. The register was not in the vestry; the churchwardens knew nothing about it; the clerk—a new clerk, who also was the sexton, and rather a wild fellow—had gone ten miles off to a wedding: every place was searched; till, at last, the book was found, amid a heap of old magazines and dusty papers, in the parlor of Caleb himself. By the time it was brought to him the sufferer was fast declining; with some difficulty his dim eye discovered the place, where, amid the pothooks of the parishioners, the large, clear hand of his old friend, and trembling characters of the bride, looked forth distinguished.

"Extract this for me, will you?" said Caleb.

Mr. Jones obeyed.

"Now just write above the extract:

"SIR—By Mr. Price's desire I send you the inclosed. He is too ill to write himself. But he bids me say that he has never been quite the same man since you left him; and that, if he should not get well again, still your kind letter has made him easier in his mind."

Caleb stopped.

"Go on."

"That is all I have to say: sign your name, and put the address—here it is. Ah, the letter," he muttered, "must not lie about! If any thing happen to me, it may get him into trouble."

And, as Mr. Jones sealed his communication, Caleb feebly stretched his wan hand, and held the letter which had "come too late" over the flame of the candle. As the paper dropped on the carpetless floor, Mr. Jones prudently set thereon the broad sole of his top-boot, and the maid servant brushed it into the grate.

"Ah, trample it out; hurry it among the ashes. The last as the rest," said Caleb hoarsely. "Friendship, fortune, hope, love, life—a little flame, and then—and then—"

"Don't be uneasy; it's quite out!" said Mr. Jones.

Caleb turned his face to the wall. He lingered till the next day, when he passed insensibly from sleep to death. As soon as the breath was out of his body Mr. Jones felt that his duty was discharged—that other duties called him home. He promised to return to read the burial service over the deceased, gave some hasty orders about the plain funeral, and was turning from the room, when he saw the letter he had written by Caleb's wish still on the table. "I pass the post-office, I'll put it in," said he to the weeping servant; "and just give me that scrap of paper." So he wrote on the scrap, "P. S. He died this morning at half-past twelve, without pain.—R. J.;" and, without the trouble of breaking the seal, thrust the final bulletin into the folds of the letter, which he then carefully placed in his vast pocket, and safely transferred to the post. And that was all that the jovial and happy man to whom the letter was addressed ever heard of the last days of his college friend.

The living vacant by the death of Caleb Price was not so valuable as to plague the patron with many applications. It continued vacant nearly the whole of the six months prescribed by law. And the desolate parsonage was committed to the charge of one of the villagers, who had occasionally assisted Caleb in the care of his little garden. The villager, his wife, and half a dozen noisy, ragged children, took possession of the quiet bachelor's abode. The furniture had been sold to pay the expenses of the funeral and a few trifling bills; and, save the kitchen and the two attics, the empty house, uninhabited, was surrendered to the sportive mischief of the idle urchins, who prowled about the silent chambers in fear of the silence and in ecstasy at the space. The bed-room in which Caleb had died was, indeed, long held sacred by infantine superstition. But one day the eldest boy having ventured across the threshold, two cupboards, the doors standing ajar, attracted the child's curiosity. He opened one, and his exclamation soon brought the rest of the children round him. Have you ever, reader, when a boy, suddenly stumbled on that El Dorado, called by the grown-up folks a lumber-room? Lumber, indeed! what *Virtù* double-locks in cabinets is the real lumber to the boy! Lumber, reader! to thee it was a treasury! Now this cupboard had been the lumber-room in Caleb's household. In an instant the whole troop had thrown themselves on the motley contents. Stray joints of clumsy fishing-rods, artificial baits, a pair of worn-out top-boots,

in which one of the urchins, whooping and shouting, buried himself up to the middle; moth-eaten, stained, and ragged, the collegian's gown—relic of the dead man's palmy time; a bag of carpenter's tools, chiefly broken, a cricket-bat, an odd boxing-glove, a fencing-foil, snapped in the middle; and, more than all, some half-finished attempts at rude toys: a boat, a cart, a doll's house, in which the good-natured Caleb had busied himself for the younger ones of that family in which he had found the fatal ideal of his trite life. One by one were these lugged forth from their dusty slumber—profane hands struggling for the first right of appropriation. And now, revealed against the wall, glared upon the startled violators of the sanctuary, with glassy eyes and horrent visage, a grim monster. They huddled back one upon the other, pale and breathless, till the eldest, seeing that the creature moved not, took heart—approached on tiptoe—twice receded, and twice again advanced, and finally drew out, daubed, painted, and tricked forth in the semblance of a griffin, a gigantic kite!

The children, alas! were not old and wise enough to know all the dormant value of that imprisoned aeronaut, which had cost poor Caleb many a dull evening's labor—the intended gift to the false one's favorite brother. But they guessed that it was a thing or spirit appertaining of right to them; and they resolved, after mature consultation, to impart the secret of their discovery to an old wooden-legged villager who had served in the army, who was the idol of all the children of the place; and who, they firmly believed, knew every thing under the sun except the mystical arts of reading and writing. Accordingly, having seen that the coast was clear—for they considered their parents (as the children of the hard-working often do) the natural foes to amusement—they carried the monster into an old outhouse, and ran to the veteran to beg him to come up slyly and inspect its properties.

Three months after this memorable event arrived the new pastor: a slim, prim, orderly, and starch young man, framed by nature and trained by practice to bear a great deal of solitude and starving. Two loving couples had waited to be married till His Reverence should arrive. The ceremony performed, where was the registry-book? The vestry was searched, the churchwardens interrogated; the gay clerk, who, on the demise of his deaf predecessor, had come into office a little before Caleb's last illness, had a dim recollection of having taken the registry up to Mr. Price at the time the vestry-room was whitewashed. The house was searched; the cupboard, the mysterious cupboard, was explored. "Here it is, sir!" cried the clerk; and he pounced upon a pale parchment volume. The thin clergyman opened it, and recoiled in dismay: more than three fourths of the leaves had been torn out.

"It is the moths, sir," said the gardener's wife, who had not yet removed from the house.

The clergyman looked round: one of the children was trembling. "What have you done to this book, little one?"

"That book?—the—hi!—hi!—"

"Speak the truth, and you shan't be punished."

"I did not know it was any harm—hi!—hi!—"

"Well, and—"

"And old Ben helped us."

"Well!"

"And—and—and—hi!—hi!—The tail of the kite, sir!—"

"Where is the kite?"

Alas! the kite and its tail were long ago gone to that undiscovered limbo, where all things lost, broken, vanished, and destroyed—things that lose themselves, for servants are too honest to steal: things that break themselves, for servants are too careful to break—find an everlasting and impenetrable refuge.

"It does not signify a pin's head," said the clerk; "the parish must find a new 'un!"

"It is no fault of mine," said the pastor. "Are my chops ready?"

CHAPTER II.

"And soothed with idle dreams the
Frowning fate."—CRABBE.

"WHY does not my father come back? What a time he has been away!"

"My dear Philip, business detains him: but he will be here in a few days—perhaps to-day!"

"I should like him to see how much I am improved."

"Improved in what, Philip?" said the mother, with a smile. "Not Latin, I am sure; for I have not seen you open a book since you insisted on poor Todd's dismissal."

"Todd! Oh, he was such a scrub, and spoke through his nose: what could he know of Latin?"

"More than you ever will, I fear, unless—" and here there was a certain hesitation in the mother's voice, "unless your father consents to your going to school."

"Well, I should like to go to Eton!" That's the only school for a gentleman. I've heard my father say so."

"Philip, you are too proud."

"Proud! You often call me proud, but then you kiss me when you do so. Kiss me now, mother."

The lady drew her son to her breast, put aside the clustering hair from his forehead, and kissed him; but the kiss was sad, and a moment after she pushed him away gently, and muttered, unconscious that she was overheard,

"If, after all, my devotion to the father should wrong the children!"

The boy started, and a cloud passed over his brow; but he said nothing. A light step entered the room through the French casements that opened on the lawn, and the mother turned to her youngest-born, and her eye brightened.

"Mamma! mamma! here is a letter for you. I snatched it from John: it is papa's handwriting."

The lady uttered a joyous exclamation, and seized the letter. The younger child nestled himself on a stool at her feet, looking up while she read it; the elder stood apart, leaning on his gun, and with something of thought, even of gloom, upon his countenance.

There was a strong contrast in the two children. The elder, who was about fifteen, seemed older than he was, not only from his height, but from the darkness of his complexion, and a certain proud, nay, imperious expression upon features that, without having the soft and fluent

graces of childhood, were yet regular and striking. His dark-green shooting-dress, with the belt and pouch; the cap, with its gold tassel set upon his luxuriant curls, which had the purple gloss of the raven's plume, blended, perhaps, something prematurely manly in his own tastes with the love of the fantastic and the picturesque which bespeaks the presiding genius of the proud mother. The younger son had scarcely told his ninth year; and the soft auburn ringlets, descending half way down the shoulders; the rich and delicate bloom that exhibits at once the hardy health and the gentle fostering; the large, deep blue eyes; the flexile and almost effeminate contour of the harmonious features, altogether made such an ideal of childlike beauty as Lawrence had loved to paint or Chantrey model.

And the daintiest cares of a mother, who, as yet, has her darling all to herself—her toy, her plaything—were visible in the large falling collar of finest cambric, and the blue velvet dress, with its filigree buttons and embroidered sash. Both the boys had about them the air of those whom Fate ushers blandly into life: the air of wealth, and birth, and luxury, spoiled and pampered, as if earth had no thorn for their feet, and Heaven not a wind to visit their young cheeks too roughly. The mother had been extremely handsome, and though the first bloom of youth was now gone, she had still the beauty that might captivate new love: an easier task than to retain the old. Both her sons, though differing from each other, resembled her. She had the *features* of the younger; and probably any one who had seen her in her own earlier youth would have recognized in that child's gay, yet gentle countenance, the mirror of the mother when a girl. Now, however, especially when silent or thoughtful, the *expression* of her face was rather that of the elder boy; the cheek, once so rosy, was now pale, though clear, with something which time had given, of pride and thought, in the curved lip and the high forehead. They who could have looked on her in her more lonely hours might have seen that the pride had known shame, and the thought was the shadow of the passions of fear and sorrow.

But now, as she read those hasty, brief, but well-remembered characters—read as one whose heart was in her eyes—joy and triumph alone were visible in that eloquent countenance. Her eyes flashed, her breast heaved; and at length, clasping the letter to her lips, she kissed it again and again with passionate transport. Then, as her eyes met the dark, inquiring, earnest gaze of her eldest born, she flung her arms round him and wept vehemently.

"What is the matter, mamma, dear mamma?" said the youngest, pushing himself between Philip and his mother.

"Your father is coming back this day—this very hour; and you—you—child—you, Philip—" Here sobs broke in upon her words, and left her speechless.

The letter that had produced this effect ran as follows:

"*To* Mrs. Morton, *Fernside Cottage.*

"Dearest Kate—My last letter prepared you for the news I have now to relate—my poor uncle is no more. Though I had seen so little of him, especially of late years, his death sensibly affected me: but I have at least the consolation of thinking that there is nothing now to prevent my doing justice to you. I am the sole heir to his fortune. I have it in my power, dearest Kate, to offer you a tardy recompense for all you have put up with for my sake; a sacred testimony to your long forbearance, your unreproachful love, your wrongs, and your devotion. Our children too—my noble Philip!—kiss them, Kate—kiss them for me a thousand times.

"I write in great haste; the burial is just over, and my letter will only serve to announce my return. My darling Catharine, I shall be with you almost as soon as these lines meet your eyes—those dear eyes, that, for all the tears they have shed for my faults and follies, have never looked the less kind.

"Yours, ever as ever,

"Philip Beaufort."

This letter has told its tale, and little remains to explain. Philip Beaufort was one of those men of whom there are many in his peculiar class of society—easy, thoughtless, good-humored, generous, with feelings infinitely better than his principles.

Inheriting himself but a moderate fortune, which was three parts in the hands of the Jews before he was twenty-five, he had the most brilliant expectations from his uncle; an old bachelor, who, from a courtier, had turned a misanthrope; cold, shrewd, penetrating, worldly, sarcastic, and imperious; and from this relation he received, meanwhile, a handsome, and, indeed, munificent allowance. About sixteen years before the date at which this narrative opens, Philip Beaufort had "run off," as the saying is, with Catharine Morton, then little more than a child—a motherless child—educated at a boarding-school to notions and desires far beyond her station, for she was the daughter of a provincial tradesman. And Philip Beaufort, in the prime of life, was possessed of most of the qualities that dazzle the eyes, and many of the arts that betray the affections. It was suspected by some that they were privately married: if so, the secret had been closely kept, and baffled all the inquiries of the stern old uncle. Still there was much, not only in the manner, at once modest and dignified, but in the character of Catharine, which was proud and high-spirited, to give color to the suspicion. Beaufort, a man naturally careless of forms, paid her a marked and punctilious respect; and his attachment was evidently one, not only of passion, but of confidence and esteem. Time developed in her mental qualities far superior to those of Beaufort; and for these she had ample leisure of cultivation. To the influence derived from her mind and person she added that of a frank, affectionate, and winning disposition; their children cemented the bond between them. Mr. Beaufort was passionately attached to field-sports. He lived the greater part of the year with Catharine at the beautiful cottage, to which he had built hunting-stables that were the admiration of the county; and, though the cottage was near to London, the pleasures of the metropolis seldom allured him for more than a few days—generally but a few hours—at a time; and he always hurried back with renewed relish to what he considered his home.

Whatever the connection between Catharine and himself (and of the *true* nature of that connection, the Introductory Chapter has made the reader more enlightened than the world), her influence had at least weaned from all excesses, and many follies, a man who, before he knew her, had seemed likely, from the extreme joviality and carelessness of his nature, and a very imperfect education, to contract whatever vices were most in fashion as preservatives against *ennui*. And if their union had been openly hallowed by the church, Philip Beaufort had been universally esteemed the model of a tender husband and a fond father. Ever, as he became more and more acquainted with Catharine's natural good qualities, and more and more attached to his home, had Mr. Beaufort, with the generosity of true affection, desired to remove from her the pain of an equivocal condition by a public marriage. But Mr. Beaufort, though generous, was not free from the worldliness which had met him every where amid the society in which his youth had been spent. His uncle, the head of one of those families which yearly vanish from the commonalty into the peerage, but which once formed a distinguished peculiarity in the aristocracy of England—families of ancient birth, immense possessions, at once noble and untitled—held his estates by no other tenure than his own caprice. Though he professed to like Philip, yet he saw but little of him. When the news of the illicit connection his nephew was reported to have formed reached him, he at first resolved to break it off; but, observing that Philip no longer gambled nor run in debt, and had retired from the turf to the safer and more economical pastimes of the field, he contented himself with inquiries which satisfied him that Philip was not married; and perhaps he thought it, on the whole, more prudent to wink at an error that was not attended by the bills which had heretofore characterized the human infirmities of his reckless nephew. He took care, however, incidentally, and in reference to some scandal of the day, to pronounce his opinion, not upon the fault, but upon the only mode of repairing it.

"If ever," said he, and he looked grimly at Philip while he spoke, "a gentleman were to disgrace his ancestry by introducing into his family one whom his own sister could not receive at her house, why, he ought to sink to her level, and wealth would but make his disgrace the more notorious. If I had an only son, and that son were booby enough to do any thing so discreditable as to marry beneath him, I would rather have my footman for my successor. You understand, Phil?"

Philip did understand, and looked round at the noble house and the stately park, and his generosity was not equal to the trial. Catharine—so great was her power over him—might, perhaps, have easily triumphed over his more selfish calculations; but her love was too delicate ever to breathe, of itself, the hope that lay deepest at her heart. And her children!—ah! for them she pined, but for them she also hoped. Before them was a long future; and she had all confidence in Philip. Of late, there had been considerable doubts how far the elder Beaufort would realize the expectations in which his nephew had been reared. Philip's younger brother had been much with the old gentleman, and appeared to be in high favor; this brother was a man in every respect the opposite of Philip: sober, supple, decorous, ambitious, with a face of smiles and a heart of ice.

But the old gentleman was taken dangerously ill, and Philip was summoned to his bed of death. Robert, the younger brother, was there also, with his wife (for he had married prudently) and his children—(he had two, a son and daughter). Not a word did the uncle say as to the disposition of his property till an hour before he died. And then, turning in his bed, he looked first at one nephew, then at the other, and faltered out,

"Philip, you are a scapegrace, but a gentleman: Robert, you are a careful, sober, plausible man, and it is a great pity you were not in business: you would have made a fortune!—you won't inherit one, though you think it: I have marked you, sir. Philip, beware of your brother. Now let me see the parson."

The old man died, the will was read, and Philip succeeded to a rental of £20,000 a year; Robert to a diamond ring, a gold repeater, £5000, and a curious collection of bottled snakes.

CHAPTER III.

"Stay, delightful Dream;
Let him within his pleasant garden walk;
Give him her arm—of blessings let them talk."
CRABBE.

"THERE, Robert, there! now you can see the new stables. By Jove, they are the completest thing in the three kingdoms!"

"Quite a pile! But is that the house? You lodge your horses more magnificently than yourself."

"But is it not a beautiful cottage?—to be sure it owes every thing to Catharine's taste. Dear Catharine!"

Mr. Robert Beaufort—for this colloquy took place between the brothers as their britska rapidly descended the hill, at the foot of which lay Fernside Cottage and its miniature demesnes—Mr. Robert Beaufort pulled his traveling-cap over his brows, and his countenance fell, whether at the name of Catharine, or the tone in which the name was uttered; and there was a pause, broken by a third occupant of the britska, a youth of about seventeen, who sat opposite the brothers.

"And who are those boys on the lawn, uncle?"

"Who are those boys?" It was a simple question, but it grated on the ear of Mr. Robert Beaufort: it struck discord at his heart. "Who are those boys?" as they ran across the sward, eager to welcome their father home—the westering sun shining full on their joyous faces—their young forms so lithe and so graceful—their merry laughter ringing in the still air. "Those boys," thought Mr. Robert Beaufort, "the sons of shame, rob mine of his inheritance." The elder brother turned round at his nephew's question, and saw the expression on Robert's face. He bit his lip, and answered gravely,

"Arthur, they are my children."

"I did not know you were married," replied Arthur, bending forward to take a better view of his cousins.

Mr. Robert Beaufort smiled bitterly, and Philip's brow grew crimson.

The carriage stopped at the little lodge. Philip opened the door and jumped to the ground; the brother and his son followed. A moment more, and Philip was locked in Catharine's arms, her tears falling fast upon his breast, his children plucking at his coat, and the younger one crying, in his shrill, impatient treble, "Papa! papa! you don't see Sidney, papa!"

Mr. Robert Beaufort placed his hand on his son's shoulder and arrested his steps as they contemplated the group before them.

"Arthur," said he, in a hollow whisper, "those children are our disgrace and your supplanters; they are bastards! bastards! and they are to be his heirs!"

Arthur made no answer, but the smile with which he had hitherto gazed on his new relations vanished.

"Kate," said Mr. Beaufort, as he turned from Mrs. Morton, and lifted his youngest-born in his arms, "this is my brother and his son: they are welcome, are they not?"

Mr. Robert bowed low, and extended his hand, with stiff affability, to Mrs. Morton, muttering something equally complimentary and inaudible.

The party proceeded toward the house. Philip and Arthur brought up the rear.

"Do you shoot?" asked Arthur, observing the gun in his cousin's hand.

"Yes. I hope this season to bag as many head as my father: he is a famous shot. But this is only a single barrel, and an old-fashioned sort of detonator. My father must get me one of the new guns. I can't afford it myself."

"I should think not," said Arthur, smiling.

"Oh, as to that," resumed Philip, quickly, and with a heightened color, "I *could* have managed it very well if I had not given thirty guineas for a brace of pointers the other day: they are the best dogs you ever saw."

"Thirty guineas!" echoed Arthur, looking with *naïve* surprise at the speaker; "why, how old are you?"

"Just fifteen last birthday. Holloa, John! John Green!" cried the young gentleman, in an imperious voice, to one of the gardeners who was crossing the lawn, "see that the nets are taken down to the lake to-morrow, and that my tent is pitched properly, by the lime-trees, by nine o'clock. I hope you will understand me this time: Heaven knows you take a great deal of telling before you understand any thing!"

"Yes, Mr. Philip," said the man, bowing obsequiously; and then muttered as he went off, "Drat the nat'rel! he speaks to a poor man as if he warn't flesh and blood."

"Does your father keep hunters?" asked Philip.

"No"

"Why?"

"Perhaps one reason may be that he is not rich enough."

"Oh! that's a pity. Never mind, we'll mount you whenever you like to pay us a visit."

Young Arthur drew himself up, and his air, naturally frank and gentle, became haughty and reserved. Philip gazed on him and felt offended; he scarce knew why, but from that moment he conceived a dislike to his cousin.

CHAPTER IV.

"For a man is helpless and vain, of a condition so exposed to calamity that a raisin is able to kill him: any trooper out of the Egyptian army—a fly can do it, when it goes on God's errand."

JEREMY TAYLOR: *On the Deceitfulness of the Heart.*

THE two brothers sat at their wine after dinner. Robert sipped Claret, the sturdy Philip quaffed his more generous port. Catharine and the boys might be seen at a little distance, and by the light of a soft August moon, among the shrubs and *bosquets* of the lawn.

Philip Beaufort was about five-and-forty, tall, robust, nay, of great strength of frame and limb, with a countenance extremely winning, not only from the comeliness of its features, but its frankness, manliness, and good-nature. His was the bronzed, rich complexion, the inclination towards *embonpoint*, the athletic girth of chest, which denote redundant health, and mirthful temper, and sanguine blood. Robert, who had lived the life of cities, was a year younger than his brother; nearly as tall, but pale, meager, stooping, and with a careworn, anxious, hungry look, which made the smile that hung upon his lips seem hollow and artificial. His dress, though plain, was neat and studied; his manner bland and plausible; his voice sweet and low: there was that about him which, if it did not win liking, tended to excite respect; a certain decorum, a nameless propriety of appearance and bearing, that approached a little to formality: his every movement, slow and measured, was that of one who paced in the circle that fences round the habits and usages of the world.

"Yes," said Philip, "I had always decided to take this step whenever my poor uncle's death should allow me to do so. You have seen Catharine, but you do not know half her good qualities; she would grace any station: and, beside, she nursed me so carefully last year, when I broke my collar-bone in that cursed steeplechase. Egad, I am getting too heavy and growing too old for such schoolboy pranks."

"I have no doubt of Mrs Morton's excellence, and I honor your motives; still, when you talk of her gracing any station, you must not forget, my dear brother, that she will be no more received as Mrs. Beaufort than she is now as Mrs. Morton."

"But I tell you, Robert, that I am really married to her already—that she would never have left her home but on that condition—that we were married the very day we met after her flight."

Robert's thin lips broke into a slight sneer of incredulity.

"My dear brother, you do right to say this: any man in your situation would. But I know that my uncle took every pains to ascertain if the report of a private marriage were true."

"And you helped him in the search. Eh, Bob?"

Bob slightly blushed. Philip went on:

"Ha, ha, to be sure you did; you knew that such a discovery would have done for me in the old gentleman's good opinion. But I blinded you both, ha, ha! The fact is, that we were married with the greatest privacy; that even now, I own, it would be difficult for Catharine herself to establish the fact unless I wished it. I am ashamed to think that I have never even

told her where I keep the main proof of the marriage. I induced one witness to leave the country, the other must be long since dead: my poor friend, too, who officiated, is no more. Even the register, Bob, the register itself has been destroyed; and yet, notwithstanding, I will prove the ceremony and clear up poor Catharine's fame; for I have the attested copy of the register safe and sound. Catharine not married! Why, look at her, man!"

Mr. Robert Beaufort glanced at the window for a moment, but his countenance was still that of one unconvinced.

"Well, brother," said he, dipping his fingers in the water-glass, "it is not for me to contradict you. It is a very curious tale—parson dead—witnesses missing. But still, as I said before, if you are resolved on a public marriage, you are wise to insist that there has been a previous private one. Yet, believe me, Philip," continued Robert, with solemn earnestness, "the world—"

"D— the world! What do I care for the world? We don't want to go to routs and balls, and give dinners to fine people. I shall live much the same as I have always done; only I shall now keep the hounds—they are very indifferently kept at present—and have a yacht, and engage the best masters for the boys. Phil wants to go to Eton; but I know what Eton is. Poor fellow! his feelings might be hurt there, if others are as skeptical as yourself. I suppose my old friends will not be less civil now I have £20,000 a year. And as for the society of women, between you and me, I don't care a rush for any woman but Catharine: poor Katty!"

"Well, you are the best judge of your own affairs: you don't misinterpret my motives?"

"My dear Bob, no. I am quite sensible how kind it is in you—a man of your starch habits and strict views—coming here to pay a mark of respect to Kate (Mr. Robert turned uneasily in his chair) even before you knew of the private marriage; and I am sure I don't blame you for never having done it before. You did quite right to try your chance with my uncle."

Mr. Robert turned in his chair again, still more uneasily, and cleared his voice as if to speak. But Philip tossed off his wine, and proceeded without heeding his brother,

"And though the poor old man does not seem to have liked you the better for consulting his scruples, yet we must make up for the partiality of his will. Let me see—what, with your wife's fortune, you muster £2000 a year?"

"Only £1500, Philip, and Arthur's education is growing expensive. Next year he goes to college. He is certainly very clever, and I have great hopes—"

"That he will do honor to us all—so have I. He is a noble young fellow; and I think my Philip may find a great deal to learn from him. Phil is a sad, idle dog, but with a devil of a spirit, and sharp as a needle. I wish you could see him ride. Well, to return to Arthur. Don't trouble yourself about his education: that shall be my care. He shall go to Christ Church—a gentleman commoner, of course—and when he's of age we'll get him into Parliament. Now for yourself, Bob. I shall sell the town-house in Berkeley Square, and whatever it brings you shall have. Besides that, I'll add £1500 a year to your £1500: so that's said and done. Pshaw! brothers should be brothers. Let's come out and play with the boys!"

The two Beauforts stepped through the open casement into the lawn.

"You look pale, Bob—all you London fellows do. As for me, I feel as strong as a horse; much better than when I was one of your gay dogs, straying loose about the town! 'Gad! I have never had a moment's ill health, except a fall now and then: I feel as if I should live forever, and that's the reason why I could never make a will."

"Have you never, then, made your will?"

"Never as yet. Faith, till now, I had little enough to leave. But, now that all this great Beaufort property is at my own disposal, I must think of Kate's jointure. By Jove! now I speak of it, I will ride to —— to-morrow, and consult the lawyer there both about the will and the marriage. You will stay for the wedding?"

"Why, I *must* go into ——shire to-morrow evening, to place Arthur with his tutor. But I'll return for the wedding, if you particularly wish it: only Mrs. Beaufort is a woman of very strict—"

"I *do* particularly wish it," interrupted Philip, gravely; "for I desire, for Catharine's sake, that you, my sole surviving relation, may not seem to withhold your countenance from an act of justice to her. And as for your wife, I fancy £1500 a year would reconcile her to my marrying out of the penitentiary."

Mr. Robert bowed his head, coughed huskily, and said, "I appreciate your generous affection, Philip."

The next morning, while the elder parties were still over the breakfast-table, the young people were in the grounds: it was a lovely day, one of the last of the luxuriant August; and Arthur, as he looked round, thought he had never seen a more beautiful place. It was, indeed, just the spot to captivate a youthful and susceptible fancy. The village of Fernside, though in one of the counties adjoining Middlesex, and as near to London as the owner's passionate pursuits of the field would permit, was yet as rural and sequestered as if a hundred miles distant from the smoke of the huge city. Though the dwelling was called a cottage, Philip had enlarged the original modest building into a villa of some pretensions. On either side a graceful and well-proportioned portico stretched verandahs, covered with roses and clematis; to the right extended a range of costly conservatories, terminating in vistas of trellis-work, which formed those elegant alleys called roseries, and served to screen the more useful gardens from view. The lawn, smooth and even, was studded with American plants and shrubs in flower, and bounded on one side by a small lake, on the opposite bank of which limes and cedars threw their shadows over the clear waves. On the other side, a light fence separated the grounds from a large paddock, in which three or four hunters grazed in indolent enjoyment. It was one of those cottages which bespeak the ease and luxury not often found in more ostentatious mansions: an abode which the visitor of sixteen contemplates with vague notions of poetry and love—which at forty he might think dull and d—d expensive—which at sixty he would pronounce to be damp in winter, and full of earwigs

in the summer. Master Philip was leaning on his favorite gun; Master Sidney was chasing a peacock butterfly; Arthur was silently gazing on the shining lake and the still foliage that drooped over its surface. In the countenance of this young man there was something that excited a certain interest. He was less handsome than Philip, but the expression of his face was more prepossessing. There was something of pride in the forehead; but of good-nature, not unmixed with irresolution and weakness, in the curves of the mouth. He was more delicate of frame than Philip, and the color of his complexion was not that of a robust constitution. His movements were graceful and self-possessed, and he had his father's sweetness of voice.

"This is really beautiful! I envy you, cousin Philip."

"Has not your father got a country-house?"

"No: we live either in London or at some hot, crowded watering-place."

"Yes; this is very nice during the shooting and hunting season. But my old nurse says we shall have a much finer place now. I liked this very well till I saw Lord Belville's place. But it is very unpleasant not to have the finest house in the county: *aut Cæsar aut nihil*—that's my motto. Ah! do you see that swallow? I'll bet you a guinea I hit it."

"No, poor thing! don't hurt it." But, ere the remonstrance was uttered, the bird lay quivering on the ground.

"It is just September, and one must keep one's hand in," said Philip, as he reloaded his gun.

To Arthur this action seemed a wanton cruelty; it was rather the wanton recklessness which belongs to a wild boy accustomed to gratify the impulse of the moment; the recklessness which is *not* cruelty in the boy, but which prosperity may pamper into cruelty in the man. And scarce had he reloaded his gun before the neigh of a young colt came from a neighboring paddock, and Philip bounded to the fence. "He calls me, poor fellow; you shall see him feed from my hand. Run in for a piece of bread—a large piece, Sidney." The boy and the animal seemed to understand each other. "I see you don't like horses," he said to Arthur. "As for me, I love dogs, horses—every dumb creature."

"Except swallows!" said Arthur, with a half smile, and a little surprised at the inconsistency of the boast.

"Oh! that is *sport*—all fair: it is not to hurt the swallow—it is to obtain skill," said Philip, coloring; and then, as if not quite easy with his own definition, he turned away abruptly.

"This is dull work: suppose we fish. By Jove! (he had caught his father's expletive), that blockhead has put the tent on the wrong side of the lake, after all. Holla, you, sir!" and the unhappy gardener looked up from his flowerbeds; "what ails you? I have a great mind to tell my father of you: you grow stupidier every day. I told you to put the tent under the lime-trees."

"We could not manage it, sir; the boughs were in the way."

"And why did not you cut the boughs, blockhead?"

"I did not dare do so, sir, without master's orders" said the man, doggedly.

"My orders are sufficient, I should think: so none of your impertinence," cried Philip, with a raised color; and lifting his hand, in which he held his ramrod, he shook it menacingly over the gardener's head: "I've a great mind to—"

"What's the matter, Philip?" cried the good-humored voice of his father: "fy!"

"This fellow does not mind what I say, sir."

"I did not like to cut the boughs of the lime-trees without your orders, sir," said the gardener.

"No, it would be a pity to cut them. You should consult me there, Master Philip;" and the father shook him by the collar with a good-natured and affectionate, but rough sort of caress.

"Be quiet, father!" said the boy, petulantly and proudly, "or," he added, in a lower voice, but one which showed emotion, "my cousin may think you mean less kindly than you always do, sir."

The father was touched. "Go and cut the lime boughs, John; and always do as Mr. Philip tells you."

The mother was behind, and she sighed audibly, "Ah! dearest, I fear you will spoil him."

"Is he not your son—and do we not owe him the more respect for having hitherto allowed others to—"

He stopped, and the mother could say no more. And thus it was that this boy of powerful character and strong passions had, from motives the most amiable, been pampered from the darling into the despot.

"And now, Kate, I will, as I told you last night, ride over to —— and fix the earliest day for our marriage. I will ask the lawyer to dine here, to talk about the proper steps for proving the private one."

"Will that be difficult?" asked Catharine, with natural anxiety.

"No; for, if you remember, I had the precaution to get an examined copy of the register; otherwise, I own to you, I should have been alarmed. I don't know what has become of Smith. I heard some time since from his father that he had left the colony; and (I never told you before—it would have made you uneasy) once, a few years ago, when my uncle again got it into his head that we might be married, I was afraid poor Caleb's successor might, by chance, betray us. So I went over to A—— myself, being near it when I was staying with Lord C——, in order to see how far it might be necessary to secure the parson; and, only think! I found an accident had happened to the register, so, as the clergyman could know nothing, I kept my own council. How lucky I have the copy! No doubt the lawyer will set all to rights; and, while I am making settlements, I may as well make my will. I have plenty for both boys, but the dark one must be the heir. Does he not look born to be an eldest son?"

"Ah, Philip!"

"Pshaw! one don't die the sooner for making a will. Have I the air of a man in a consumption?" and the sturdy sportsman glanced complacently at the strength and symmetry of his manly limbs. "Come, Phil, let's go to the stables. Now, Robert, I will show you what is better worth seeing than those miserable flowerbeds." So saying, Mr. Beaufort led the way to

the court-yard at the back of the cottage. Catharine and Sidney remained on the lawn, the rest followed the host. The grooms, of whom Beaufort was the idol, hastened to show how well the horses had thriven in his absence.

"Do see how Brown Bess has come on, sir; but, to be sure, Master Philip keeps her in exercise. Ah, sir, he will be as good a rider as your honor one of these days."

"He ought to be, Tom, for I think he'll never have my weight to carry. Well, saddle Brown Bess for Mr. Philip. What horse shall I take? Ah! here's my old friend Puppet."

"I don't know what's come to Puppet, sir; he's off his feed and turned sulky. I tried him over the bar yesterday, but he was quite restiff, like."

"The devil he was! So, so, old boy, you shall go over the six-barred gate to-day, or we'll know why." And Mr. Beaufort patted the sleek neck of his favorite hunter. "Put the saddle on him, Tom."

"Yes, your honor. I sometimes think he is hurt in the loins somehow: he don't take to his leaps kindly, and he always tries to bite when we bridles him. Be quiet, sir!"

"Only his airs," said Philip. "I did not know this, or *I* would have taken him over the gate. Why did not you tell me, Tom?"

"Lord love you, sir! because you have such a spurret; and if any thing had come to you—"

"Quite right; you are not weight enough for Puppet, my boy; and he never did like any one to back him but myself. What say you, brother; will you ride with us?"

"No, I must go to —— to-day with Arthur. I have engaged the post-horses at two o'clock; but I shall be with you to-morrow or the day after. You see his tutor expects him; and as he is backward in his mathematics, he has no time to lose."

"Well, then, good-by, nephew!" and Beaufort slipped a pocket-book into the boy's hand. "Tush! whenever you want money, don't trouble your father—write to me; we shall be always glad to see you; and you must teach Philip to like his book a little better—eh, Phil?"

"No, father, *I* shall be rich enough to do without books," said Philip, rather coarsely; but then, observing the heightened color of his cousin, he went up to him, and with a generous impulse said, "Arthur, you admired this gun: pray accept it. Nay, don't be shy; I can have as many as I like for the asking: you're not so well off, you know."

The intention was kind, but the manner was so patronizing that Arthur felt offended. He put back the gun, and said, dryly, "I shall have no occasion for a gun, thank you."

If Arthur was offended by the offer, Philip was much more offended by the refusal. "As you like: I hate pride," said he; and he gave the gun to the groom as he vaulted into his saddle with the lightness of a young Mercury. "Come, father."

Mr. Beaufort had now mounted his favorite hunter: a large, powerful horse, well known for its prowess in the field. The rider trotted him once or twice through the spacious yard.

"Nonsense, Tom: no more hurt in the loins than I am. Open that gate: we will go across the paddock, and take the gate yonder—the old six-bar—eh, Phil?"

"Capital! to be sure!"

The gate was opened; the grooms stood watchful to see the leap; and a kindred curiosity arrested Robert Beaufort and his son.

How well they looked, those two horsemen; the ease, lightness, spirit of the one, with the fine-limbed and fiery steed that literally "bounded beneath him as a barb," seemingly as gay, as ardent, and as haughty as the boy-rider. And the manly and almost Herculean form of the elder Beaufort, which, from the buoyancy of its movements, and the supple grace that belongs to the perfect mastership of any athletic art, possessed an elegance and dignity, especially on horseback, which rarely accompanies proportions equally sturdy and robust. There was, indeed, something knightly and chivalrous in the bearing of the elder Beaufort; in his handsome, aquiline features, the erectness of his mien, the very wave of his hand, as he spurred from the yard.

"What a fine-looking fellow my uncle is!" said Arthur, with involuntary admiration.

"Ay, an excellent life—amazingly strong!" returned the pale father, with a slight sigh.

"Philip," said Mr. Beaufort, as they cantered across the paddock, "I think the gate is too much for you. I will just take Puppet over, and then we will open it for you."

"Pooh, my dear father! you don't know how I'm improved!" And slackening the rein, and touching the side of his horse, the young rider darted forward and cleared the gate, which was of no common height, with an ease that extorted a loud bravo from the proud father.

"Now, Puppet," said Mr. Beaufort, spurring his own horse. The animal cantered toward the gate, and then suddenly turned round with an impatient and angry snort. "For shame, Puppet! for shame, old boy!" said the sportsman, wheeling him again to the barrier. The horse shook his head, as if in remonstrance; but the spur, vigorously applied, showed him that his master would not listen to his mute reasonings. He bounded forward—made at the gate—struck his hoofs against the top bar—fell forward, and threw his rider head foremost on the road beyond. The horse rose instantly—not so the master. The son dismounted, alarmed and terrified. His father was speechless! and blood gushed from the mouth and nostrils as the head drooped heavily on the boy's breast. The bystanders had witnessed the fall—they crowded to the spot—they took the fallen man from the weak arms of the son—the head groom examined him with the eye of one who had picked up science from his experience in such casualties.

"Speak, brother! where are you hurt?" exclaimed Robert Beaufort.

"He will never speak more!" said the groom, bursting into tears. "His neck is broken!"

"Send for the nearest surgeon," cried Mr. Robert. "Good God, boy! don't mount that devilish horse!"

But Arthur had already leaped on the unhappy steed which had been the cause of this appalling affliction. "Which way?"

"Straight on to ——, only two miles; every one knows Mr. Powis's house. God bless you!" said the groom.

Arthur vanished.

"Lift him carefully, and take him to the house," said Mr. Robert. "My poor brother! my dear brother!"

He was interrupted by a cry—a single, shrill, heart-breaking cry—and Philip fell senseless to the ground.

No one heeded him at that hour; no one heeded the fatherless BASTARD. "Gently, gently," said Mr. Robert, as he followed the servants and their load. And he then muttered to himself, and his sallow cheek grew bright, and his breath came short: "He has made no will! he never made a will!"

CHAPTER V.

"*Constance.* Oh, boy, then where art thou?
. . . What becomes of me?"
King John.

IT was three days after the death of Philip Beaufort—for the surgeon arrived only to confirm the judgment of the groom: in the drawing-room of the cottage, the windows closed, lay the body in its coffin, the lid not yet nailed down. There, prostrate on the floor, tearless, speechless, was the miserable Catharine; poor Sidney, too young to comprehend all his loss, sobbing at her side; while Philip, apart, seated beside the coffin, gazed abstractedly on that cold, rigid face, which had never known one frown for his boyish follies.

In another room, that had been appropriated to the late owner, called his study, sat Robert Beaufort. Every thing in this room spoke of the deceased. Partially separated from the rest of the house, it communicated by a winding staircase with a chamber above, to which Philip had been wont to betake himself, whenever he returned late and over-exhilarated from some rural feast crowning a hard day's hunt. Above a quaint, old-fashioned bureau of Dutch workmanship (which Philip had picked up at a sale in the earlier years of his marriage) was a portrait of Catharine, taken in the bloom of her youth. On a peg on the door that led to the staircase still hung his rough driving-coat. The window commanded the view of the paddock, in which the worn-out hunter or the unbroken colt grazed at will. Around the walls of the "study" (a strange misnomer!) hung prints of celebrated fox-hunts and renowned steeple-chases. Guns, fishing-rods, and foxes' brushes, ranged with a sportsman's neatness, supplied the place of books. On the mantle-piece lay a cigar-case, a well-worn volume on the Veterinary Art, and the last number of *The Sporting Magazine*. And in that room—thus witnessing of the hardy, masculine, rural life that had passed away—sallow, stooping, town-worn, sat, I say, Robert Beaufort, the heir-at-law—alone: for the very day of his death he had remanded his son home with the letter that announced to his wife the change in their fortunes, and directed her to send his lawyer post-haste to the house of death. The bureau, and the drawers, and the boxes which contained the papers of the deceased were open; their contents had been ransacked; no certificate of the private marriage, no hint of such an event; not a paper found to signify the last wishes of the rich, dead man. He had died and made no sign. Mr. Robert Beaufort's countenance was still and composed.

A knock at the door was heard: the lawyer entered.

"Sir, the undertakers are here, and Mr. Greaves has ordered the bells to be rung: at three o'clock he will read the service."

"I am obliged to you, Blackwell, for taking these melancholy offices on yourself. My poor brother! It is so sudden! But the funeral, you say, ought to take place to-day?"

"The weather is so warm!" said the lawyer, wiping his forehead. As he spoke, the death-bell was heard.

There was a pause.

"It would have been a terrible shock to Mrs. Morton if she had been his wife," observed Mr. Blackwell. "But I suppose persons of that kind have very little feeling. I must say that it was very fortunate for the family that the event happened before Mr. Beaufort was wheedled into so improper a marriage."

"It *was* fortunate, Blackwell. Have you ordered the post-horses? I shall start immediately after the funeral."

"What is to be done with the cottage, sir?"

"You may advertise it for sale."

"And Mrs. Morton and the boys?"

"Hum—we will consider. She was a tradesman's daughter. I think I ought to provide for her suitably, eh?"

"It is more than the world could expect from you, sir: it is very different from a wife."

"Oh, very! very much so, indeed! Just ring for a lighted candle; we will seal up these boxes. And—I think I could take a sandwich. Poor Philip!"

The funeral was over—the dead shoveled away. What a strange thing it does seem, that that very form which we prized so charily, for which we prayed the winds to be gentle, which we lapped from the cold in our arms, from whose footstep we would have removed a stone, should be suddenly thrust out of sight—an abomination that the earth must not look upon—a despicable loathsomeness, to be concealed and to be forgotten! And this same composition of bone and muscle, that was yesterday so strong—which men respected, and women loved, and children clung to—to-day so lamentably powerless, unable to defend or protect those who lay nearest to its heart; its riches wrested from it, its wishes spat upon, its influence expiring with its last sigh! A breath from its lips making all that mighty difference between what it was and what it is!

The post-horses were at the door as the funeral procession returned to the house.

Mr. Robert Beaufort bowed slightly to Mrs. Morton, and said, with his pocket-handkerchief still before his eyes.

"I will write to you in a few days, ma'am; you will find that I shall not forget you. The cottage will be sold; but we sha'n't hurry you. Good-by, ma'am; good-by, my boys;" and he patted his nephews on the head.

Philip winced aside, and scowled haughtily at his uncle, who muttered to himself, "That boy will come to no good!" Little Sidney put his hand into the rich man's, and looked up pleadingly into his face: "Can't you say something pleasant to poor mamma, Uncle Robert?"

Mr. Beaufort hemmed huskily and entered the britska—it had been his brother's: the lawyer followed, and they drove away.

A week after the funeral, Philip stole from the house into the conservatory to gather some fruit for his mother: she had scarcely touched food since Beaufort's death. She was worn to a shadow: her hair had turned gray. Now she had at last found tears, and she wept noiselessly, but unceasingly.

The boy had plucked some grapes, and placed them carefully in his basket: he was about to select a nectarine that seemed riper than the rest, when his hand was roughly seized, and the gruff voice of John Green, the gardener, exclaimed,

"What are you about, Master Philip? You must not touch them 'ere fruit!"

"How dare you, fellow!" cried the young gentleman, in a tone of equal astonishment and wrath.

"None of your airs, Master Philip! What I means is, that some great folks are coming to look at the place to-morrow, and I won't have my show of fruit spoiled by being pawed about by the like of you: so, that's plain, Master Philip!"

The boy grew very pale, but remained silent. The gardener, delighted to retaliate the insolence he had received, continued,

"You need not go for to look so spiteful, master; you are not the great man you thought you were; you are nobody now, and so you will find, ere long. So, march out, if you please: I wants to lock up the glass."

As he spoke, he took the lad roughly by the arm; but Philip, the most irascible of mortals, was strong for his years, and fearless as a young lion. He caught up a watering-pot, which the gardener had deposited while he expostulated with his late tyrant, and struck the man across the face with it so violently and so suddenly that he fell back over the beds, and the glass crackled and shivered under him. Philip did not wait for the foe to recover his equilibrium; but, taking up his grapes, and possessing himself quietly of the disputed nectarine, quitted the spot: and the gardener did not think it prudent to pursue him. To boys, under ordinary circumstances—boys who have buffeted their way through a scolding nursery, a wrangling family, or a public school—there would have been nothing in this squabble to dwell on the memory or vibrate on the nerves after the first burst of passion; but to Philip Beaufort it was an era in life; it was the first insult he had ever received; it was his initiation into that changed, rough, and terrible career, to which the spoiled darling of vanity and love was henceforth condemned. His pride and his self-esteem had incurred a fearful shock. He entered the house, and a sickness came over him; his limbs trembled; he sat down in the hall, and, placing the fruit beside him, covered his face with his hands and wept. Those were not the tears of a boy, drawn from a shallow source; they were the burning, agonizing, reluctant tears that men shed, wrung from the heart as if it were its blood. He had never been sent to school, lest he should meet with mortification. He had had various tutors, trained to show rather than to exact respect; one succeeding another at his own whim and caprice. His natural quickness, and a very strong, hard, inquisitive turn of mind, had enabled him, however, to pick up more knowledge, though of a desultory and miscellaneous nature, than boys of his age generally possess; and his roving, independent, out-of-door existence had served to ripen his understanding. He had certainly, in spite of every precaution, arrived at some, though not very distinct, notions of his peculiar position; but none of its inconveniences had visited him till that day. He began now to turn his eyes to the future; and vague and dark forebodings—a consciousness of the shelter, the protector, the station he had lost in his father's death—crept coldly over him. While thus musing, a ring was heard at the bell—he lifted his head—it was the postman with a letter. Philip hastily rose, and, averting his face, on which the tears were not yet dried, took the letter; and then, snatching up his little basket of fruit, repaired to his mother's room.

The shutters were half closed on the bright day—oh, what a mockery is there in the smile of the happy sun when it shines on the wretched! Mrs. Morton sat, or, rather, crouched in a distant corner, her streaming eyes fixed on vacancy—listless, drooping—a very image of desolate woe: and Sidney was weaving flower-chains at her feet.

"Mamma! mother!" whispered Philip, as he threw his arms round her neck; look up! look up! My heart breaks to see you. Do taste this fruit: you will die too if you go on thus; and what will become of us—of Sidney?"

Mrs. Morton did look up vaguely into his face, and strove to smile.

"See, too, I have brought you a letter; perhaps good news: shall I break the seal?"

Mrs. Morton shook her head gently, and took the letter—alas! how different from that one which Sidney had placed in her hands not two short weeks since: it was Mr. Robert Beaufort's handwriting. She shuddered and laid it down. And then there suddenly, and for the first time, flashed across her the sense of her strange position—the dread of the future. What were her sons to be henceforth? What herself? Whatever the sanctity of her marriage, the law might fail her. At the disposition of Mr. Robert Beaufort the fate of three lives might depend. She gasped for breath, again took up the letter, and hurried over the contents: they ran thus:

"Dear Madam—Knowing that you must naturally be anxious as to the future prospects of your children and yourself, left, by my poor brother, destitute of all provision, I take the earliest opportunity which it seems to me that propriety and decorum allow, to apprize you of my intentions. I need not say that, properly speaking, you can have no kind of claim upon the relations of my late brother; nor will I hurt your feelings by those moral reflections which at this season of sorrow can not, I hope, fail involuntarily to force themselves upon you. Without more than this mere allusion to your peculiar connection with my brother, I may, however, be permitted to add, that that connection tended very materially to separate him from the legitimate branches of his family; and in consulting with them as to a provision for you and your children, I find that, besides scruples that are to be respected, some natural degree of soreness exists upon their minds. Out of regard, however, to

my poor brother (though I saw very little of him of late years), I am willing to waive those feelings which, as a father and a husband, you may conceive that I share with the rest of my family. You will probably now decide on living with some of your own relations; and that you may not be entirely a burden to them, I beg to say that I shall allow you a hundred a year; paid, if you prefer it, quarterly. You may also select certain articles of linen and plate, of which I inclose a list. With regard to your sons, I have no objection to place them at a grammar-school, and, at a proper age to apprentice them to any trade suitable to their future station, in the choice of which your own family can give you the best advice. If they conduct themselves properly, they may always depend on my protection. I do not wish to hurry your movements; but it will probably be painful to you to remain longer than you can help in a place crowded with unpleasant recollections; and as the cottage is to be sold—indeed, my brother-in-law, Lord Lilburne, thinks it would suit him—you will be liable to the interruption of strangers to see it; and, indeed, your prolonged residence at Fernside, you must be sensible, is rather an obstacle to the sale. I beg to inclose you a draught for £100 to pay any present expenses; and to request, when you are settled, to know where the first quarter shall be paid.

"I shall write to Mr. Jackson (who, I think, is the bailiff), to detail my instructions as to selling the crops, &c., and discharging the servants, so that you may have no farther trouble.

"I am, madam,

"Your obedient servant,

"Robert Beaufort.

"Berkeley-square, *September* 12, 18—"

The letter fell from Catharine's hands. Her grief was changed to indignation and scorn.

"The insolent!" she exclaimed, with flashing eyes. "This to me! to me! the wife, the lawful wife of his brother! the wedded mother of his brother's children!"

"Say that again, mother! again—again!" cried Philip, in a loud voice. "His wife! wedded!"

"I swear it," said Catharine, solemnly. "I kept the secret for your father's sake. Now, for yours, the truth must be proclaimed."

"Thank God! thank God!" murmured Philip, in a quivering voice, throwing his arms round his brother. "We have no brand on our names, Sidney."

At those accents, so full of suppressed joy and pride, the mother felt at once all that her son had suspected and concealed. She felt that beneath his haughty and wayward character there had lurked delicate and generous forbearance for her; that from his equivocal position his very faults might have arisen; and a pang of remorse for her long sacrifice of the children to the father shot through her heart. It was followed by a fear, an appalling fear, more painful than the remorse. The proofs that were to clear herself and them! The words of her husband that last awful morning rang in her ear. The minister dead—the witness absent—the register lost! But the copy of that register! the copy! Might not that suffice? She groaned, and closed her eyes as if to shut out the future: then starting up, she hurried from the room, and went straight to Beaufort's study. As she laid her hand on the latch of the door, she trembled and drew back. But care for the living was stronger, at that moment, than even anguish for the dead; she entered the apartment; she passed with a firm step to the bureau. It was locked; Robert Beaufort's seal upon the lock: on every cupboard, every box, every drawer, the same seal, that spoke of rights more valued than her own. But Catharine was not daunted: she turned and saw Philip by her side; she pointed to the bureau in silence; the boy understood the appeal. He left the room, and returned in a few moments with a chisel. The lock was broken: tremblingly and eagerly Catharine ransacked the contents; opened paper after paper, letter after letter, in vain; no certificate—no will—no memorial. Could the brother have abstracted the fatal proof? A word sufficed to explain to Philip what she sought for, and his search was more minute than hers. Every possible receptacle for papers in that room, in the whole house, was explored, and still the search was fruitless.

Three hours afterward they were in the same room in which Philip had brought Robert Beaufort's letter to his mother. Catharine was seated, tearless, but deadly pale, with heart-sickness and dismay.

"Mother," said Philip, "may I now read the letter?"

"Yes, boy, and decide for us all." She paused, and examined his face as he read. He felt her eye was upon him, and restrained his emotions as he proceeded. When he had done, he lifted his dark gaze upon Catharine's watchful countenance.

"Mother, whether or not we obtain our rights, you will still refuse this man's charity. I am young—a boy; but I am strong and active. I will work for you day and night. I have it in me—I feel it; any thing rather than eating *his* bread."

"Philip! Philip! you are indeed my son—your father's son! And have you no reproach for your mother, who so weakly, so criminally concealed your birthright, till, alas! discovery may be too late? Oh! reproach me, reproach me! it will be kindness. No! do not kiss me! I can not bear it. Boy! boy! if, as my heart tells me, we fail in proof, do you understand what, in the world's eye, I am—what you are?"

"I do!" said Philip, firmly; and he fell on his knees at her feet. "Whatever others call you, you are a mother, and I your son. You are, in the judgment of Heaven, my father's wife, and I his heir."

Catharine bowed her head, and with a gush of tears, fell into his arms. Sidney crept up to her, and forced his lips to her cold cheek. "Mamma! what vexes you? Mamma, mamma!"

"Oh, Sidney! Sidney! How like his father! Look at him, Philip! shall we do right to refuse even this pittance? Must *he* be a beggar too?"

"Never a beggar!" said Philip, with a pride that showed what hard lessons he had yet to learn. "The lawful sons of a Beaufort were not born to beg their bread!"

CHAPTER VI.

"The storm above, and frozen world below.
. . . . .
The olive bough
Faded and cast upon the common wind,
And earth a doveless ark."
LAMAN BLANCHARD.

MR. ROBERT BEAUFORT was generally considered by the world a very worthy man. He had never committed any excess—never gambled or incurred debt—or fallen into the warm errors most common with his sex. He was a good husband—a careful father—an agreeable neighbor—rather charitable than otherwise to the poor. He was honest and methodical in his dealings, and had been known to behave handsomely in different relations of life. Mr. Robert Beaufort, indeed, always meant to do what was right—*in the eyes of the world!* He had no other rule of action but that which the world supplied: his religion was decorum—his sense of honor was regard to opinion. His heart was a dial to which the world was the sun: when the great eye of the public fell on it, it answered every purpose that a heart could answer; but, when that eye was invisible, the dial was mute—a piece of brass and nothing more.

It is just to Robert Beaufort to assure the reader that he wholly disbelieved his brother's story of a private marriage. He considered that tale, when heard for the first time, as a mere invention (and a shallow one) of a man wishing to make the imprudent step he was about to take as respectable as he could. The careless tone of his brother when speaking upon the subject—his confession that of such a marriage there was no distinct proofs, except a copy of a register (which copy Robert had not found)—made his incredulity natural. He therefore deemed himself under no obligation of delicacy or respect to a woman through whose means he had very nearly lost a noble succession—a woman who had not even borne his brother's name—a woman whom nobody knew. Had Mrs. Morton been Mrs. Beaufort, and the natural sons legitimate children, Robert Beaufort, supposing their situation of relative power and dependence to have been the same, would have behaved with careful and scrupulous generosity. The world would have said, "Nothing could be handsomer than Mr. Robert Beaufort's conduct!" Nay, if Mrs. Morton had been some divorced wife of birth and connections, he would have made very different dispositions in her favor: he would not have allowed the connections to have called him *shabby*. But here he felt that, all circumstances considered, the world, if it spoke at all (which it would scarcely think it worth while to do), would be on his side. An artful woman—low-born, and, of course, low-bred—who wanted to inveigle the rich and careless paramour into marriage: what could be expected from the man she had sought to injure—the rightful heir? Was it not very good in him to do any thing for her; and, if he provided for the children suitably to the original station of the mother, did he not go to the very utmost of reasonable expectation? He certainly thought in his conscience, such as it was, that he had acted well; not extravagantly, not foolishly, but *well*. He was sure the world would say so if it knew all: he was not bound to do any thing. He was not, therefore, prepared for Catharine's short, haughty, but temperate reply to his letter: a reply which conveyed a decided refusal of his offers—asserted positively her own marriage, and the claims of her children—intimated legal proceedings—and was signed in the name of Catharine *Beaufort!* Mr. Beaufort put the letter in his bureau, labeled "Impertinent answer from Mrs. Morton, Sept. 14," and was quite contented to forget the existence of the writer, until his lawyer, Mr. Blackwell, informed him that a suit had been instituted by Catharine. Mr. Robert turned pale, but Blackwell composed him.

"Pooh, sir! you have nothing to fear. It is but an attempt to extort money: the attorney is a low practitioner, accustomed to get up bad cases: they can make nothing of it."

This was true: whatever the rights of the case, poor Catharine had no proofs—no evidence—which could justify a respectable lawyer to advise her proceeding to a suit. She named two witnesses of her marriage: one dead, the other could not be heard of. She selected for the alleged place in which the ceremony was performed a very remote village, in which it appeared that the register had been destroyed. No attested copy thereof was to be found; and Catharine was stunned on hearing that, even if found, it was doubtful whether it could be received as evidence, unless to corroborate actual personal testimony. It so happened that when Philip, many years ago, had received the copy, he had not shown it to Catharine, nor mentioned Mr. Jones's name as the copyist. In fact, then only three years married to Catharine, his worldly caution had not yet been conquered by confident experience of her generosity. As for the mere moral evidence dependent on the publication of her bans in London, that amounted to no proof whatever; nor, on inquiry at A——, did the Welsh villagers remember any thing farther than that, some fifteen years ago, a handsome gentleman had visited Mr. Price, and one or two rather thought that Mr. Price had married him to a lady from London; evidence quite inadmissible against the deadly, damning fact, that for fifteen years Catharine had *openly* borne another name, and lived with Mr. Beaufort ostensibly as his mistress. Her generosity in this destroyed her case. Nevertheless, she found a low practitioner, who took her money and neglected her cause; so her suit was heard and dismissed with contempt. Henceforth, then, indeed, in the eyes of the law and the public, Catharine was an impudent adventurer, and her sons were nameless outcasts.

And now, relieved from all fear, Mr. Robert Beaufort entered upon the full enjoyment of his splendid fortune. The house in Berkeley-square was furnished anew. Great dinners and gay routs were given in the ensuing spring. Mr. and Mrs. Beaufort became persons of considerable importance. The rich man had, even when poor, been ambitious; his ambition now centered in his only son. Arthur had always been considered a boy of talents and promise: to what might he not now aspire? The term of his probation with the tutor was abridged, and Arthur Beaufort was sent at once to Oxford.

Before he went to the University, during a short preparatory visit to his father, Arthur spoke to him of the Mortons.

"What has become of them, sir? and what have you done for them?"

"Done for them!" said Mr. Beaufort, opening his eyes. "What should I do for persons who have just been harassing me with the most unprincipled litigation? My conduct to them has been too generous—that is, all things considered. But when you are my age you will find there is very little gratitude in the world, Arthur."

"Still, sir," said Arthur, with the goodness that belonged to him, "still, my uncle was greatly attached to them; and the boys, at least, are guiltless."

"Well, well!" replied Mr. Beaufort, a little impatiently, "I believe they want for nothing; I fancy they are with the mother's relations. Whenever they address me in a proper manner, they shall not find me revengeful or hard-hearted; but, since we are on this topic," continued the father, smoothing his shirt-frill with a care that showed his decorum even in trifles, "I hope you see the results of that kind of connection, and that you will take warning by your poor uncle's example. And now let us change the subject: it is not a very pleasant one, and, at your age, the less your thoughts turn on such matters the better."

Arthur Beaufort, with the careless generosity of youth, that gauges other men's conduct by its own sentiments, believed that his father, who had never been niggardly to himself, had really acted as his words implied; and, engrossed by the pursuits of the new and brilliant career opened, whether to his pleasures or his studies, suffered the objects of his inquiries to pass from his thoughts.

Meanwhile Mrs. Morton, for by that name we must still call her, and her children were settled in a small lodging in an humble suburb, situated on the high road between Fernside and the metropolis. She saved from her hopeless lawsuit, after the sale of her jewels and ornaments, a sufficient sum to enable her, with economy, to live respectably for a year or two at least, during which time she might arrange her plans for the future. She reckoned, as a sure resource, upon the assistance of her relations; but it was one to which she applied with natural shame and reluctance. She had kept up a correspondence with her father during his life. To him she never revealed the secret of her marriage, though she did not write like a person conscious of error. Perhaps, as she always said to her son, she had made to her husband a solemn promise never to divulge or even hint that secret until he himself should authorize its disclosure. For neither he nor Catharine ever contemplated separation or death. Alas! how all of us, when happy, sleep secure in the dark shadows which ought to warn us of the sorrows that are to come! Still Catharine's father, a man of coarse mind and not rigid principles, did not take much to heart that connection which he assumed to be illicit. She was provided for, that was some comfort: doubtless Mr. Beaufort would act like a gentleman—perhaps, at last, make her an honest woman and a lady. Meanwhile, she had a fine house, and a fine carriage, and fine servants; and, so far from applying to him for money, was constantly sending him little presents. But Catharine only saw, in his permission of her correspondence, kind, forgiving, and trustful affection, and she loved him tenderly: when he died, the link that bound her to her family was broken. Her brother succeeded to the trade: a man of probity and honor, but somewhat hard and unamiable. In the only letter she had received from him—the one announcing her father's death—he told her plainly, and very properly, that he could not countenance the life she led—that he had children growing up—that all intercourse between them was at an end, unless she left Mr. Beaufort; when, if she sincerely repented, he would still prove her affectionate brother.

Though Catharine had at the time resented this letter as unfeeling, now, humbled and sorrow-stricken, she recognized the propriety of principle from which it emanated. Her brother was well off for his station; she would explain to him her real situation, and he would believe her story. She would write to him, and beg him, at least, to give aid to her poor children.

But this step she did not take till a considerable portion of her pittance was consumed—till nearly three parts of a year since Beaufort's death had expired—and till sundry warnings, not to be lightly heeded, had made her forebode the probability of an early death for herself. From the age of sixteen, when she had been placed by Mr. Beaufort at the head of his household, she had been cradled, not in extravagance, but in an easy luxury, which had not brought with it habits of economy and thrift. She could grudge any thing to herself, but to her children—*his* children, whose every whim had been anticipated, she had not the heart to be saving. She could have starved in a garret had she been alone, but she could not see them wanting a comfort while she possessed a guinea. Philip, to do him justice, evinced a consideration not to have been expected from his early and arrogant recklessness. But Sidney—who could expect consideration from such a child? What could he know of the change of circumstances—of the value of money? Did he seem dejected, Catharine would steal out and spend a week's income on the lapful of toys which she brought home. Did he seem a shade more pale, did he complain of the slightest ailment, a doctor must be sent for. Alas! her own ailments, neglected and unheeded, were growing beyond the reach of medicine. Anxious—fearful—gnawed by regret for the past, the thought of famine in the future, she daily fretted and wore herself away. She had cultivated her mind during her secluded residence with Mr. Beaufort, but she had learned none of the arts by which decayed gentlewomen keep the wolf from the door; no little holiday accomplishments, which in the day of need turn to useful trade; no water-color drawings, no paintings on velvet, no fabrication of pretty gewgaws, no embroidery and fine needlework. She was helpless—utterly helpless—not strong enough even for a servant; and, even in that capacity, could she have got a character? A great change at this time was apparent in Philip. Had he fallen then into kind hands and guiding eyes, his passions and energies might have ripened into rare qualities and great virtues. But perhaps, as Goethe has somewhere said, "Experience, after all, is the best teacher." He kept a constant guard on his vehement temper, his wayward will; he would not have vexed

his mother for the world. But, strange to say (it was a great mystery in the woman's heart), in proportion as he became more amiable, it seemed that his mother loved him less. Perhaps she did not, in that change, recognize so closely the darling of the old time; perhaps the very weaknesses and importunities of Sidney, the hourly sacrifices the child entailed upon her, endeared him more to her from that natural sense of dependence and protection which forms the great bond between mother and child; perhaps, too, as Philip had been one to inspire as much pride as affection, so the pride faded away with the expectations that had fed it, and carried off in its decay some of the affection that was intertwined with it. However this be, Philip had formerly appeared the more spoiled and favored of the two, and now Sidney seemed all in all. Thus, beneath the younger son's caressing gentleness, there grew up a certain regard for self; it was latent, it took amiable colors, it had even a certain charm and grace in so sweet a child, but selfishness it was not the less: in this he differed from his brother. Philip was self-willed, Sidney self-loving. A certain timidity of character, endearing, perhaps, to the anxious heart of a mother, made this fault in the younger boy more likely to take root; for in bold natures there is a lavish and uncalculating recklessness, which scorns self unconsciously: and what is fear, but, when physical, the regard for one's own person; when moral, the anxiety for one's own interests?

It was in a small room in a lodging-house in the suburb of H——, that Mrs. Morton was seated by the window, anxiously awaiting the knock of the postman, who was expected to bring her brother's reply to her letter. It was, therefore, between ten and eleven o'clock—a morning in the merry month of June. It was hot and sultry, which is rare in an English June. A fly-trap, red, white, and yellow, suspended from the ceiling, swarmed with flies; flies were on the ceiling, flies buzzed at the windows; the sofa and chairs of horse-hair seemed stuffed with flies. There was an air of heated discomfort in the gaudy paper, in the bright-staring carpet, in the very looking-glass over the chimney-piece, where a strip of mirror lay in an embrace of frame covered with yellow muslin. We may talk of the dreariness of winter—and winter, no doubt, is desolate—but what in the world is more dreary to eyes inured to the verdure and bloom of nature—"the pomp of groves and garniture of fields"—than a close room in a suburban lodging-house; the sun piercing every corner; nothing fresh, nothing cool, nothing fragrant to be seen, felt, or inhaled; all dust, glare, noise, with a chandler's shop, perhaps, next door? Sidney, armed with a pair of scissors, was cutting the pictures out of a story-book which his mother had bought him the day before. Philip, who, of late, had taken much to rambling about the streets—it my be, in hopes of meeting one of those benevolent, eccentric elderly gentlemen he had read of in old novels, who suddenly come to the relief of distressed virtue; or, more probably, from the restlessness that belonged to his adventurous temperament—Philip had left the house since breakfast.

"Oh! how hot this nasty room is!" exclaimed Sidney, abruptly looking up from his employment. "Sha'n't we ever go into the country again, mamma?"

"Not at present, my love."

"I wish I could have my pony: why can't I have my pony, mamma?"

"Because—because—the pony is sold, Sidney."

"Who sold it?"

"Your uncle."

"He is a very naughty man, my uncle: is not he? But can't I have another pony? It would be so nice this fine weather!"

"Ah! my dear, I wish I could afford it: but you shall have a ride this week! Yes," continued the mother, as if reasoning with herself in excuse of the extravagance, "he does not look well: poor child! he *must* have exercise."

"A ride! Oh! that is my own, kind mamma!" exclaimed Sidney, clapping his hands. "Not on a donkey, you know! a pony. The man down the street, there, lets ponies. I must have the white pony with the long tail. But, I say, mamma, don't tell Philip—pray don't—he would be jealous."

"No, not jealous, my dear: why do you think so?"

"Because he is always angry when I ask you for any thing. It is very unkind in him, for I don't care if he has a pony too—only not the white one."

Here the postman's knock, loud and sudden, startled Mrs. Morton from her seat. She pressed her hands tightly to her heart as if to still its beating, and went nervously to the door, thence to the stairs, to anticipate the lumbering step of the slipshod maid-servant.

"Give it me, Jane! give it me!"

"One shilling and eightpence—charged double—if *you* please, ma'am! Thank you."

"Mamma, may I tell Jane to engage the pony?"

"Not now, my love: sit down—be quiet: I—I am not well."

Sidney, who was affectionate and obedient, crept back peaceably to the window, and, after a short, impatient sigh, resumed the scissors and the story-book. I do not apologize to the reader for the various letters I am obliged to lay before him, for character often betrays itself more in letters than in speech. Mr. Roger Morton's reply was couched in these terms:

"Dear Catharine—I have received your letter of the 14th inst., and write per return. I am very much grieved to hear of your afflictions; but, whatever you say, I can not think the late Mr. Beaufort acted like a conscientious man in forgetting to make his will, and leaving his little ones destitute. It is all very well to talk of his intentions; but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. And it is hard upon me, who have a large family of my own, and get my living by honest industry, to have a rich gentleman's children to maintain. As for your story about the private marriage, it may or may not be. Perhaps you were taken in by that worthless man, for a *real* marriage it could not be. And as you say the law has decided that point, therefore the less you say on the matter the better. It all comes to the same thing. People are not bound to believe what can't be proved. And even if what you say is true, you are more to be

blamed than pitied for holding your tongue so many years, and discrediting an honest family, as ours has always been considered. I am sure *my* wife would not have thought of such a thing for the finest gentleman that ever wore shoe-leather. However, I don't want to hurt your feelings; and I am sure I am ready to do whatever is right and proper. You can not expect that I should ask you to my house. My wife, you know, is a very religious woman—what is called evangelical; but that's neither here nor there: I deal with all people, churchmen and dissenters—even Jews—and don't trouble my head much about differences in opinion. I dare say there are many ways to heaven, as I said the other day to Mr. Thwaites, our member. But it is right to say my wife will not hear of your coming here; and, indeed, it might do harm to my business; for there are several elderly single gentlewomen who buy flannel for the poor at my shop, and they are very particular—as they ought to be, indeed; for morals are very strict in this county, and particularly in this town, where we certainly do pay very high church-rates. Not that I grumble; for, though I am as liberal as any man, I am for an Established Church—as I ought to be, since the dean is my best customer. With regard to yourself, I will inclose you £10, and you will let me know when it is gone, and I will see what more I can do. You say you are very poorly, which I am sorry to hear; but you must pluck up your spirits, and take in plain work; and I really think you ought to apply to Mr. Robert Beaufort. He bears a high character; and notwithstanding your law-suit, which I can not approve of, I dare say he might allow you £40 or £50 a year, if you apply properly, which would be the right thing in him. So much for you. As for the boys poor, fatherless creatures! it is very hard that they should be so punished for no fault of their own; and my wife, who, though strict, is a good-hearted woman, is ready and willing to do what I wish about them. You say the eldest is near sixteen, and well come on in his studies. I can get him a very good thing in a light, genteel way. My wife's brother, Mr. Christopher Plaskwith, is a bookseller and stationer, with pretty practice, in R——. He is a clever man, and has a newspaper, which he kindly sends me every week; and, though it is not my county, it has some very sensible views, and is often noticed in the London papers as 'our provincial contemporary.' Mr. Plaskwith owes me some money, which I advanced him when he set up the paper, and he has several times most honestly offered to pay me in shares in the said paper. But, as the thing might break, and I don't like concerns I don't understand, I have not taken advantage of his very handsome proposals. Now Plaskwith wrote me word two days ago, that he wanted a genteel, smart lad, as assistant and 'prentice, and offered to take my eldest boy; but we can't spare him. I write to Christopher by this post; and if your youth will run down on the top of the coach, and inquire for Mr. Plaskwith—the fare is trifling—I have no doubt he will be engaged at once. But you will say, 'There's the premium to consider!' No such thing; Kit will set off the premium against his debt to me, so you will have nothing to pay. 'Tis a very pretty business, and the lad's education will get him on; so that's off your mind. As to the little chap, I'll take him at once. You say he is a pretty boy, and a pretty boy is always a help in a linen-draper's shop. He shall share and share with my own young folks, and Mrs. Morton will take care of his washing and morals. I conclude (this is Mrs. M.'s suggestion) that he has had the measles, cowpock, and whooping-cough, which please let me know. If he behave well, which, at his age, we can easily break him into, he is settled for life. So now you have got rid of two mouths to feed, and have nobody to think of but yourself, which must be a great comfort. Don't forget to write to Mr. Beaufort; and if he don't do something for you, he's not the gentleman I take him for: but you are my own flesh and blood, and sha'n't starve; for, though I don't think it right in a man in business to encourage what's wrong, yet, when a person's down in the world, I think an ounce of help is better than a pound of preaching. My wife thinks otherwise, and wants to send you some tracts; but every body can't be as correct as some folks. However, as I said before, that's neither here nor there. Let me know when your boy comes down, and also about the measles, cowpock, and whooping-cough; also if all's right with Mr. Plaskwith. So now I hope you will feel more comfortable; and remain,

"Dear Catharine,

"Your forgiving and affectionate brother,

"ROGER MORTON.

"*High-street, N——, June* 13.

"P.S.—Mrs. M. says that she will be a mother to your little boy, and that you had better mend up all his linen before you send him."

As Catharine finished this epistle, she lifted up her eyes and beheld Philip. He had entered noiselessly, and he remained silent, leaning against the wall, and watching the face of his mother, which crimsoned with painful humiliation while she read. Philip was not now the trim and dainty stripling first introduced to the reader. He had outgrown his faded suit of funereal mourning; his long, neglected hair hung elf-like and matted down his cheeks; there was a gloomy look in his bright dark eyes. Poverty never betrays itself more than in the features and form of Pride. It was evident that his spirit endured rather than accommodated itself to his fallen state; and notwithstanding his soiled and threadbare garments, and a haggardness that ill becomes the years of palmy youth, there was about his whole mien and person a wild and savage grandeur, more impressive than his former ruffling arrogance of manner.

"Well, mother," said he, with a strange mixture of sternness in his countenance and pity in his voice, "well, mother, and what says your brother?"

"You decided for us once before, decide again. But I need not ask you: you would never—"

"I don't know," interrupted Philip, vaguely; "let me see what we are to decide on."

Mrs. Morton was naturally a woman of high courage and spirit, but sickness and grief had worn down both; and, though Philip was but sixteen, there is something in the very nature of woman, especially in trouble, which makes her seek to lean on some other will than her

own. She gave Philip the letter, and went quietly to sit down by Sidney.

"Your brother means well," said Philip, when he had concluded the epistle.

"Yes, but nothing is to be done: I can not, can not send poor Sidney to—to—" and Mrs. Morton sobbed.

"No, my dear, dear mother, no; it would be terrible, indeed, to part you and him. But this bookseller—Plaskwith—perhaps I shall be able to support you both."

"Why, you do not think, Philip, of being an apprentice! you, who have been so brought up! you, who are so proud!"

"Mother, I would sweep the crossings for your sake! Mother, for your sake I would go to my uncle Beaufort with my hat in my hand, for halfpence. Mother, I am not proud; I would be honest if I can; but when I see you pining away, and so changed, the devil comes into me, and I often shudder lest I should commit some crime—what, I don't know!"

"Come here, Philip—my own Philip, my son my hope, my firstborn!" and the mother's heart gushed forth in all the fondness of early days. "Don't speak so terribly; you frighten me!"

She threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him soothingly. He laid his burning temples on her bosom, and nestled himself to her, as he had been wont to do after some stormy paroxysm of his passionate and wayward infancy. So there they remained, their lips silent, their hearts speaking to each other—each from each taking strange succor and holy strength—till Philip rose, calm, and with a quiet smile, "Good-by, mother; I will go at once to Mr. Plaskwith."

"But you have no money for the coach-fare: here, Philip;" and she placed her purse in his hand, from which he reluctantly selected a few shillings. "And, mind, if the man is rude, and you dislike him—mind, you must not subject yourself to insolence and mortification."

"Oh, all will go well, don't fear," said Philip, cheerfully; and he left the house.

Toward evening he had reached his destination. The shop was of goodly exterior, with a private entrance; over the shop was written, "Christopher Plaskwith, Bookseller and Stationer;" on the private door a brass plate, inscribed with "R—— and *—— Mercury Office, Mr. Plaskwith." Philip applied at the private entrance, and was shown by a "neat-handed Phillis" into a small office-room. In a few minutes the door opened, and the bookseller entered.

Mr. Christopher Plaskwith was a short, stout man, in drab-colored breeches, and gaiters to match—a black coat and waistcoat—a large watch-chain, with a prodigious bunch of seals, alternated by small keys and old-fashioned mourning-rings. His complexion was pale and sodden, and his hair short, dark, and sleek. The bookseller valued himself on a likeness to Bonaparte, and affected a short, brusque, peremptory manner, which he meant to be the indication of the vigorous and decisive character of his prototype.

"So you are the young gentleman Mr. Roger Morton recommends?" Here Mr. Plaskwith took out a huge pocket-book, slowly unclasped it, staring hard at Philip, with what he designed for a piercing and penetrative survey.

"This is the letter—no! this is Sir Thomas Champerdown's order for fifty copies of the last *Mercury*, containing his speech at the county meeting. Your age, young man? Only sixteen!—look older—that's not it—that's not it—and this *is* it! Sit down. Yes, Mr. Roger Morton recommends you—a relation—unfortunate circumstances—well educated—my benevolence—hum! Well, young man, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Sir?"

"Can you cast accounts—know book-keeping?"

"I know something of algebra, sir."

"Algebra! Oh, what else?"

"French and Latin."

"Hum! may be useful. Why do you wear your hair so long? Look at mine. What's your name?"

"Philip Morton."

"Mr. Philip Morton, you have an intelligent countenance—I go a great deal by countenances. You know the terms?—most favorable to you. No premium—I settle that with Roger. I give board and bed—find your own washing. Habits regular—'prenticeship only five years; when over, must not set up in the same town. I will see to the indentures. When can you come?"

"When you please, sir."

"Day after to-morrow, by six o'clock coach."

"But, sir," said Philip, "will there be no salary? Something, ever so small, that I could send to my mother?"

"Salary at sixteen! Board and bed—no premium! Salary! what for? 'Prentices have no salary! You will have every comfort."

"Give me less comfort, that I may give my mother more; a little money, ever so little, and take it out of my board: I can do with one meal a day, sir."

The bookseller was moved; he took a huge pinchful of snuff out of his waistcoat pocket, and mused a moment. He then said, as he re-examined Philip—

"Well, young man, I'll tell you what we will do. You shall come here first upon trial—see if we like each other before we sign the indentures—allow you, meanwhile, 5*s.* a week. If you show talent, will see if I and Roger can settle about some little allowance. That do, eh?"

"I thank you, sir, yes," said Philip, gratefully.

"Settled, then. Follow me—present you to Mrs. P."

Thus saying, Mr. Plaskwith returned the letter to the pocket-book, and the pocket-book to the pocket; and, putting his arms behind his coat-tails, threw up his chin, and strode through the passage into a small parlor, that looked upon a small garden. Here, seated round the table, were a thin lady, with a squint, Mrs. Plaskwith; two little girls, the Misses Plaskwith, also with squints and pinafores; a young man of three or four and twenty, in nankeen trousers, a little the worse for washing, and a black velveteen jacket and waistcoat. This young gentleman was very much freckled; wore his hair, which was dark and wiry, up at one side, down at the other; had a short, thick nose, full lips, and, when close to him, smelt of cigars. Such was Mr. Plim-

mins, Mr. Plaskwith's *factotum*, foreman in the shop, assistant-editor to the *Mercury*. Mr. Plaskwith formally went the round of the introduction: Mrs. P. nodded her head; the Misses P. nudged each other and grinned; Mr. Plimmins passed his hand through his hair, glanced at the glass, and bowed very politely.

"Now, Mrs. P., my second cup, and give Mr. Morton *his* dish of tea. Must be tired, sir—hot day. Jemima, ring—no, go to the stairs, and call out, 'More buttered toast.' That's the shorter way—promptitude is my rule in life, Mr. Morton. Pray—hum, hum—have you ever, by chance, studied the biography of the great Napoleon Bonaparte?"

Mr. Plimmins gulped down his tea, and kicked Philip under the table. Philip looked fiercely at the foreman, and replied sullenly—

"No, sir."

"That's a pity. Napoleon Bonaparte was a very great man—very! You have seen his cast? There it is, on the dumb waiter! Look at it! See a likeness, eh?"

"Likeness, sir! I never saw Napoleon Bonaparte."

"Never saw *him!* No! just look round the room. Who does that bust put you in mind of? who does it resemble?"

Here Mr. Plaskwith rose and put himself into an attitude; his hand in his waistcoat, and his face pensively inclined toward the tea-table. "Now fancy me at St. Helena—this table is the ocean. Now, then, who is that cast like, Mr. Philip Morton?"

"I suppose, sir, it is like you!"

"Ah, that it is! Strikes every one! Does it not, Mrs. P., does it not? And, when you have known me longer, you will find a moral similitude—a moral, sir! Straightforward—short—to the point—bold—determined!"

"Bless me, Mr. P.!" said Mrs. Plaskwith, very querulously, "do make haste with your tea: the young gentleman, I suppose, wants to go home, and the coach passes in a quarter of an hour."

"Have you see Kean in Richard the Third, Mr. Morton?" asked Mr. Plimmins.

"I have never seen a play."

"Never seen a play! How very odd!"

"Not at all odd, Mr. Plimmins," said the stationer. "Mr. Morton has known troubles—so hand him the hot toast."

Silent and morose, but rather disdainful than sad, Philip listened to the babble round him, and observed the ungenial characters with which he was to associate. He cared not to please (*that*, alas! had never been especially his study); it was enough for him if he could see, stretching to his mind's eye beyond the walls of that dull room, the long vistas into fairer fortune. At sixteen, what sorrow can freeze the hope, or what prophetic fear whisper "fool" to the ambition? He would bear back into ease and prosperity, if not into affluence and station, the dear ones left at home. From the eminence of five shillings a week he looked over the Promised Land.

At length Mr. Plaskwith, pulling out his watch, said, "Just in time to catch the coach—make your bow and be off—Smart's the word!" Philip rose, took up his hat, made a stiff bow that included the whole group, and vanished with his host.

Mrs. Plaskwith breathed more easily when he was gone.

"I never seed a more odd, fierce, ill-bred looking young man! I declare I am quite afraid of him. What an eye he has!"

"Uncommonly dark; what, I may say, gipsy-like," said Mr. Plimmins.

"He! he! You always do say such good things, Plimmins. Gipsy-like! he! he! So he is. I wonder if he can tell fortunes?"

"He'll be long before he has a fortune of his own to tell. Ha! ha!" said Plimmins.

"He! he! how *very* good! You are *so* pleasant, Plimmins."

While these strictures on his appearance were still going on, Philip had already ascended the roof of the coach; and, waving his hand with the condescension of old times to his future master, was carried away by the "Express" in a whirlwind of dust.

"A very warm evening, sir," said a passenger seated at his right, puffing, while he spoke, from a short German pipe, a volume of smoke into Philip's face.

"Very warm. Be so good as to smoke into the face of the gentleman on the other side of you," returned Philip, petulantly.

"Ho! ho!" replied the passenger, with a loud, powerful laugh—the laugh of a strong man. "You don't take to the pipe yet; you will by-and-by, when you have known the cares and anxieties that I have gone through. A pipe! It is a great soother! a pleasant comforter! Blue devils fly before its honest breath! It ripens the brain—it opens the heart; and the man who smokes, thinks like a sage and acts like a Samaritan!"

Roused from his revery by this quaint and unexpected declamation, Philip turned his quick glance at his neighbor. He saw a man of great bulk and immense physical power—broad-shouldered—deep-chested—not corpulent, but taking the same girth from bone and muscle that a corpulent man does from flesh. He wore a blue coat—frogged, braided, and buttoned to the throat. A broad-brimmed straw hat, set on one side, gave a jaunty appearance to a countenance which, notwithstanding its jovial complexion and smiling mouth, had, in repose, a bold and decided character. It was a face well suited to the frame, inasmuch as it betokened a mind capable of wielding and mastering the brute physical force of body. Light eyes of piercing intelligence; rough, but resolute and striking features, and a jaw of iron. There was thought, there was power, there was passion in the shaggy brow, the deep-plowed lines, the dilated nostril, and the restless play of the lips. Philip looked hard and gravely, and the man returned his look.

"What do you think of me, young gentleman?" asked the passenger, as he replaced the pipe in his mouth. "I am a fine-looking man, am I not?"

"You seem a strange one."

"Strange! Ay, I puzzle you, as I have done, and shall do many. You can not read me as easily as I can read you. Come, shall I guess at your character and circumstances? You are a gentleman, or something like it, by birth—that the tone of your voice tells me. You are poor, devilish poor—that the hole in your coat

assures me. You are proud, fiery, discontented, and unhappy—all that I see in your face. It was because I saw those signs that I spoke to you. I volunteer no acquaintance with the happy."

"I dare say not; for, if you know all the unhappy, you must have a sufficiently large acquaintance," returned Philip.

"Your wit is beyond your years! What is your calling, if the question does not offend you?"

"I have none as yet," said Philip, with a slight sigh and a deep blush.

"More's the pity!" grunted the smoker, with a long, emphatic, nasal intonation. "I should have judged that you were a raw recruit in the camp of the enemy."

"Enemy! I don't understand you."

"In other words, a plant growing out of a lawyer's desk. I will explain. There is one class of spiders, industrious, hard-working octopedes, who, out of the sweat of their brains (I take it, by-the-by, that a spider must have a fine craniological development), make their own webs and catch their own flies. There is another class of spiders who have no stuff in them wherewith to make webs; they, therefore, wander about, looking out for food provided by the toil of their neighbors. Whenever they come to the web of a smaller spider, whose larder seems well supplied, they rush upon his domain—pursue him to his hole—eat him up if they can—reject him if he is too tough for their maws—and quietly possess themselves of all the legs and wings they find dangling in his meshes: these spiders I call enemies—the world calls them lawyers!"

Philip laughed. "And who are the first class of spiders?"

"Honest creatures, who openly confess that they live upon flies. Lawyers fall foul upon them, under pretense of delivering flies from their clutches. They are wonderful bloodsuckers, these lawyers, in spite of all their hypocrisy. Ha! ha! Ho! ho!"

And with a loud, rough chuckle, more expressive of malignity than mirth, the man turned himself round, applied himself vigorously to his pipe, and sank into a silence which, as mile after mile glided past the wheels, he did not seem disposed to break. Neither was Philip inclined to be communicative. Considerations for his own state and prospects swallowed up the curiosity he might otherwise have felt as to his singular neighbor. He had not touched food since the early morning. Anxiety had made him insensible to hunger till he arrived at Mr. Plaskwith's; and then, feverish, sore, and sick at heart, the sight of the luxuries gracing the tea-table only revolted him. He did not now feel hunger, but he was fatigued and faint. For several nights, the sleep which youth can so ill dispense with had been broken and disturbed; and now, the rapid motion of the coach, and the free current of a fresher and more exhausting air than he had been accustomed to for many months, began to operate on his nerves like the intoxication of a narcotic. His eyes grew heavy; indistinct mists, through which there seemed to glare the various squints of the female Plaskwiths, succeeded the gliding road and the dancing trees. His head fell on his bosom; and thence, instinctively seeking the strongest support at hand, inclined toward the stout smoker, and finally nestled itself composedly on that gentleman's shoulder. The passenger, feeling this unwelcome weight, took the pipe, which he had already thrice refilled, from his lips, and emitted an angry and impatient snort; finding that this produced no effect, and that the load grew heavier as the boy's sleep grew deeper, he cried, in a loud voice, "Holla! I did not pay my fare to be your bolster, young man!" and shook himself lustily. Philip started, and would have fallen sideloug from the coach, if his neighbor had not griped him hard with a hand that could have kept a young oak from falling.

"Rouse yourself! You might have had an ugly tumble."

Philip muttered something inaudible between sleeping and waking, and turned his dark eyes toward the man; in that glance there was so much unconscious, but sad and deep reproach, that the passenger felt touched and ashamed. Before, however, he could say any thing in apology or conciliation, Philip had again fallen asleep. But this time, as if he had felt and resented the rebuff he had received, he inclined his head away from his neighbor, against the edge of a box on the roof: a dangerous pillow, from which any sudden jolt might transfer him to the road below.

"Poor lad! he looks pale!" muttered the man; and he knocked the weed from his pipe, and placed it gently in his pocket. "Perhaps the smoke was too much for him? he seems ill and thin;" and he took the boy's long, lean fingers in his own. "His cheek is hollow! What do I know but it may be with fasting? Pooh! I was a brute. Hush, coachee, hush! Don't talk so loud, and be d—d to you—he will certainly be off;" and the man softly and creepingly encircled the boy's waist with his huge arm. "Now, then, to shift his head; so—so—that's right." Philip's sallow cheek and long hair were now tenderly lapped on the soliloquist's bosom. "Poor wretch! he smiles: perhaps he is thinking of home, and the butterflies he ran after when he was an urchin; they never come back, those days—never—never—never! I think the wind veers to the east; he may catch cold;" and with that, the man, gliding the head for a moment, and with the tenderness of a woman, from his breast to his shoulder, unbottoned his coat (as he replaced the weight, no longer unwelcome, in its former part), and drew the lappets closely round the slender frame of the sleeper, exposing his own sturdy breast—for he wore no waistcoat—to the sharpening air. Thus cradled on that stranger's bosom, wrapped from the present, and dreaming, perhaps—while a heart scorched by fierce and terrible struggles with life and sin made his pillow—of a fair and unsullied future, slept the fatherless and friendless boy.

CHAPTER VII.

"*Constance.* My life, my joy, my food, my all the world,
My widow-comfort."—*King John.*

Amid the glare of the lamps, the rattle of carriages, the lumbering of carts and wagons—the throng, the clamor, the reeking life and dissonant

roar of London, Philip woke from his happy sleep. He woke, uncertain and confused, and saw strange eyes bent on him kindly and watchfully.

"You have slept well, my lad!" said the passenger, in the deep, ringing voice which made itself heard above all the noises round.

"And you have suffered me to incommode you thus?" said Philip, with more gratitude in his voice and look than, perhaps, he had shown to any one out of his own family since his birth.

"You have had but little kindness shown you, my poor boy, if you think so much of this?"

"No—all people were very kind to me once. I did not value it then." Here the coach rolled heavily down the dark arch of the inn-yard.

"Take care of yourself, my boy! You look ill;" and in the dark the man slipped a sovereign into Philip's hand.

"I don't want money, though I thank you heartily all the same; it would be a shame at my age to be a beggar. But can you think of an employment where I can make something? what they offer me is so trifling. I have a mother and a brother—a mere child, sir—at home."

"Employment!" repeated the man; and, as the coach now stopped at the tavern door, the light from the lamp fell full on his marked face. "Ay, I know of employment; but you should apply to some one else to obtain it for you! As for me, it is not likely that we shall meet again!"

"I am sorry for that! What and who are you?" asked Philip, with rude and blunt curiosity.

"Me!" returned the passenger, with his deep laugh; oh! I know some people who call me an honest fellow. Take the employment offered you, no matter how trifling: keep out of harm's way. Good-night to you!"

So saying, he quickly descended from the roof; and, as he was directing the coachman where to look for his carpet bag, Philip saw three or four well-dressed-looking men make up to him, shake him heartily by the hand, and welcome him with great seeming cordiality.

Philip sighed. "He has friends," he muttered to himself; and, paying his fare, he turned from the bustling yard, and took his solitary way home.

A week after his visit to R——, Philip was settled on his probation at Mr. Plaskwith's, and Mrs. Morton's health was so decidedly worse, that she resolved to know her fate, and consult a physician. The oracle was at first ambiguous in its response. But when Mrs. Morton said firmly, "I have duties to perform: upon your candid answer rest my plans with respect to my children—left, if I die suddenly, destitute in the world," the doctor looked hard in her face, saw its calm resolution, and replied frankly,

"Lose no time, then, in arranging your plans: life is uncertain with all—with you especially; you may live some time yet, but your constitution is much shaken; I fear there is water on the chest. No, ma'am, no fee. I will see you again."

The physician turned to Sidney, who played with his watch-chain, and smiled up in his face.

"And that child, sir?" said the mother, wistfully, forgetting the dread fiat pronounced against herself; "he is so delicate!"

"Not at all, ma'am—a very fine little fellow;" and the doctor patted the boy's head, and abruptly vanished.

"Ah! mamma, I wish you would ride—I wish you would take the white pony!"

"Poor boy! poor boy!" muttered the mother; "I must not be selfish." She covered her face with her hands, and began to think.

Could she, thus doomed, resolve on declining her brother's offer? Did it not, at least, secure bread and shelter to her child? When she was dead, might not a tie between the uncle and nephew be snapped asunder? Would he be as kind to the boy as now, when she could commend him with her own lips to his care—when she could place that precious charge into his hands? With these thoughts, she formed one of those resolutions which have all the strength of self-sacrificing love. She would put the boy from her, her last solace and comfort; she would die alone—alone!

CHAPTER VIII.

"*Constance.* When I shall meet him in the court of Heaven,
I shall not know him."—*King John.*

One evening, the shop closed and the business done, Mr. Roger Morton and his family sat in that snug and comfortable retreat which generally backs the ware-rooms of an English tradesman. Happy often, and indeed happy, is that little sanctuary, near to, and yet remote from, the toil and care of the busy mart from which its homely ease and peaceful security are drawn. Glance down those rows of silenced shops in a town at night, and picture the glad and quiet groups gathered within, over that nightly and social meal which custom has banished from the more indolent tribes who neither toil nor spin. Placed between the two extremes of life, the tradesman who ventures not beyond his means, and sees clear books and sure gains, with enough of occupation to give healthful excitement, enough of fortune to greet each new-born child without a sigh, might be envied alike by those above and those below his state—if the restless heart of man ever envied content!

"And so the little boy is not to come?" said Mrs. Morton, as she crossed her knife and fork, and pushed away her plate, in token that she had done supper.

"I don't know. Children, go to bed; there—there—that will do. Good-night! Catharine does not say either yes or no. She wants time to consider."

"It was a very handsome offer on our part: some folks never know when they are well off."

"That is very true, my dear, and you are a very sensible person. Kate herself might have been an honest woman, and, what is more, a very rich woman by this time. She might have married Spencer, the young brewer—an excellent man, and well to do!"

"Spencer! I don't remember him."

"No: after she went off, he retired from business and left the place. I don't know what's become of him. He was mightily taken with her, to be sure. She was uncommonly handsome, my sister Catharine."

"Handsome is as handsome does, Mr. Mor-

ton," said the wife, who was very much marked with the small-pox. "We all have our temptations and trials: this is a vale of tears, and without grace we are whited sepulchers."

Mr. Morton mixed his brandy and water, and moved his chair into its accustomed corner.

"You saw your brother's letter," said he, after a pause; "he gives young Philip a very good character."

"The human heart is very deceitful," replied Mrs. Morton, who, by-the-way, spoke through her nose. "Pray Heaven he may be what he seems; but what's bred in the bone comes out in the flesh."

"We must hope the best," said Mr. Morton, mildly; "and—put another lump into the grog, my dear."

"It is a mercy, I'm thinking, that we didn't have the other little boy. I dare say he has never even been taught his catechism: them people don't know what it is to be a mother. And, besides, it would have been very awkward, Mr. M.; we could never have said who he was; and I've no doubt Miss Pryinall would have been very curious."

"Miss Pryinall be ——!" Mr. Morton checked himself, took a large draught of the brandy and water, and added, "Miss Pryinall wants to have a finger in every body's pie."

"But she buys a deal of flannel, and does great good to the town: it was she who found out that Mrs. Giles was no better than she should be.

"Poor Mrs. Giles! she came to the workhouse."

"Poor Mrs. Giles, indeed! I wonder, Mr. Morton, that you, a married man, with a family, should say *poor* Mrs. Giles!"

"My dear, when people who have been well off come to the workhouse, they may be called poor: but that's neither here nor there; only, if the boy does come to us, we must look sharp upon Miss Pryinall."

"I hope he won't come; it will be very unpleasant. And when a man has a wife and family, the less he meddles with other folks and their little ones, the better. For, as the Scripture says, 'A man shall cleave to his wife, and—'"

Here a sharp, shrill ring at the bell was heard, and Mrs. Morton broke off into—

"Well! I declare! at this hour—who can that be? And all gone to bed! Do go and see, Mr. Morton."

Somewhat reluctantly and slowly, Mr. Morton rose, and, proceeding to the passage, unbarred the door. A brief and muttered conversation followed, to the great irritability of Mrs. Morton, who stood in the passage, the candle in her hand.

"What is the matter, Mr. M.?"

Mr. Morton turned back, looking agitated.

"Where's my hat? Oh, here. My sister is come—at the inn."

"Gracious me! She does not go for to say she is *your* sister?"

"No, no—here's her note—calls herself a lady that's ill. I shall be back soon."

"She can't come here—she sha'n't come here, Mr. M. I'm an honest woman—she can't come here. You understand—"

Mr. Morton had naturally a stern countenance—stern to every one but his wife. The shrill tone to which he was so long accustomed jarred then on his heart as well as ear. He frowned:

"Pshaw! woman, you have no feeling!" said he, and walked out of the house, pulling his hat over his brows.

That was the only rude speech Mr. Morton had ever made to his better half. She treasured it up in her heart and memory; it was associated with the sister and the child; and she was not a woman who ever forgave.

Mr. Morton walked rapidly through the still, moon-lit streets till he reached the inn. A club was held that night in one of the rooms below; and, as he crossed the threshold, the sound of "hip—hip—hurrah!" mingled with the stamping of feet and the jingling of glasses, saluted his entrance. He was a stiff, sober, respectable man; a man who, except at elections—he was a great politician—mixed in none of the revels of his more boisterous townsmen. The sounds, the spot, were ungenial to him. He paused, and the color of shame rose to his brow. He was ashamed to be there; ashamed to meet the desolate, and, as he believed, erring sister.

A pretty maid-servant, heated and flushed with orders and compliments, crossed his path with a tray full of glasses.

"There's a lady come by the Telegraph?"

"Yes, sir, up-stairs, No. 2, Mr. Morton."

Mr. Morton! He shrunk at the sound of his own name. "My wife's right," he muttered. "After all, this is more unpleasant than I thought for."

The slight stairs shook under his hasty tread. He opened the door of No. 2, and that Catharine whom he had last seen at the age of gay sixteen, radiant with bloom, and, but for her air of pride, the model for a Hebe—that Catharine, old ere youth was gone, pale, faded, the dark hair silvered over, the cheeks hollow, and the eye dim—that Catharine fell upon his breast!

"God bless you, brother! How kind to come! How long since we have met!"

"Sit down, Catharine, my dear sister. You are faint—you are very much changed—very. I should not have known you."

"Brother, I have brought my boy: it is painful to part from him—very—very painful; but it is right, and God's will be done." She turned as she spoke toward a little, deformed, rickety dwarf of a sofa, that seemed to hide itself in the darkest corner of the low, gloomy room; and Morton followed her. With one hand she removed the shawl that she had thrown over the child, and, placing the fore finger of the other upon her lips—lips that smiled *then*—she whispered, "We will not wake him, he is so tired. But I would not put him to bed till you had seen him."

And there slept poor Sidney, his fair cheek pillowed on his arm; the soft, silky ringlets thrown from the delicate and unclouded brow; the natural bloom increased by warmth and travel; the lovely face so innocent and hushed; the breathing so gentle and regular, as if never broken by a sigh.

Mr. Morton drew his hand across his eyes.

There was something very touching in the contrast between that wakeful, anxious, forlorn woman, and the slumber of the unconscious boy. And in that moment, what breast upon which the light of Christian pity—of natural affection

had ever dawned, would, even supposing the world's judgment were true, have recalled Catharine's reputed error? There is so divine a holiness in the love of a mother, that, no matter how the tie that binds her to the child was formed, she becomes, as it were, consecrated and sacred; and the past is forgotten, and the world and its harsh verdicts swept away when *that* love alone is visible; and the God who watches over the little one sheds his smile over the human deputy, in whose tenderness there breathes His own!

"You will be kind to him—will you not?" said Mrs. Morton; and the appeal was made with that trustful, almost cheerful tone which implies, "Who would not be kind to a thing so fair and helpless?" "He is very sensitive and very docile; you will never have occasion to say a hard word to him—never! You have children of your own, brother!"

"He is a beautiful boy—beautiful. I will be a father to him!"

As he spoke, the recollection of his wife—sour, querulous, austere—came over him; but he said to himself, "She must take to such a child: women always take to beauty."

He bent down, and gently pressed his lips to Sidney's forehead. Mrs. Morton replaced the shawl, and drew her brother to the other end of the room.

"And now," she said, coloring as she spoke, "I must see your wife, brother: there is much to say about a child that only a woman will recollect! Is she very good-tempered and kind, your wife? You know I never saw her; you married after—after I left."

"She is a very worthy woman," said Mr. Morton, clearing his throat, "and brought me some money; she has a will of her own, as most women have—but that's neither here nor there; she is a good wife as wives go, and prudent and painstaking; I don't know what I should do without her."

"Brother, I have one favor to request—a great favor."

"Any thing I can do in the way of money?"

"It has nothing to do with money. I can't live long—don't shake your head—I can't live long. I have no fear for Philip; he has so much spirit—such strength of character; but *that child!* I can not bear to leave him altogether: let me stay in this town—I can lodge any where; but to see him sometimes—to know I shall be in reach, if he is ill—let me stay here—let me die here!"

"You must not talk so sadly: you are young yet—younger than I am: *I* don't think of dying."

"Heaven forbid! but—"

"Well, well!" interrupted Mr. Morton, who began to fear his feelings would hurry him into some promise which his wife would not suffer him to keep, "you shall talk to Margaret—that is, to Mrs. Morton; I will get her to see you—yes, I think I can contrive that; and if you can arrange with her to stay—but, you see, as she brought the money, and is a very particular woman—"

"I will see her—thank you, thank you—she can not refuse me."

"And, brother, resumed Mrs. Morton, after a short pause, and speaking in a firm voice, "and is it possible that you disbelieve my story? that you, like all the rest, consider my children the sons of shame?"

There was an honest earnestness in Catharine's voice as she spoke that might have convinced many. But Mr. Morton was a man of facts—a practical man—a man who believed that law was always right, and that the improbable was never true.

He looked down as he answered, "I think you have been a very ill-used woman, Catharine, and that is all I can say on that matter: let us drop the subject."

"No! I was not ill-used; my husband—yes, my husband—was noble and generous from first to last. It was for the sake of his children's prospects, for the expectations they, through him, might derive from his proud uncle, that he concealed our marriage. Do not blame Philip—do not condemn the dead."

"I don't want to blame any one," said Mr. Morton, rather angrily; "I am a plain man, a tradesman, and can only go by what in my class seems fair and honest, which I can't think Mr. Beaufort's conduct was, put it how you will; if he marries you, as you think, he gets rid of a witness, he destroys a certificate, and he dies without a will. However, all that's neither here nor there. You do quite right not to take the name of Beaufort, since it is an uncommon name, and would always make the story public. Least said soonest mended. You must always consider that your children will be called natural children, and have their own way to make. No harm in that! Warm day for your journey." Catharine sighed and wiped her eyes: she no longer reproached the world, since the son of her own mother disbelieved her.

The relations talked together for some minutes on the past—the present; but there was embarrassment and constraint on both sides—it was so difficult to avoid one subject; and, after sixteen years of absence, there is little left in common, even between those who once played together round their parents' knees. Mr. Morton was glad at last to find an excuse in Catharine's fatigue to leave her. "Cheer up, and take a glass of something warm before you go to bed. Good-night!" These were his parting words.

Long was the conference and sleepless the couch of Mr. and Mrs. Morton. At first, that estimable lady positively declared she would not and could not visit Catharine: as to receiving her, that was out of the question. But she secretly resolved to give up that point, in order to insist with greater strength upon another, viz., the impossibility of Catharine remaining in the town, such concession for the purpose of resistance being a very common and sagacious policy with married ladies. Accordingly, when suddenly, and with a good grace, Mrs. Morton appeared affected by her husband's eloquence, and said, "Well, poor thing! if she is so ill, and you wish it so much, I will call to-morrow," Mr. Morton felt his heart softened toward the many excellent reasons which his wife urged against allowing Catharine to reside in the town. He was a political character; he had many enemies; the story of his seduced sister, now forgotten, would certainly be raked up; it would affect his comfort, perhaps his trade, certainly his eldest

daughter, who was now thirteen; it would be impossible, then, to adopt the plan hitherto resolved upon—of passing off Sidney as the legitimate orphan of a distant relation; it would be made a great handle for gossip by Miss Pryinall. Added to all these relations, one not less strong occurred to Mr. Morton himself: the uncommon and merciless rigidity of his wife would render all the other women in the town very glad of any topic that would humble her own sense of immaculate propriety. Moreover, he saw that, if Catharine did remain, it would be a perpetual source of irritation in his own home; he was a man who liked an easy life, and avoided, as far as possible, all food for domestic worry. And thus, when at length the wedded pair turned back to back, and composed themselves to sleep, the conditions of peace were settled, and the weak party, as usual in diplomacy, sacrificed to the interests of the united powers.

After breakfast the next morning, Mrs. Morton sallied out on her husband's arm. Mr. Morton was rather a handsome man, with an air and look grave, composed, severe, that had tended much to raise his character in the town. Mrs. Morton was short, wiry, and bony. She had won her husband by making desperate love to him, to say nothing of a dower that enabled him to extend his business, new paint as well as new stock his shop, and rise into the very first rank of tradesmen in his native town. He still believed that she was excessively fond of him; a common delusion of husbands, especially when henpecked. Mrs. Morton *was*, perhaps, fond of him in her own way; for, though her heart was not warm, there may be a great deal of fondness with very little feeling. The worthy lady was now clothed in her best. She had a proper pride in showing the rewards that belong to female virtue. Flowers adorned her Leghorn bonnet, and her green silk gown boasted four flounces—such then was, I am told, the fashion. She wore, also, a very handsome black shawl, extremely heavy, though the day was oppressively hot, and with a deep border; a smart *Sevigné* broach of yellow topazes glittered in her breast; a huge gilt serpent glared from her waistband; her hair, or, more properly speaking, her *front*, was tortured into very tight curls, and her feet into very tight, half-laced boots, from which the fragrance of new leather had not yet departed. It was this last infliction, for *il faut souffrir pour être belle*, which somewhat yet more acerbated the ordinary acid of Mrs. Morton's temper. The sweetest disposition is ruffled when the shoe pinches; and it happened that Mrs. Roger Morton was one of those ladies who always have chilblains in the winter and corns in the summer.

"So you say your sister is a beauty?"

"*Was* a beauty, Mrs. M—*was* a beauty. People alter."

"A bad conscience, Mr. Morton, is—"

"My dear, can't you walk faster?"

"If you had my corns, Mr. Morton, you would not talk in that way!"

"The happy pair sank into silence, only broken by sundry "How d'ye do's?" and "Good morning's!" interchanged with their friends, till they arrived at the inn.

"Let us go up quickly,"' said Mrs. Morton. And quiet—quiet to gloom—did the inn, so noisy over-night, seem by morning. The shutters partially closed to keep out the sun; the tap-room deserted; the passage smelling of stale smoke; an elderly dog, lazily snapping at the flies, at the foot of the staircase—not a soul to be seen at the bar. The husband and wife, glad to be unobserved, crept on tiptoe up the stairs, and entered Catharine's apartment.

Catharine was seated on the sofa, and Sidney—dressed, like Mrs. Roger Morton, to look his prettiest, nor yet aware of the change that awaited his destiny, but pleased at the excitement of seeing new friends, as handsome children, sure of praise and petting, usually are—stood by her side.

"My wife—Catharine," said Mr. Morton. Catharine rose eagerly, and gazed searchingly on her sister-in-law's hard face. She swallowed the convulsive rising at her heart as she gazed, and stretched out both her hands, not so much to welcome as to plead. Mrs. Roger Morton drew herself up, and then dropped a courtesy—it was an involuntary piece of good breeding—it was extorted by the noble countenance, the matronly mien of Catharine—different from what she had anticipated—she dropped the courtesy, and Catharine took her hand and pressed it.

"This is my son;" she turned away her head. Sidney advanced towards his protectress who was to be, and Mrs. Roger muttered.

"Come here, my dear! A fine little boy!"

"As fine a child as ever I saw!" said Mr. Morton, heartily, as he took Sidney on his lap, and stroked down his golden hair.

This displeased Mrs. Roger Morton, but she sat herself down, and said it was "Very warm."

"Now go to that lady, my dear," said Mr. Morton. "Is she not a very nice lady? Don't you think you shall like her very much!"

Sidney, the best-mannered child in the world, went boldly up to Mrs. Morton as he was bid. Mrs. Morton was embarrassed. Some folks are so with other folk's children: a child either removes all constraint from a party, or it increases the constraint tenfold. Mrs. Morton, however, forced a smile, and said, "I have a little boy at home about your age."

"Have you?" exclaimed Catharine, eagerly; and, as if that confession made them friends at once, she drew a chair close to her sister-in-law's: "My brother has told you all?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And I shall stay here—in the town somewhere—and see him sometimes?"

Mrs. Roger Morton glanced at her husband, her husband glanced at the door, and Catharine's quick eye turned from one to the other.

"Mr. Morton will explain ma'am," said the wife.

"E-hem! Catharine, my dear, I am afraid *that* is out of the question," began Mr. Morton, who, when fairly put to it, could be business-like enough. "You see bygones are bygones, and it is no use raking them up. But many people in the town will recollect you."

"No one will see me—no one, but you and Sidney."

"It will be sure to creep out; won't it, Mrs. Morton?"

"Quite sure. Indeed, ma'am, it is impossible. Mr. Morton is so very respectable, and his neighbors pay so much attention to all he does; and

then, if we have an election in the autumn—you see, ma'am, he has a great stake in the place, and is a public character."

"That's neither here nor there," said Mr. Morton. "But, I say, Catharine, can your little boy go into the other room for a moment? Margaret, suppose you take him and make friends."

Delighted to throw on her husband the burden of explanation, which she had originally meant to have all the importance of giving herself, in her most proper and patronizing manner, Mrs. Morton twisted her fingers into the boy's hand, and, opening the door that communicated with the bedroom, left the brother and sister alone. And then Mr. Morton, with more tact and delicacy than might have been expected from him, began to soften to Catharine the hardship of the separation he urged. He dwelt principally on what was best for the child. Boys were so brutal in their intercourse with each other. He had even thought it better to represent Philip to Mr. Plaskwith as a more distant relation than he was; and he begged, by-the-by, that Catharine would tell Philip to take the hint. But as for Sidney, sooner or later *he* would go to a day-school—have companions of his own age; if his birth were known, he would be exposed to many mortifications—so much better, and so very easy to bring him up as the lawful, that is, as the *legal* offspring of some distant relation.

"And," cried poor Catharine, clasping her hands, "when I am dead, is he never to know that I was his mother?"

The anguish of that question thrilled the heart of the listener. He was affected below all the surface that worldly thoughts and habits had laid, stratum by stratum, over the humanities within. He threw his arms round Catharine, and strained her to his breast.

"No, my sister, my poor sister, he shall know it when he is old enough to understand and to keep his own secret. He shall know, too, how we all loved and prized you once—how young you were—how flattered and tempted—how you were deceived; for I know *that*—on my soul I do—I know it was not your fault. He shall know, too, how fondly you loved your child, and how you sacrificed, for his sake, the very comfort of being near him. He shall know it all—all!"

"My brother, my brother, I resign him—I am content. God reward you. I will go—go quickly. I know you will take care of him now."

"And you see," resumed Mr. Morton, resettling himself and wiping his eyes, "it is best, between you and me, that Mrs. Morton should have her own way in this. She is a very good woman—very; but it is prudent not to vex her. You may come in now, Mrs. Morton."

Mrs. Morton and Sidney reappeared.

"We have settled it all," said the husband. "When can we have him?"

"Not to-day," said Mrs. Roger Morton; "you see, ma'am, we must get his bed ready, and his sheets well aired: I am very particular."

"Certainly, certainly. Will he sleep alone?—pardon me."

"He shall have a room to himself," said Mr. Morton. "Eh, my dear? Next to Martha's. Martha is our parlor-maid—very good-natured girl, and fond of children."

Mrs. Morton looked grave, thought a moment, and said, "Yes, he can have that room."

"Who can have that room?" asked Sidney, innocently.

"You, my dear," replied Mr. Morton.

"And where will mamma sleep? I must sleep near mamma."

"Mamma is going away," said Catharine, in a firm voice, in which the despair would only have been felt by the acute ear of sympathy; "going away for a little time; but this gentleman and lady will be very, very kind to you."

"We will do our best, ma'am," said Mrs Morton.

And, as she spoke, a sudden light broke on the boy's mind; he uttered a loud cry, broke from his aunt, rushed to his mother's breast, and hid his face there, sobbing bitterly.

"I am afraid he has been very much spoiled," whispered Mrs. Roger Morton. "I don't think we need stay any longer—it will look suspicious. Good-morning, ma'am; we shall be ready to-morrow."

"Good-by, Catharine," said Mr. Morton; and he added, as he kissed her, "Be of good heart; I will come up by myself and spend the evening with you."

It was the night after this interview. Sidney had gone to his new home; they had been all kind to him—Mr. Morton, the children, Martha the parlor-maid. Mrs. Roger herself had given him a large slice of bread and jam, but had looked gloomy all the rest of the evening, because, like a dog in a strange place, he refused to eat. His little heart was full, and his eyes, swimming with tears, were turned at every moment to the door. But he did not show the violent grief that might have been expected. He was naturally timid, and his very desolation, amid the unfamiliar faces, awed and chilled him. But when Martha took him to bed, and undressed him, and he knelt down to say his prayers, and came to the words, "Pray God bless dear mamma, and make me a good child," his heart could contain its load no longer, and he sobbed with a passion that alarmed the good-natured servant. She had been used, however, to children, and she soothed and caressed him, and told him of all the nice things he would do, and the nice toys he would have; and at last, silenced, if not convinced, his eyes closed, and, the tears yet wet on their lashes, fell asleep.

It had been arranged that Catharine should return home that night by a late coach, which left the town at twelve. It was already past eleven. Mrs. Morton had retired to bed; and her husband, who had, according to his wont, lingered behind to smoke a cigar over his last glass of brandy and water, had just thrown aside the stump and was winding up his watch, when he heard a low tap at his window. He stood mute and alarmed, for the window opened on a back lane, dark and solitary at night, and, from the heat of the weather, the iron-cased shutter was not yet closed; the sound was repeated, and he heard a faint voice. He glanced at the poker, and then cautiously moved to the window, and looked forth: "Who's there?"

"It is I—it is Catharine! I can not go without seeing my boy. I must see him—I must once more!"

"My dear sister, the place is shut up—it is impossible. God bless me, if Mrs. Morton should hear you!"

"I have walked before this window for hours —I have waited till all is hushed in your house —till no one, not even a menial, need see the mother stealing to the bed of her child. Brother! by the memory of our own mother, I command you to let me look, for the last time, upon my boy's face!"

As Catharine said this, standing in that lone street—darkness and solitude below, God and the stars above—there was about her a majesty which awed the listener. Though she was so near, her features were not very clearly visible; but her attitude—her hand raised aloft, the outline of her wasted but still commanding form, were more impressive from the shadowy dimness of the air.

"Come round, Catharine," said Mr. Morton, after a pause; "I will admit you."

He shut the window, stole to the door, unbarred it gently, and admitted his visitor. He bade her follow him; and, shading the light with his hand, crept up the stairs. Catharine's step made no sound.

They passed, unmolested and unheard, the room in which the wife was drowsily reading, according to her custom, before she tied her nightcap and got into bed, a chapter in some pious book. They ascended to the chamber where Sidney lay; Morton opened the door cautiously, and stood at the threshold, so holding the candle that its light might not wake the child, though it sufficed to guide Catharine to the bed. The room was small, perhaps close, but scrupulously clean; for cleanliness was Mrs. Roger Morton's capital virtue. The mother, with a tremulous hand, drew aside the white curtains, and checked her sobs as she gazed on the young, quiet face that was turned toward her. She gazed some moments in passionate silence; who shall say, beneath that silence, what thoughts, what prayers moved and stirred? Then bending down, with pale, convulsive lips, she kissed the little hands thrown so listlessly on the coverlid of the pillow on which the head lay. After this, she turned her face to her brother, with a mute appeal in her glance, took a ring from her finger—a ring that had never till then left it—the ring which Philip Beaufort had placed there the day after that child was born. "Let him wear this round his neck," said she, and stopped, lest she should sob aloud and disturb the boy. In that gift she felt as if she invoked the father's spirit to watch over the friendless orphan; and then, pressing together her own hands firmly, as we do in some paroxysm of great pain, she turned from the room, descended the stairs, gained the street, and muttered to her brother, "I am happy now; peace be on these thresholds!" Before he could answer she was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

"Thus things are strangely wrought,
While joyful May doth last;
Take May in time; when May is gone
The pleasant time is past."
RICHARD EDWARDS:
From the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*.

It was that period of the year when, to those who look on the surface of society, London wears its most radiant smile; when shops are gayest, and trade most brisk; when down the thoroughfares roll and glitter the countless streams of indolent and voluptuous life; when the upper class spend, and the middle class make; when the ball-room is the market of beauty, and the club-house the school for scandal; when the hells yawn for their prey, and the opera-singers and fiddlers—creatures hatched from gold, as the dung-flies from the dung—swarm, and buzz, and fatten round the hide of the gentle Public. In the cant phrase, it was "the London season." And happy, take it altogether, happy above the rest of the year, even for the hapless, is that period of ferment and fever. It is not the season for duns, and the debtor glides about with less anxious eye; and the weather is warm, and the vagrant sleeps, unfrozen, under the star-lit portico; and the beggar thrives, and the thief rejoices—for the rankness of the civilization has superfluities clutched by all. And out of the general corruption things sordid and things miserable crawl forth to bask in the common sunshine—things that perish when the first autumn winds whistle along the melancholy city. It is the gay time for the heir and the beauty, and the statesman and the lawyer, and the mother with her young daughters, and the artist with his fresh pictures, and the poet with his new book. It is the gay time, too, for the starved journeyman, and the ragged outcast, that, with long stride and patient eyes, follows, for pence, the equestrian, who bids him go and be d—d in vain. It is a gay time for the painted harlot in a crimson pelisse; and a gay time for the old hag that loiters round the thresholds of the gin-shop, to buy back, in a draught, the dreams of departed youth. It is gay, in fine, as the fullness of a vast city is ever gay—for Vice as for Innocence, for Poverty as for Wealth. And the wheels of every single destiny wheel on the merrier, no matter whether they are bound to heaven or to hell.

Arthur Beaufort, the young heir, was at his father's house. He was fresh from Oxford, where he had already discovered that learning is *not* better than house and land. Since the new prospects opened to him, Arthur Beaufort was greatly changed. Naturally studious and prudent, had his fortunes remained what they had been before his uncle's death, he would probably have become a laborious and distinguished man. But, though his abilities were good, he had not those restless impulses which belong to genius—often not only its glory, but its curse. The golden rod cast his energies asleep at once. Good-natured to a fault, and vacillating in character, he adopted the manner and the code of the rich young idlers who were his equals at college. He became, like them, careless, extravagant, and fond of pleasure. This change, if it deteriorated his mind, improved his exterior. It was a change that could not but please women; and, of all women, his mother the most. Mrs. Beaufort was a lady of high birth, and, in marrying her, Robert had hoped much from the interest of her connections; but a change of ministry had thrown her relations out of power; and, beyond her dowry, he obtained no worldly advantage with the lady of his mercenary choice. Mrs. Beaufort was a woman whom a word or two will describe. She

was thoroughly commonplace; neither bad nor good, neither clever nor silly. She was what is called well-bred; that is, languid, silent, perfectly dressed, and insipid. Of her two children, Arthur was almost the exclusive favorite, especially after he became the heir to such brilliant fortunes. For she was so much the mechanical creature of the world, that even her affection was warm or cold in proportion as the world shone on it. Without being absolutely in love with her husband, she liked him: they suited each other; and (in spite of all the temptations that had beset her in their earlier years, for she had been esteemed a beauty; and lived, as worldly people must do, in circles where examples of unpunished gallantry are numerous and contagious), her conduct had ever been scrupulously correct. She had little or no feeling for misfortunes with which she had never come into contact; for those with which she had, such as the distresses of younger sons, or the errors of fashionable women, or the disappointments of "a proper ambition," she had more sympathy than might have been supposed, and touched on them with all the tact of well-bred charity and ladylike forbearance. Thus, though she was regarded as a strict person in point of moral decorum, yet in society she was popular—as women at once pretty and inoffensive generally are.

To do Mrs. Beaufort justice, she had not been privy to the letter her husband had wrote to Catharine, although not wholly innocent of it. The fact is, that Robert had never mentioned to her the peculiar circumstances that made Catharine an exception from ordinary rules—the generous propositions of his brother to him the night before his death; and, whatever his incredulity as to the alleged private marriage—the perfect loyalty and faith that Catharine had borne to the deceased—he had merely observed, "I must do something, I suppose, for that woman: she very nearly entrapped my poor brother into marrying her; and he would then, for what I know, have cut Arthur out of the estates. Still, I must do something for her—eh?"

"Yes, I think so. What was she—very low?"

"A tradesman's daughter."

"The children should be provided for according to the rank of the mother; that's the general rule in such cases: and the mother should have about the same provision she might have looked for if she had married a tradesman, and been left a widow. I dare say she was a very artful kind of person, and don't deserve any thing; but it is always handsomer, in the eyes of the world, to go by the general rules people lay down as to money matters."

So spoke Mrs. Beaufort. She concluded her husband had settled the matter, and never again recurred to it. Indeed she had never liked the late Mr. Beaufort, whom she considered *mauvais ton*.

In the breakfast-room at Mr. Beaufort's, the mother and son were seated; the former at work, the latter lounging by the window: they were not alone. In a large elbow-chair sat a middle-aged man, listening or appearing to listen, to the prattle of a beautiful little girl, Arthur Beaufort's sister. This man was not handsome, but there was a certain elegance in his air, and a certain intelligence in his countenance which made his appearance pleasing. He had that kind of eye which is often seen with red hair—an eye of a reddish hazel, with very long lashes; the eyebrows were dark and clearly defined; and the short hair showed to advantage the contour of a small, well-shaped head. His features were irregular; the complexion had been sanguine, but was now faded, and a yellow tinge mingled with the red. His face was more wrinkled, especially round the eyes; which, when he laughed, were scarcely visible, than is usual even in men ten years older. But his teeth were still of a dazzling whiteness; nor was there any trace of decayed health in his countenance. He seemed one who had lived hard, but who had much yet left in the lamp wherewith to feed the wick. At the first glance he appeared slight, as he lolled listlessly in his chair, almost fragile. But, at a nearer examination, you perceived that, in spite of the small extremities and delicate bones, his frame was constitutionally strong. Without being broad in the shoulders, he was exceedingly deep in the chest, deeper than men who seemed giants by his side; and his gestures had the ease of one accustomed to an active life. He had, indeed, been celebrated in his youth for his skill in athletic exercises; but a wound received in a duel, many years ago, had rendered him lame for life—a misfortune which interfered with his former habits, and was said to have soured his temper. This personage, whose position and character will be described hereafter, was Lord Lilburne, the brother of Mrs. Beaufort.

"So, Camilla," said Lord Lilburne to his niece, as carelessly, not fondly, he stroked down her glossy ringlets, "you don't like Berkeley-square as much as you did Gloucester-place!"

"Oh, no! not half as much! You see I never walk out in the fields,* nor make daisy chains at Primrose Hill. I don't know what mamma means," added the child in a whisper, "in saying we are better off here."

Lord Lilburne smiled, but the smile was a half sneer.

"You will know quite soon enough, Camilla; the understandings of young ladies grow up very quickly on this side of Oxford-street. Well, Arthur, and what are your plans to-day?"

"Why," said Arthur, suppressing a yawn, "I have promised to ride out with a friend of mine to see a horse that is for sale somewhere in the suburbs."

As he spoke, Arthur rose, stretched himself, looked in the glass, and then glanced impatiently at the window.

"He ought to be here by this time."

"He! who?" said Lord Lilburne; "the horse or the animal—I mean, the friend!"

"The friend," answered Arthur, smiling, but coloring while he smiled, for he half suspected the quiet sneer of his uncle.

"Who is your friend, Arthur?" asked Mrs. Beaufort, looking up from her work.

"Watson, an Oxford man. By-the-by, I must introduce him to you."

"Watson! What Watson? what family of Watson? Some Watsons are good and some are bad," said Mrs. Beaufort, musingly.

* Now the Regent's Park.

"Then they are very unlike the rest of mankind," observed Lord Lilburne, dryly.

"Oh! *my* Watson is a very gentlemanlike person, I assure you," said Arthur, half laughing, "and you need not be ashamed of him." Then, rather desirous of turning the conversation, he continued, "So my father will be back from Beaufort-court to-day?"

"Yes; he writes in excellent spirits. He says the rents will bear raising at least ten per cent., and that the house will not require much repair."

Here Arthur threw open the window.

"Ah, Watson, how are you? How d'ye do, Marsden? Danvers too! that's capital! the more the merrier! I will be down in an instant. But would you not rather come in?"

"An agreeable inundation," murmured Lord Lilburne. "Three at a time: he takes your house for Trinity College."

A loud, clear voice, however declined the invitation; the horses were heard pawing without. Arthur seized his hat and whip, and glanced to his mother and uncle, smilingly "Good-by! I shall be out till dinner. Kiss me, my pretty 'Milly!" And as his sister, who had run to the window, sickening for the fresh air and exercise he was about to enjoy, now turned to him wistful and mournful eyes, the kind-hearted young man took her in his arms, and whispered, while he kissed her,

"Get up early to-morrow, and we'll have such a nice walk together."

Arthur was gone; his mother's gaze had followed his young and graceful figure to the door.

"Own that he is handsome, Lilburne. May I not say more—has he not the proper air?"

"My dear sister, your son will be rich. As for his air, he has plenty of airs, but wants graces."

"Then who could polish him like yourself?"

"Probably no one. But had I a son—which Heaven forbid!—he should not have me for his mentor. Place a young man (go and shut the door, Camilla!) between two vices—women and gambling—if you want to polish him into the fashionable smoothness. Between you and me, the varnish is a little expensive!"

Mrs. Beaufort sighed. Lord Lilburne smiled. He had a strange pleasure in hurting the feelings of others. Besides, he disliked youth: in his own youth he had enjoyed so much that he grew sour when he saw the young.

Meanwhile Arthur Beaufort and his friends, careless of the warmth of the day, were laughing merrily and talking gayly as they made for the suburb of H——.

"It is an out-of-the-way place for a horse, too," said Sir Harry Danvers.

"But I assure you," insisted Mr. Watson, earnestly, "that my groom, who is a capital judge, says it is the cleverest hack he ever mounted. It has won several trotting matches. It belonged to a sporting tradesman, now done up. The advertisement caught me."

"Well," said Arthur, gayly, "at all events the ride is delightful. What weather! You must all dine with me at Richmond to-morrow—we will row back."

"And a little chicken hazard at the M—— afterward," said Mr. Marsden, who was an elder, not a better man than the rest—a handsome saturnine man—who had just left Oxford, and was already known on the turf.

"Any thing you please," said Arthur, making his horse curvet.

Oh, Mr. Robert Beaufort! Mr. Robert Beaufort! could your prudent, scheming, worldly heart but feel what devil's tricks your wealth was playing with a son who, if poor, had been the pride of the Beauforts! On one side of our pieces of gold we see the saint trampling down the dragon—false emblem! Reverse it on the coin! In the real use of the gold, it is the dragon who tramples down the saint! But on—on! the day is bright, and your companions merry; make the best of your green years, Arthur Beaufort!

The young men had just entered the suburb of H——, and were spurring on four abreast, at a canter. At that time an old man, feeling his way before him with a stick—for, though not quite blind, he saw imperfectly—was crossing the road. Arthur and his friends, in loud converse, did not observe the poor passenger. He stopped abruptly, for his ear caught the sound of danger: it was too late: Mr. Marsden's horse, hard-mouthed, and high-stepping, came full against him. Mr. Marsden looked down:

"Hang these old men! *always* in the way," said he, plaintively, and in the tone of a much injured person; and, with that, Mr. Marsden rode on. But the others, who were younger—who were not gamblers—who were not yet grinded down into stone by the world's wheels—the others halted. Arthur Beaufort leaped from his horse, and the old man was already in his arms; but he was severely hurt. The blood trickled from his forehead; he complained of pain in his side and limbs.

"Lean on me, my poor fellow! I will take you home. Do you live far off?"

"Not many yards. This would not have happened if I had had my dog. Never mind, sir, go your way. It is only an old man—what of that? I wish I had my dog."

"I will join you," said Arthur to his friends; "my groom has the direction. I will just take the poor old man home, and send for a surgeon. I shall not be long."

"So like you, Beaufort! the best fellow in the world," said Mr. Watson, with some emotion. "And there's Marsden positively dismounted and looking at his horse's knees as if they could be hurt! Here's a sovereign for you, my man."

"And here's another," said Sir Harry; "so that's settled. "Well, you will join us Beaufort? You see the yard yonder. We'll wait twenty minutes for you. Come on, Watson."

The old man had not picked up the sovereigns thrown at his feet, neither had he thanked the donors. And on his countenance there was a sour, querulous, resentful expression.

"Must a man be a beggar because he is run over or because he is half blind?" said he, turning his dim, wandering eyes painfully toward Arthur. "Well, I wish I had my dog!"

"I will supply his place," said Arthur, soothingly. "Come, lean on me—heavier—that's right. You are not so bad, eh?"

"Um! the sovereigns! it is wicked to leave them in the kennel!"

Arthur smiled. "Here they are, sir."

The old man slid the coins into his pocket, and

Arthur continued to talk, though he got but short answers, and those only in the way of direction, till at last the old man stopped at the door of a small house near the church-yard.

After twice ringing the bell, the door was opened by a middle-aged woman, whose appearance was above that of a common menial; dressed, somewhat gayly for her years, in a cap seated very far back on a black *toupée*, and decorated with red ribbons, an apron made out of an Indian silk handkerchief, a puce-colored sarcenet gown, black silk-stockings, long gilt earrings, and a watch at her girdle.

"Bless us and save us, sir! what *has* happened?" exclaimed this worthy personage, holding up her hands.

"Pish! I am faint: let me in. I don't want your aid any more, sir. Thank you. Good-day!"

Not discouraged by this farewell, the churlish tone of which fell harmless on the invincibly sweet temper of Arthur, the young man continued to assist the sufferer along the narrow passage into a little old-fashioned parlor; and no sooner was the owner deposited on his worm-eaten leather chair than he fainted away. On reaching the house, Arthur had sent his servant (who had followed him with the horses) for the nearest surgeon; and while the old lady was still employed, after taking off the sufferer's cravat, in burning feathers under his nose, there was heard a sharp rap and a shrill ring. Arthur opened the door, and admitted a smart little man in nankeen breeches and gaiters. He bustled into the room.

"What's this—bad accident—rode over? Sad thing—very sad. Open the window. A glass of water—a towel. So—so: I see—I see: no fracture—contusion. Help him off with his coat. Another chair, ma'am; put up his poor legs. What age is he, ma'am? Sixty-eight! Too old to bleed. Thank you. How is it, sir? Poorly, to be sure: will be comfortable presently—faintish still? Soon put all to rights."

"Tray! Tray! Where's Tray? Where's my dog, Mrs. Boxer?"

"Lord, sir! what do you want with your dog now? He is in the back yard."

"And what business has my dog in the back yard?" almost screamed the sufferer, in accents that denoted no diminution of vigor. "I thought, as soon as my back was turned, my dog would be ill used! Why did I go without my dog? Let in my dog directly, Mrs. Boxer!"

"All right, you see, sir," said the apothecary, turning to Beaufort; "no cause for alarm—very comforting, that little passion—does him good—sets one's mind easy. How did it happen? Ah, I understand! knocked down—might have been worse. Your groom (sharp fellow!) explained in a trice, sir. Thought it was my old friend here by the description. Worthy man—settled here a many year—very odd—eccentric (this in a whisper). Came off instantly—just at dinner—cold lamb and salad. 'Mrs. Perkins,' says I, 'if any one calls for me, I shall be at No. 4, Prospect-place.' Your servant observed the address, sir. Oh, very sharp fellow! See how the old gentleman takes to his dog—fine little dog—what a stump of a tail! Deal of practice—expect two accouchements every hour. Hot weather for childbirth. So says I to Mrs. Perkins, 'If Mrs. Plummer is taken, or Mrs. Everat, or if old Mr. Grub has another fit, send off at once to No. 4.' Medical men should be always in the way—that's my maxim. Now, sir, where do you feel the pain?"

"In my ears, sir."

"Bless me, that looks bad. How long have you felt it?"

"Ever since you have been in the room."

"Oh, I take. Ha! ha! very eccentric—very!" muttered the apothecary, a little disconcerted. "Well, let him lie down, ma'am. I'll send him a little quieting draught to be taken directly—pill at night, aperient in the morning. If wanted, send for me—always to be found. Bless me, that's my boy Bob's ring! Please to open the door, ma'am. Know his ring—very peculiar knack of his own. Lay ten to one it is Mrs. Plummer, or perhaps Mrs. Everat—her ninth child in eight years—in the grocery line. A woman in a thousand, sir!"

Here a thin boy, with very short coat-sleeves and very large hands, burst into the room with his mouth open.

"Sir—Mr. Perkins—sir!"

"I know—I know—coming. Mrs. Plummer or Mrs. Everat?"

"No, sir, it be the poor lady at Mrs. Lacy's; she be taken desperate. Mrs. Lacy's girl has just been over to the shop, and made me run here to you, sir."

"Mrs. Lacy's! Oh, I know. Poor Mrs. Morton! Bad case—very bad—must be off. Keep him quiet ma'am. Good-day! Look in to-morrow—nine o'clock. Put a little lint with the lotion on the head, ma'am. Mrs. Morton! Ah! bad job that."

Here the apothecary had shuffled himself off to the street door, when Arthur laid his hand on his arm.

"Mrs. Morton! Did you say *Morton*, sir? What kind of a person—is she very ill?"

"Hopeless case, sir—general break-up. Nice woman—quite the lady—known better days, I'm sure."

"Has she any children—sons?"

"Two—both away now—fine lads—quite wrapped up in them—youngest especially."

"Good Heavens! it must be she—ill, and dying, and destitute, perhaps," exclaimed Arthur, with real and deep feeling; "I will go with you, sir. I fancy that I know this lady—that (he added, generously) I am *related* to her."

"Do you? Glad to hear it. Come along, then; she ought to have some one near her besides servants: not but what Jenny, the maid, is uncommonly kind. Dr. ——, who attends her sometimes, said to me, says he, 'It is the mind, Mr. Perkins; I wish we could get back her boys.'"

"And where are they?"

"'Prenticed out, I fancy. Master Sidney—"

"Sidney!"

"Ah! that was his name—pretty name. D'ye know Sir Sidney Smith?—extraordinary man, sir! Master Sidney was a beautiful child—quite spoiled. She always fancied him ailing—always sending for me. 'Mr. Perkins,' said she, 'there's something the matter with my child; I'm sure there is, though he won't own it. He has lost his appetite—had a headache last night.' 'Nothing the matter, ma'am,' says

I; 'wish you'd think more of yourself.' These mothers are silly, anxious, poor creatures. Nater, sir, nater,—wonderful thing—nater! Here we are."

And the apothecary knocked at the private door of a milliner and hosier's shop.

CHAPTER X.

"Thy child shall live, and I will see it nourished."
Titus Andronicus.

As might be expected, the excitement and fatigue of Catharine's journey to N—— had considerably accelerated the progress of disease. And when she reached home, and looked round the cheerless rooms, all solitary, all hushed—Sidney gone, gone from her forever—she felt, indeed, as if the last reed on which she had leaned was broken, and her business upon earth was done. Catharine was not condemned to absolute poverty: the poverty which grinds and gnaws, the poverty of rags and famine. She had still left nearly half of such portion of the little capital, realized by the sale of her trinkets, as had escaped the clutch of the law; and her brother had forced into her hands a note for £20, with an assurance that the same sum should be paid to her half yearly. Alas! there was little chance of her needing it again! She was not, then, in want of means to procure the common comforts of life. But now a new passion had entered into her breast—the passion of the miser; she wished to hoard every sixpence as some little provision for her children. What was the use of her feeding a lamp nearly extinguished, and which was fated to be soon broken up, and cast amid the vast lumber-house of death! She would willingly have removed into a more homely lodging, but the servant of the house had been so fond of Sidney, so kind to *him*. She clung to one familiar face on which there seemed to live the reflection of her child's. But she relinquished the first floor for the second; and there, day by day, she felt her eyes grow heavier and heavier beneath the clouds of the last sleep. Besides the aid of Mr. Perkins, a kind enough man in his way, the good physician whom she had before consulted still attended her, and—refused his fee. Shocked at perceiving that she rejected every little alleviation of her condition, and wishing, at least, to procure for her last hours the society of one of her sons, he had inquired the address of the elder; and on the day preceding the one in which Arthur discovered her abode, he dispatched to Philip the following letter:

"Sir—Being called in to attend your mother in a lingering illness, which I fear may prove fatal, I think it my duty to request you to come to her as soon as you receive this. Your presence can not but be a great comfort to her. The nature of her illness is such that it is impossible to calculate exactly how long she may be spared to you; but I am sure that her fate might be prolonged, and her remaining days more happy, if she could be induced to remove into a better air and a more quiet neighborhood, to take more generous sustenance, and, above all, if her mind could be set more at ease as to your and your brother's prospects. You must pardon me if I have seemed inquisitive; but I have sought to draw from your mother some particulars as to her family and connections, with a wish to represent to them her state of mind. She is, however, very reserved on these points. If, however, you have relations well to do in the world, I think some application to them should be made. I fear the state of her affairs weighs much upon your poor mother's mind; and I must leave you to judge how far it can be relieved by the good feeling of any persons upon whom she may have legitimate claims. At all events, I repeat my wish that you should come to her forthwith. I am, &c.,

"—— ——."

After he had dispatched this letter, a sudden and marked alteration for the worse took place in his patient's disorder; and in the visit he had paid that morning, he saw cause to fear that her hours on earth would be much fewer than he had before anticipated. He had left her, however, comparatively better; but, two hours after his departure, the symptoms of her disease had become very alarming, and the good-natured servant girl, her sole nurse, and who had, moreover, the whole business of the other lodgers to attend to, had, as we have seen, thought it necessary to summon the apothecary in the interval that must elapse before she could reach the distant part of the metropolis in which Dr. —— resided.

On entering the chamber, Arthur felt all the remorse, which of right belonged to his father, press heavily on his soul. What a contrast, that mean and solitary chamber, and its comfortless appurtenances, to the graceful and luxurious abode, where, full of health and hope, he had last beheld her, the mother of Philip Beaufort's children! He remained silent till Mr. Perkins, after a few questions, retired to send his drugs. He then approached the bed; Catharine, though very weak and suffering much pain, was still sensible. She turned her dim eyes on the young man, but she did not recognize his features.

"You do not remember me?" said he, in a voice struggling with tears: "I am Arthur—Arthur Beaufort."

Catharine made no answer.

"Good God! why do I see you here? I believed you with your friends—your children; provided for, as became my father to do. He assured me that you were so."

Still no answer.

And then the young man, overpowered with the feelings of a sympathizing and generous nature, forgetting for a while Catharine's weakness, poured forth a torrent of inquiries, regrets, and self-upbraidings, which Catharine at first little heeded. But the name of her children, repeated again and again, struck upon that chord which, in a woman's heart, is the last to break; and she raised herself in her bed, and looked at her visitor wistfully.

"Your father," she said, then, "your father was unlike my Philip: but I see things differently now. For me, all bounty is too late; but my children—to-morrow they may have no mother. The law is with you, but not justice! You will be rich and powerful—will you befriend my children?"

"Through life, so help me Heaven!" exclaimed Arthur, falling on his knees beside the bed.

What then passed between them it is needless to detail; for it was little, save broken repetitions of the same prayer and the same response. But there was so much truth and earnestness in Arthur's voice and countenance, that Catharine felt as if an angel had come there to administer comfort. And when, late in the day, the physician entered, he found his patient leaning on the breast of her young visitor, and looking on his face with a happy smile.

The physician gathered enough from the appearance of Arthur and the gossip of Mr. Perkins to conjecture that one of the rich relations he had attributed to Catharine was arrived. Alas for her, it was now too late!

CHAPTER XI.

"D'ye stand amazed? Look o'er thy head, Maximinian: Look to the terror which overhangs thee."
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: *The Prophetess.*

PHILIP had been five weeks in his new home: in another week he was to enter on his articles of apprenticeship. With a stern, unbending gloom of manner, he had entered on the duties of his novitiate. He submitted to all that was enjoined him. He seemed to have lost forever the wild and unruly waywardness that had stamped his boyhood; but he was never seen to smile—he scarcely ever opened his lips. His very soul seemed to have quitted him with its faults; and he performed all the functions of his situation with the quiet, listless regularity of a machine. Only when the work was done and the shop closed, instead of joining the family circle in the back parlor, he would stroll out in the dusk of evening, away from the town, and not return till the hour at which the family retired to rest. Punctual in all he did, he never exceeded that hour. He had heard once a week from his mother; and only on the mornings in which he expected a letter did he seem restless and agitated. Till the postman entered the shop he was pale as death; his hands trembling, his lips compressed. When he read the letter he became composed; for Catharine sedulously concealed from her son the state of her health; she wrote cheerfully, besought him to content himself with the state into which he had fallen, and expressed her joy that in his letters he intimated that content: for the poor boy's letters were not less considerate than her own. On her return from her brother, she had so far silenced or concealed her misgivings as to express satisfaction at the home she had provided for Sidney; and she even held out hopes of some future, when, their probation finished and their independence secured, she might reside with her sons alternately. These hopes redoubled Philip's assiduity, and he saved every shilling of his weekly stipend; and sighed as he thought that, in another week, his term of apprenticeship would commence, and the stipend cease.

Mr. Plaskwith could not but be pleased, on the whole, with the diligence of his assistant, but he was chafed and irritated by the sullenness of his manner. As for Mrs. Plaskwith, poor woman! she positively detested the taciturn and moody boy, who never mixed in the jokes of the circle, nor played with the children, nor complimented her, nor added, in short, any thing to the sociability of the house. Mr. Plimmins, who had at first sought to condescend, next sought to bully; but the gaunt frame and savage eye of Philip awed the smirk youth, in spite of himself; and he confessed to Mrs. Plaskwith that he should not like to meet "the gipsy" alone on a dark night; to which Mrs. Plaskwith replied, as usual, "that Mr. Plimmins always *did* say the best things in the world!"

One morning Philip was sent some miles into the country, to assist in cataloguing some books in the library of Sir Thomas Champerdown; that gentleman, who was a scholar, having requested that some one acquainted with the Greek character might be sent to him, and Philip being the only one in the shop who possessed such knowledge.

It was evening before he returned. Mr. and Mrs. Plaskwith were both in the shop as he entered; in fact, they had been employed in talking him over.

"I can't abide him!" cried Mrs. Plaskwith. "If you choose to take him for good, I sha'n't have an easy moment. I'm sure the 'prentice that cut his master's throat at Chatham, last week, was just like him."

"Pshaw, Mrs. P.!" said the bookseller, taking a huge pinch of snuff, as usual, from his waistcoat pocket. "I myself was reserved when I was young—all reflective people are. I may observe, by-the-by, that it was the case with Napoleon Bonaparte: still, however, I must own he is a disagreeable youth, though he attends to his business."

"And how fond of his money he is!" remarked Mrs. Plaskwith; "he won't buy himself a new pair of shoes! quite disgraceful! And did you see what a look he gave Plimmins, when he joked about his indifference to his *sole?* Plimmins always does say such good things!"

"He is shabby, certainly," said the bookseller; "but the value of a book does not always depend on the binding."

"I hope he is honest!" observed Mrs. Plaskwith; and here Philip entered.

"Hum!" said Mr. Plaskwith, "you have had a long day's work; but I suppose it will take a week to finish?"

"I am to go again to-morrow morning, sir: two days more will conclude the task."

"There's a letter for you," cried Mrs. Plaskwith; "you owes me for it."

"A letter!" It was not his mother's hand—it was a strange writing; he gasped for breath as he broke the seal. It was the letter of the physician.

His mother, then, was ill—dying—wanting, perhaps, the necessaries of life. She would have concealed from him her illness and her poverty. His quick alarm exaggerated the last into utter want; he uttered a cry that ran through the shop, and rushed to Mr. Plaskwith.

"Sir, sir! my mother is dying! She is poor, poor—perhaps starving; money, money! lend me money! ten pounds! five! I will work for you all my life for nothing, but lend me the money!"

"Hoity-toity!" said Mrs. Plaskwith, nudging her husband; "I told you what would come of it; it will be 'money or life' next time."

Philip did not heed or hear this address, but stood immediately before the bookseller, his hands clasped, wild impatience in his eyes. Mr. Plaskwith, somewhat stupefied, remained silent.

"Do you hear me! Are you human?" exclaimed Philip, his emotion revealing at once all the fire of his character. "I tell you my mother is dying; I must go to her! Shall I go empty-handed? Give me money!"

Mr. Plaskwith was not a bad-hearted man; but he was a formal man, and an irritable one. The tone his shop-boy (for so he considered Philip) assumed to him, before his own wife, too (examples are very dangerous), rather exasperated than moved him.

"That's not the way to speak to your master! You forget yourself, young man!"

"Forget! But, sir, if she has not necessaries—if she is starving?"

"Fudge!" said Mr. Plaskwith. "Mr. Morton writes me word that he has provided for your mother! Does not he, Hannah?"

"More fool he, I'm sure, with such a fine family of his own! Don't look at me in that way, young man; I won't take it—that I won't! I declare my blood friz to see you!"

"Will you advance me money? Five pounds—only five pounds, Mr. Plaskwith?"

"Not five shillings! Talk to *me* in this style!—not the man for it, sir!—highly improper. Come shut up the shop, and recollect yourself; and perhaps, when Sir Thomas's library is done, I may let you go to town. You can't go to-morrow. All a sham, perhaps—eh, Hannah?"

"Very likely! Consult Plimmins. Better come away now, Mr. P. He looks like a young tiger."

Mrs. Plaskwith quitted the shop for the parlor. Her husband, putting his hands behind his back, and throwing back his chin, was about to follow her. Philip, who had remained for the last moment mute and white as stone, turned abruptly; and his grief taking rather the tone of rage than supplication, he threw himself before his master, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, said,

"I leave you—do not let it be with a curse. I conjure you, have mercy on me!"

Mr. Plaskwith stopped; and, had Philip then taken but a milder tone, all had been well. But, accustomed from childhood to command—all his fierce passions loose within him—despising the very man he thus implored, the boy ruined his own cause. Indignant at the silence of Mr. Plaskwith, and too blinded by his emotions to see that in that silence there was relenting, he suddenly shook the little man with a vehemence that almost overset him, and cried,

"You, who demand for five years my bones and blood—my body and soul—a slave to your vile trade—do you deny me bread for a mother's lips?"

Trembling with anger, and perhaps fear, Mr. Plaskwith extricated himself from the gripe of Philip, and, hurrying from the shop, said, as he banged the door,

"Beg my pardon for this to-night, or out you go to-morrow, neck and crop! Zounds! a pretty pass the world's come to! I don't believe a word about your mother. Baugh!"

Left alone, Philip remained for some moments struggling with his wrath and agony. He then seized his hat, which he had thrown off on entering, pressed it over his brows, and turned to quit the shop, when his eye fell upon the till. Plaskwith had left it open, and the gleam of the coin struck his gaze—that deadly smile of the arch tempter. Intellect, reason, conscience—all in that instant, were confusion and chaos. He cast a hurried glance round the solitary and darkening room; plunged his hand into the drawer; clutched—he knew not what—silver or gold, as it came uppermost, and burst into a loud and bitter laugh. That laugh itself startled him; it did not sound like his own. His cheek turned white, and his knees knocked together; his hair bristled; he felt as if the very fiend had uttered that yell of joy over a fallen soul.

"No, no, no!" he muttered; "no, my mother, not even for thee!" And, dashing the money to the ground, he fled like a maniac from the house.

At a later hour that same evening, Mr. Robert Beaufort returned from his country mansion to Berkeley-square. He found his wife very uneasy and nervous about the non-appearance of their only son. He had sent home his groom and horses about seven o'clock, with a hurried scroll, written in pencil on a blank page torn from his pocket-book, and containing only these words:

"Don't wait dinner for me—I may not be home for some hours. I have met with a melancholy adventure. You will approve what I have done when we meet."

This note a little perplexed Mr. Beaufort; but, as he was very hungry, he turned a deaf ear both to his wife's conjectures and his own surmises till he had refreshed himself; and then he sent for the groom, and learned that, after the accident to the blind man, Mr. Arthur had been left at a hosier's in H——. This seemed to him extremely mysterious; and, as hour after hour passed away, and still Arthur came not, he began to imbibe his wife's fears, which were now wound up almost to hysterics; and, just at midnight, he ordered his carriage, and, taking with him the groom as a guide, set off to the suburban region. Mrs. Beaufort had wished to accompany him; but the husband observing that young men would be young men, and that there *might* possibly be a lady in the case, Mrs. Beaufort, after a pause of thought, passively agreed that, all things considered, she had better remain at home. No lady of proper decorum likes to run the risk of finding herself in a false position. Mr. Beaufort accordingly set out alone. Easy was the carriage, swift were the steeds, and luxuriously the wealthy man was whirled along. Not a suspicion of the true cause of Arthur's detention crossed him; but he thought of the snares of London—of artful females in distress; "a melancholy adventure" generally implies love for the adventure, and money for the melancholy; and Arthur was young—generous—with a heart and a pocket equally open to imposition. Such scrapes, however, do not terrify a father when he is a man of the world, so much as they do an anxious mother; and, with more curiosity than alarm, Mr. Beaufort, after a short doze, found himself before the shop indicated.

Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, the door to the private entrance was ajar: a circumstance which seemed very suspicious to Mr. Beaufort. He pushed it open with caution and timidity: a candle, placed upon a chair in the

narrow passage, threw a sickly light over the flight of stairs, till swallowed up by the deep shadow thrown from the sharp angle made by the ascent. Robert Beaufort stood a moment in some doubt whether to call, to knock, to recede or to advance, when a step was heard upon the stairs above—it came nearer and nearer—a figure emerged from the shadow of the last landing-place—and Mr. Beaufort, to his great joy, recognized his son.

Arthur did not, however, seem to perceive his father; and was about to pass him, when Mr. Beaufort laid his hand on his arm.

"What means all this, Arthur? What place are you in? How you have alarmed us!"

Arthur cast a look upon his father of sadness and reproach.

"Father," he said, in a tone that sounded stern—almost commanding, "I will show you where I have been: follow me—nay, I say, follow."

He turned, without another word reascended the stairs, and Mr. Beaufort, surprised and awed into mechanical obedience, did as his son desired. At the landing-place of the second floor, another long-wicked, neglected, ghastly candle emitted its cheerless ray. It gleamed through the open door of a small bedroom to the left, through which Beaufort perceived the forms of two women. One (it was the kindly maid-servant) was seated on a chair, and weeping bitterly; the other (it was a hireling nurse, in the first and last day of her attendance) was unpinning her dingy shawl before she lay down to take a nap. She turned her vacant, listless face upon the two men, put on a doleful smile, and decently closed the door.

"Where are we, I say, Arthur?" repeated Mr. Beaufort.

Arthur took his father's hand, drew him into a room to the right, and, taking up the candle, placed it on a small table beside a bed, and said, "Here, sir—in the presence of Death!"

Mr. Beaufort cast a hurried and fearful glance on the still, wan, serene face beneath his eyes, and recognized in that glance the features of the neglected and the once-adored Catharine.

"Yes—she whom your brother so loved—the mother of his children—died in this squalid room, and far from her sons, in poverty, in sorrow! died of a broken heart! Was that well, father? Have you in this nothing to repent?"

Conscience-stricken and appalled, the worldly man sank down on a seat beside the bed, and covered his face with his hands.

"Ay," continued Arthur, almost bitterly, "ay, we, his nearest of kin—we, who have inherited his lands and gold—we have been thus heedless of that great legacy your brother bequeathed to us: the things dearest to him—the woman he loved—the children his death cast, nameless and branded, on the world. Ay, weep, father; and while you weep, think of the future—of reparation. I have sworn to that clay to befriend her sons; join you, who have all the power, to fulfill the promise—join in that vow; and may Heaven not visit on us both the woes of this bed of death."

"I did not know—I—I—" faltered Mr. Beaufort.

"But we should have known," interrupted Arthur, mournfully. "Ah, my dear father! do not harden your heart by false excuses. The dead still speaks to you, and commends to your care her children. My task here is done: oh, sir! yours is to come. I leave you alone with the dead."

So saying, the young man, whom the tragedy of the scene had worked into a passion and a dignity above his usual character, unwilling to trust farther to his emotions, turned abruptly from the room, fled rapidly down the stairs, and left the house. As the carriage and liveries of his father met his eye, he groaned, for their evidences of comfort and wealth seemed a mockery to the deceased: he averted his face and walked on. Nor did he perceive or heed a form that at that instant rushed by him—pale, haggard, breathless—toward the house which he had quitted, and the door of which he left open, as he had found it—open, as the physician had left it when hurrying, ten minutes before the arrival of Mr. Beaufort, from the spot where his skill was impotent. Wrapped in gloomy thought, alone, and on foot—at that dreary hour, and in that remote suburb—the heir of the Beauforts sought his splendid home. Anxious, fearful, hoping, the outcast orphan flew on to the death-room of his mother.

Mr. Beaufort, who had but imperfectly heard Arthur's parting accents, lost and bewildered by the strangeness of his situation, did not at first perceive that he was left alone. Surprised, and chilled by the sudden silence of the chamber, he rose, withdrew his hands from his face, and again he saw that countenance so mute and solemn. He cast his gaze round the dismal room for Arthur; he called his name—no answer came; a superstitious tremor seized upon him; his limbs shook; he sunk once more on his seat, and closed his eyes, muttering, for the first time, perhaps, since his childhood, words of penitence and prayer. He was roused from this bitter self-abstraction by a deep groan. It seemed to come from the bed. Did his ears deceive him? Had the dead found a voice? He started up in an agony of dread, and saw opposite to him the livid countenance of Philip Morton: the Son of the Corpse had replaced the Son of the Living Man! The dim and solitary light fell upon that countenance. There, all the bloom and freshness natural to youth seemed blasted! There, on those wasted features, played all the terrible power and glare of precocious passions—rage, woe, scorn, despair. Terrible is it to see up on the face of a boy the storm and whirlwind that should visit only the strong heart of a man!

"She is dead! dead! and in your presence!" shouted Philip, with his wild eyes fixed upon the cowering uncle; "dead with care, perhaps with famine. And *you* have come to look upon your work!"

"Indeed," said Beaufort, deprecatingly, "I have but just arrived: I did not know she had been ill or in want, upon my honor. This is all a—a—mistake: I—I—came in search of—of—another—"

"You did *not*, then, come to relieve her?" said Philip, very calmly. "You had not learned her suffering distress, and flown hither in the hope that there was yet time to save her? You did not do this? Ha! ha! why did I think it?"

"Did any one call, gentlemen?" said a whining voice at the door; and the nurse put in her head.

"Yes—yes—you may come in," said Beaufort, shaking with nameless and cowardly apprehension; but Philip had flown to the door, and, gazing on the nurse, said,

"She is a stranger! see, a *stranger!* The son now has assumed his post. Begone, woman!" And he pushed her away, and drew the bolt across the door.

And then there looked upon him, as there had looked upon his reluctant companion, calm and holy, the face of the peaceful corpse. He burst into tears, and fell on his knees so close to Beaufort that he touched him; he took up the heavy hand, and covered it with burning kisses.

"Mother! mother! do not leave me! Wake—smile once more on your son! I would have brought you money, but I could not have asked for your blessing *then;* mother, I ask it now!"

"If I had but known—if you had but written to me, my dear young gentleman—but my offers had been refused, and—"

"Offers of a hireling's pittance to her—to her for whom my father would have coined his heart's blood into gold! My father's wife! his wife! offers—"

He rose suddenly, folded his arms, and, facing Beaufort with a fierce, determined brow, said,

"Mark me; you hold the wealth that I was trained from my cradle to consider my heritage. I have worked with these hands for bread, and never complained, except to my own heart and soul. I never hated and never cursed you—robber as you were—yes, robber! For, even were there no marriage save it the sight of God, neither my father, nor Nature, nor Heaven meant that you should seize all, and that there should be nothing due to the claims of affection and blood. He was not the less my father, even if the church spoke not on my side. Despoiler of the orphan and derider of human love, you are not the less a robber, though the law fences you round, and men call you honest! But I did not hate you for this. Now, in the presence of my dead mother—dead far from both her sons—now I abhor and curse you. You may think yourself safe when you quit this room—safe, and from my hatred; you may be so: but do not deceive yourself; the curse of the widow and the orphan shall pursue—it shall cling to you and yours—it shall gnaw your heart in the midst of splendor—it shall cleave to the heritage of your son! There shall be a deathbed yet, beside which you shall see the specter of her, now so calm, rising for retribution from the grave! These words—no, you never shall forget them—years hence they shall ring in your ears, and freeze the marrow of your bones! And now begone, my father's brother—begone from my mother's corpse to your luxurious home!"

He opened the door and pointed to the stairs. Beaufort, without a word, turned from the room and departed. He heard the door closed and locked as he descended the stairs; but he did not hear the deep groans and vehement sobs in which the desolate orphan gave vent to the anguish which succeeded to the less sacred paroxysm of revenge and wrath.

BOOK II.

„Abend ward's und wurde Morgen,
Nimmer, nimmer stand ich still;"
SCHILLER: *Der Pilgrim.*

CHAPTER I.

"*Incubo.* Look to the cavalier. What ails he?

. . . . . .

Hostess. And in such good clothes, too!"
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: *Love's Pilgrimage.*

"*Theod.* I have a brother—there my last hope!
Thus as you find me, without fear or wisdom,
I now am only child of Hope and Danger."
Ibid.

THE time employed by Mr. Beaufort in reaching his home was haunted by gloomy and confused terrors. He felt inexplicably as if the denunciations of Philip were to visit less himself than his son. He trembled at the thought of Arthur meeting this strange, wild, exasperated scatterling—perhaps on the morrow—in the very height of his passions. And yet, after the scene between Arthur and himself, he saw cause to fear that he might not be able to exercise a sufficient authority over his son, however naturally facile and obedient, to prevent his return to the house of death. In this dilemma he resolved, as is usual with cleverer men, even when yoked to feebler helpmates, to hear if his wife had any thing comforting or sensible to say upon the subject. Accordingly, on reaching Berkeley-square, he went straight to Mrs. Beaufort, and, having relieved her mind as to Arthur's safety, related the scene in which he had been so unwilling an actor. With that more lively susceptibility which belongs to most women, however comparatively unfeeling, Mrs. Beaufort made greater allowance than her husband for the excitement Philip had betrayed. Still Beaufort's description of the dark menaces, the fierce countenance, the brigand-like form of the bereaved son, gave her very considerable apprehensions for Arthur, should the young men meet; and she willingly coincided with her husband in the propriety of using all means of parental persuasion or command to guard against such an encounter. But, in the mean while, Arthur returned not, and new fears seized the anxious parents. He had gone forth alone, in a remote suburb of the metropolis, at a late hour, himself under strong excitement. He might have returned to the house, or have lost his way amid some dark haunts of violence and crime; they knew not where to send or what to suggest. Day already began to dawn, and still he came not. At length, toward five o'clock, a loud rap was heard at the door, and Mr. Beaufort, hearing some bustle in the hall, descended. He saw his son borne into the hall from a hackney-coach by two strangers, pale, bleeding, and apparently insensible. His first thought was that he had been murdered by Philip. He uttered a feeble cry, and sank down beside his son.

"Don't be darnted, sir," said one of the strangers, who seemed an artisan; "I don't think he be much hurt. You sees he was crossing the street, and the coach ran against him, but it did not go over his head; it be only the stones that make him bleed so: and that's a mercy."

"A providence, sir," said the other man;

"but Providence watches over us all, night and day, sleep or awake. Hem! We were passing at the time from the meeting—the Odd Fellows, sir—and so we took him, and got him a coach; for we found his card in his pocket. He could not speak just then; but the rattling of the coach did him a deal of good, for he groaned—my eyes! how he groaned—did not he, Burrows?"

"It did one's heart good to hear him."

"Run for Astley Cooper—you—go to Brodie. Good God! he is dying. Be quick—quick!" cried Mr. Beaufort to his servants, while Mrs. Beaufort, who had now gained the spot, with greater presence of mind, had Arthur conveyed into his room.

"It is a judgment upon me!" groaned Beaufort, rooted to the stone of his hall, and left alone with the strangers.

"No, sir, it is not a *judgment*, it is a *providence*," said the more sanctimonious and better dressed of the two men: "for, put the question, if it had been a judgment, the wheel would have gone over him; and, whether he dies or not, I shall always say that if that's not a providence, I don't know what is. We have come a long way, sir; and Burrows is a poor man, though I'm well to do."

This hint for money restored Beaufort to his recollection; he put his purse into the nearest hand outstretched to clutch it, and muttered out something like thanks.

"Sir, may the Lord bless you! and I hope the young gentleman will do well. I am sure you have cause to be thankful that he was within an inch of the wheel; was not he, Burrows? Well, it's enough to convert a heathen. But the ways of Providence are mysterious, and that's the truth of it. Good-night, sir."

Certainly it did seem as if the curse of Philip was already at its work. An accident almost similar to that which, in the adventure of the blind man, had led Arthur to the clew of Catharine, within twenty-four hours stretched Arthur himself upon his bed. The sorrow Mr. Beaufort had not relieved was now at his own hearth. But *there* were parents and nurses, and great physicians, and skillful surgeons, and all the army that combine against Death; and *there* were ease, and luxury, and kind eyes, and pitying looks, and all that can take the sting from pain. And thus, the very night on which Catharine had died, broken down and worn-out, upon a strange breast, with a feeless doctor, and by the ray of a single candle, the heir to the fortunes once destined to her son wrestled also with the grim tyrant, that seemed, however, scared from his prey by the arts and luxuries which the world of rich men raises up in defiance of the grave.

Arthur was, indeed, very seriously injured; one of his ribs broken, and two severe contusions on the head. To insensibility succeeded fever, followed by delirium. He was in imminent danger for several days. If any thing could have consoled his parents for such an affliction, it was the thought that, at least, he was saved from the chance of meeting Philip. Mr. Beaufort, in the instinct of that capricious and fluctuating conscience which belongs to weak minds—which remains still, and drooping, and lifeless as a flag on a mast-head during the calm of prosperity, but flutters, and flaps, and tosses when the wind blows and the wave heaves—thought very acutely and remorsefully of the condition of the Mortons during the danger of his own son. So far, indeed, from his anxiety for Arthur monopolizing all his care, it only sharpened his charity toward the orphans; for many a man becomes devout and good when he fancies he has an *immediate* interest in appeasing Providence. The morning after Arthur's accident, he sent for Mr. Blackwell. He commissioned him to see that Catharine's funeral rites were performed with all due care and attention: he bade him obtain an interview with Philip, and assure the youth of Mr. Beaufort's good and friendly disposition toward him, and to offer to forward his views in any course of education he might prefer, or any profession he might adopt; and he earnestly counseled the lawyer to employ all his tact and delicacy in conferring with one of so proud and fiery a temper. Mr. Blackwell, however, had no tact or delicacy to employ: he went to the house of mourning, forced his way to Philip, and the very exordium of his harangue, which was devoted to praises of the extraordinary generosity and benevolence of his employer, mingled with condescending admonitions toward gratitude from Philip, so exasperated the boy, that Mr. Blackwell was extremely glad to get out of the house with a whole skin. He, however, did not neglect the more formal part of his mission; but communicated immediately with a fashionable undertaker, and gave orders for a very genteel funeral. He thought, after the funeral, that Philip would be in a less excited state of mind, and more likely to hear reason; he therefore deferred a second interview with the orphan till after that event; and, in the mean while, dispatched a letter to Mr. Beaufort, stating that he had attended to his instructions; that the orders for the funeral were given; but that, at present, Mr. Philip Morton's mind was a little disordered, and that he could not calmly discuss, just at present, the plans for the future suggested by Mr. Beaufort. He did not doubt, however, that in another interview all would be arranged according to the wishes his client had so nobly conveyed to him. Mr. Beaufort's conscience on this point was therefore set at rest.

It was a dull, close, oppressive morning upon which the remains of Catharine Morton were consigned to the grave. With the preparations for the funeral Philip did not interfere; he did not inquire by whose orders all that solemnity of mutes, and coaches, and black plumes, and crapebands was appointed. If his vague and undeveloped conjecture ascribed this last and vain attention to Robert Beaufort, it neither lessened the sullen resentment he felt against his uncle, nor, on the other hand, did he conceive that he had a right to forbid respect to the dead, though he might reject service for the survivor. He had remained in a sort of apathy or torpor since Mr. Blackwell's visit, which seemed to the people of the house to partake rather of indifference than woe.

The funeral was over, and Philip had returned to the apartments occupied by the deceased; and now, for the first time, he set himself to examine what papers, &c., she had left behind. In an old escritoire he found, first, various packets of letters in his father's handwriting, the

characters in many of them faded by time. He opened a few: they were the earliest love-letters. He did not dare to read above a few lines, so much did their living tenderness, and breathing, frank, hearty passion, contrast with the fate of the adored one. In these letters the very heart of the writer seemed to beat! Now both hearts alike were stilled! and GHOST called vainly unto GHOST.

He came at length to a letter in his mother's hand, and dated two days before her death. He went to the window, and gasped in the midst of the sultry air for breath. Below were heard the noises of London: the shrill cries of itinerant venders, the rolling carts, the whoop of boys returned for a while from school; amid all these rose one loud, merry peal of laughter, which drew his attention mechanically to the spot whence it came: it was at the threshold of a public house, before which stood the hearse that had conveyed his mother's coffin, and the gay undertakers, halting there to refresh themselves. He closed the window with a groan, retired to the farthest corner of the room, and read as follows:

"MY DEAREST PHILIP—When you read this, I shall be no more. You and poor Sidney will have neither father nor mother, nor fortune nor name. Heaven is more just than man, and in Heaven is my hope for you. You, Philip, are already past childhood; your nature is one formed, I think, to wrestle successfully with the world. Guard against your own passions, and you may bid defiance to the obstacles that will beset your path in life. And lately, in our reverses, Philip, you have so subdued these passions, so schooled the pride and impetuosity of your childhood, that I have contemplated your prospects with less fear than I used to do, even when they seemed so brilliant. Forgive me, my dear child, if I have concealed from you my state of health, and if my death be a sudden and unlooked-for shock. Do not grieve for me too long. For myself, my release is indeed escape from the prison-house and the chain—from bodily pain and mental torture, which may, I fondly hope, prove some expiation for the errors of a happier time. For I did err when, even from the least selfish motives, I suffered my union with your father to remain concealed, and thus ruined the hopes of those who had rights upon me equal even to *his*. But oh! Philip, beware too of the passions, which do not betray their fruit till years and years after the leaves that look so green, and the blossoms that seem so fair.

"I repeat my solemn injunction, Do not grieve for me, but strengthen your mind and heart to receive the charge that I now confide to you: my Sidney, my child, your brother! He is so soft, so gentle; he has been so dependent for very life upon me, and we are parted now for the first and last time. He is with strangers; and—and—oh, Philip, Philip, watch over him for the love you bear, not only to him, but to me! Be to him a father as well as brother. Put your stout heart against the world so that you may screen him, the weak child, from its malice. He has not your talents nor strength of character; without you he is nothing. Live, toil, rise for his sake not less than your own. If you knew how this heart beats as I write to you, if you could conceive what comfort I take for *him* from my confidence in you, you would feel a new spirit—my spirit—my mother-spirit of love, and forethought, and vigilance, enter into you while you read. See him when I am gone; comfort and soothe him. Happily he is too young yet to know all his loss; and do not let him think unkindly of me in the days to come; for he is a child now, and they may poison his mind against me more easily than they can yours. Think, if he is unhappy hereafter, he may forget how I loved him—he may curse those who gave him birth. Forgive me all this, Philip, my son, and heed it well.

"And now, where you find this letter, you will see a key; it opens a well in the bureau in which I have hoarded my little savings. You will see that I have not died in poverty. Take what there is; young as you are, you may want it more now than hereafter. But hold it in trust for your brother as well as yourself. If he is harshly treated (and you will go and see him, and you will remember that *he* would writhe under what *you* might scarcely feel), or if they overtask him, he is so young to work yet, it may find him a home near you. God watch over and guard you both. You are orphans now. But HE has told even the orphans to call him 'Father!'"

When he had read this letter, Philip Morton fell upon his knees, and prayed.

CHAPTER II.

"His curse! Dost comprehend what that word means?
Shot from a father's angry breath."
JAMES SHIRLEY: *The Brothers.*

"This term is fatal, and affrights me."—*Ibid.*

"Those fond philosophers that magnify
Our human nature . . . .
Conversed but little with the world—they knew not
The fierce vexation of community!"—*Ibid.*

AFTER he had recovered his self-possession, Philip opened the well of the bureau, and was astonished and affected to find that Catharine had saved more than £100. Alas! how much must she have pinched herself to have hoarded this little treasure. After burning his father's love-letters, and some other papers which he deemed useless, he made up a little bundle of those trifling effects belonging to the deceased which he valued as memorials and relics of her, quitted the apartment, and descended to the parlor behind the shop. On the way he met with the kind servant, and, recalling the grief that she had manifested for his mother since he had been in the house, he placed two sovereigns in her hand, and bade her keep the scanty wardrobe poor Catherine had left behind. "And now," said he, as the servant wept while he spoke, "*now* I can bear to ask you what I have not before done. How did my poor mother die? Did she suffer much, or—or—"

"She went off like a lamb, sir," said the girl, drying her eyes. "You see the gentleman had been with her all the day, and she was much more easy and comfortable in her mind after he came."

The gentleman! Not the gentleman I found here?"

"Oh dear, no! Not the pale, middle-aged

gentleman nurse and I saw go down as the clock struck two. But the young, soft-spoken gentleman, who came in the morning, and said as how he was a relation. He staid with her till she slept; and, when she woke, she smiled in his face—I shall never forget that smile—for I was standing on the other side, as it might be here, and the doctor was by the window, pouring out the doctor's stuff in the glass; and so she looked on the young gentleman, and then looked round at us all, and shook her head very gently, but did not speak. And the gentleman asked her how she felt, and she took both his hands and kissed them; and then he put his arms round and raised her up, to take the physic, like, and she said then, 'You will never forget *them?*' and he said, 'Never.' I don't know what that meant, sir!"

"Well, well—go on."

"And her head fell back on his buzzom, and she looked so happy; and, when the doctor came to the bedside, she was quite gone."

"And the stranger had my post! No matter—God bless him! God bless him! Who was he? What was his name!"

"I don't know, sir; he did not say. He staid after the doctor went, and cried very bitterly; he took on more than you did, sir."

"Ay."

"And the other gentleman came just as he was a going, and they did not seem to like each other; for I heard him through the wall, as nurse and I were in the next room, speak as if he was scolding; but he did not stay long."

"And has never been since?"

"No, sir! Perhaps missus can tell you more about him. But won't you take something, sir? Do—you look so pale."

Philip, without speaking, pushed her gently aside, and went slowly down the stairs. He entered the parlor, where two or three children were seated, playing at dominoes; he dispatched one for their mother, the mistress of the shop, who came in, and dropped him a courtesy with a very grave, sad face, as was proper.

"I am going to leave your house, ma'am; and I wish to settle any little arrears of rent, &c."

"Oh! sir, don't mention it," said the landlady; and, as she spoke, she took a piece of paper from her bosom, very neatly folded, and laid it on the table. "And here, sir," she added, taking from the same depository a card, "here is the card left by the gentleman who saw to the funeral. He called half an hour ago, and bade me say, with his compliments, that he would wait on you to-morrow, at eleven o'clock. So I hope you won't go yet, for I think he means to settle every thing for you; he said as much, sir."

Philip glanced over the card, and read, "Mr. George Blackwell, Lincoln's Inn. His brow grew dark; he let the card fall on the ground, put his foot on it with a quiet scorn, and muttered to himself, "The lawyer shall not bribe me out of my curse!" He turned to the total of the bill—not heavy, for poor Catharine had paid regularly for her scanty maintenance and humble lodging—paid the money, and, as the landlady wrote the receipt, he asked, "Who was the gentleman—the younger gentleman—who called in the morning of the day my mother died?"

"Oh, sir, I am sorry I did not get his name! Mr. Perkins said that he was some relation. Very odd he has never been since. But he'll be sure to call again, sir; you had better much stay here."

"No: it does not signify. All that he could do is done. But stay: give him this note if he should call."

Philip, taking the pen from the landlady's hand, hastily wrote (while Mrs. Lacy went to bring him sealing-wax and a light) these words:

"I can not guess who you are: they say that you call yourself a relation; that must be some mistake. I knew not that my poor mother had relations so kind. But, whoever you be, you soothed her last hours—she died in your arms; and if ever—years, long years hence—we should chance to meet, and I can do any thing to aid another, my blood, and my life, and my heart, and my soul all are slaves to your will. If you be really of her kindred, I commend to you my brother; he is at —— with Mr. Morton. If you can serve him, my mother's soul will watch over you as a guardian angel. As for me, I ask no help from any one: I go into the world, and will carve out my own way. So much do I shrink from the thought of charity from others, that I do not believe I could bless you as I do now if your kindness to me did not close with the stone upon my mother's grave.

"PHILIP."

He sealed this letter and gave it to the woman.

"Oh, by-the-by," said she, "I had forgot; the doctor said that if you would send for him, he would be most happy to call on you and give you any advice."

"Very well."

"And what shall I say to Mr. Blackwell?"

"That he may tell his employer to remember our last interview."

With that Philip took up his bundle and strode from the house. He went first to the churchyard, where his mother's remains had been that day interred. It was near at hand: a quiet, almost a rural spot. The gate stood ajar, for there was a public path through the churchyard, and Philip entered with a noiseless tread. It was then near evening: the sun had broke out from the mists of the earlier day, and the westering rays shone bright and holy upon the solemn place.

"Mother! mother!" sobbed the orphan, as he fell prostrate before that fresh green mound: "here—here I have come to repeat my oath—to swear again that I will be faithful to the charge you have intrusted to your wretched son! And at this hour I dare ask if there be on this earth one more miserable and forlorn?"

As words to this effect struggled from his lips, a loud, shrill voice—the cracked, painful voice of weak age wrestling with strong passion—rose close at hand.

"Away, reprobate! thou art accursed!"

Philip started, and shuddered as if the words were addressed to himself, and from the grave. But, as he rose on his knee, and, tossing the wild hair from his eyes, looked confusedly round, he saw at a short distance, and in the shadow of the wall, two forms: the one an old man with gray hair, who was seated on a crumbling wooden tomb, facing the setting sun; the other a man apparently yet in the vigor of life, who

appeared bent as in humble supplication. The old man's hands were outstretched over the head of the younger, as if suiting terrible action to the terrible words, and, after a moment's pause —a moment, but it seemed far longer to Philip —there was heard a deep, wild, ghastly howl from a dog that cowered at the old man's feet; a howl, perhaps, of fear at the passion of his master, which the animal might associate with danger.

"Father! father!" said the suppliant, reproachfully, "your very dog rebukes your curse."

"Be dumb! My dog! What hast thou left me on earth but him? Thou hast made me loathe the sight of friends,—for thou hast made me loathe mine own name. Thou hast covered it with disgrace—thou hast made mine old age a by-word—thy crimes leave me solitary in the midst of my shame!"

"It is many years since we met, father; we may never meet again—shall we part thus?"

"*Thus*, aha!" said the old man in a tone of withering sarcasm; "I comprehend—you are come for money!"

At this taunt the son started as if stung by a serpent, raised his head to its full height, folded his arms, and replied,

"Sir, you wrong me: for more than twenty years I have maintained myself—no matter how, but without taxing you—and now I felt remorse for having suffered you to discard me—now, when you are old and helpless, and, I heard, blind; and you might want aid even from your poor, good-for-nothing son. But I have done. Forget not my sins, but this interview. Repeal your curse, father; I have enough on my head without yours; and so—let the son at least bless the father who curses him. Farewell!"

The speaker turned as he thus said, with a voice that trembled at the close, and brushed rapidly by Philip, whom he did not, however, appear to perceive; but Philip, by the last red beam of the sun, saw again that marked, storm-beaten face which it was difficult, once seen, to forget, and recognized the stranger on whose breast he had slept the night of his first fatal visit to R——.

The old man's imperfect vision did not detect the departure of his son, but his face changed and softened as the latter strode silently through the rank grass.

"William!" he said at last, gently; "William!" and the tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks; "my son!" but that son was gone; the old man listened for reply—none came. "He has left me—poor William!—we shall never meet again;" and he sank once more on the old tombstone, dumb, rigid, motionless: an image of Time himself in his own domain of Graves. The dog crept closer to his master and licked his hand. Philip stood for a moment in thoughtful silence: his exclamation of despair had been answered as by his better angel. There *was* a being more miserable than himself; and the Accursed would have envied the Bereaved!

The twilight had closed in; the earliest star —the star of Memory and Love, the Hesperus hymned by every poet since the world began— was fair in the arch of heaven, as Philip quitted the spot with a spirit more reconciled to the future, more softened, chastened, attuned to gentle and pious thoughts, than perhaps ever yet had made his soul dominant over the deep and dark tide of his gloomy passions. He went thence to a neighboring sculptor, and paid beforehand for a plain tablet to be placed above the grave he had left. He had just quitted that shop, in the same street, not many doors removed from the house in which his mother had breathed her last. He was pausing by a crossing, irresolute whether to repair at once to the home assigned to Sidney, or to seek some shelter in town for that night, when three men who were on the opposite side of the way, suddenly caught sight of him.

"There he is—there he is; stop, sir! stop!"

Philip heard these words, looked up, and recognized the voice and the person of Mr. Plaskwith; the bookseller was accompanied by Mr. Plimmins and a sturdy, ill-favored stranger.

A nameless feeling of fear, rage, and disgust seized the unhappy boy; and, at the same moment, a ragged vagabond whispered to him, "Stump it, my cove; that's a Bow-street runner."

Then there shot through Philip's head the recollection of the money he had seized, though but to dash away: was he now—he, still, to his own conviction, the heir of an ancient and spotless name—to be hunted as a thief; or, at the best, what right over his person and his liberty had he given to this taskmaster? Ignorant of the law, the law only seemed to him, as it ever does to the ignorant and the friendless, a foe. Quicker than lightning, these thoughts, which it takes so many words to describe, flashed through the storm and darkness of his breast; and, at the very instant that Mr. Plimmins had laid hands on his shoulder, his resolution was formed. The instinct of self beat loud at his heart. With a bound—a spring, that sent Mr. Plimmins sprawling in the kennel, he darted across the road, and fled down an opposite lane.

"Stop him! stop!" cried the bookseller; and the officer rushed after him with almost equal speed. Lane after lane, alley after alley, fled Philip; dodging, winding, breathless, panting; and lane after lane, alley after alley, thickened at his heels the crowd that pursued. The idle, and the curious, and the officious—ragged boys, ragged men, from stall and from cellar, from corner and from crossing—joined in that delicious chase, which runs down young error till it sinks, too often, at the door of the jail or the foot of the gallows. But Philip slackened not his peace; he began to distance his pursuers. He was now in a street which they had not yet entered; a quiet street, with few, if any, shops. Before the threshold of a better kind of public house, or, rather, tavern, to judge by its appearance, lounged two men; and, as Philip flew on, the cry of "Stop him!" had changed, as the shout passed to new voices, into "Stop *the thief!*" That cry yet howled in the distance. One of the loungers seized him; Philip, desperate and ferocious, struck at him with all his force; but the blow was scarcely felt by that Herculean frame.

"Pish!" said the man, scornfully; "I am no spy; if you run from justice, I would help you to a sign-post."

Struck by the voice, Philip looked hard at the speaker. It was the voice of the Accursed Son.

"Save me! You remember me?" said the orphan, faintly.

"Ah! I think I do; poor lad! Follow me—this way!"

The stranger turned within the tavern, passed the hall through a sort of corridor that led into a back yard which opened upon a nest of courts or passages.

"You are safe for the present; I will take you where you can tell me all at your ease. See!" As he spoke, they emerged into an open street, and the guide pointed to a row of hackney-coaches. "Be quick—get in. Coachman, drive fast to—" Philip did not hear the rest of the direction.

Our story returns to Sidney.

CHAPTER III.

"Nous vous mettrons à couvert
Repondit le pot de fer,
Si quelque matière dure
Vous menace d'aventure,
Entre deux je passerai,
Et du coup vous sauverai
. . . . . .
Le pot de terre en souffre!"

LA FONTAINE.

"SIDNEY, come here, sir! What *have* you been at? You have torn your frill into tatters! How did you do this? Come, sir, no lies."

"Indeed, ma'am, it was not my fault. I just put my head out of the window to see the coach go by, and a nail caught me here."

"Why, you little plague! you have scratched yourself: you are always in mischief. What business had you to look after the coach?"

"I don't know," said Sidney, hanging his head ruefully.

"La, mother!" cried the youngest of the cousins, a square-built, ruddy, coarse-featured urchin about Sidney's age, "la, mother, he never sees a coach in the street when we are at play but he runs arter it."

"After, not arter," said Mr. Roger Morton, taking the pipe from his mouth.

"Why do you go after the coaches, Sidney?" said Mrs. Morton; "it is very naughty; you will be run over some day."

"Yes, ma'am," said Sidney, who, during the whole colloquy, had been trembling from head to foot.

"'Yes, ma'am,' and 'no, ma'am,' you have no more manners than a cobbler's boy."

"Don't tease the child, my dear—he is crying," said Mr. Morton, more authoritatively than usual. "Come here, my man!" and the worthy uncle took him in his lap, and held his glass of brandy and water to his lips. Sidney, too frightened to refuse, sipped hurriedly, keeping his large eyes fixed on his aunt, as children do when they fear a cuff.

"You spoil the boy more than you do your own flesh and blood," said Mrs. Morton, greatly displeased.

Here Tom, the youngest-born before described, put his mouth to his mother's ear, and whispered, loud enough to be heard by all, "He runs arter the coach 'cause he thinks his ma may be in it. Who's homesick, I should like to know? Ba! baa!"

The boy pointed his finger over his mother's shoulder, and the other children burst into a loud giggle.

"Leave the room, all of you—leave the room!" said Mr. Morton, rising angrily and stamping his foot.

The children, who were in great awe of their father, huddled and hustled each other to the door; but Tom, who went last, bold in his mother's favor, popped his head through the doorway, and cried, "Good-by, little homesick."

A sudden slap in the face from his father changed his chuckle into a very different kind of music, and a loud indignant sob was heard without for some moments after the door was closed.

"If that's the way you behave to your children, Mr. Morton, I vow you sha'n't have any more, if I can help it. Don't come near me—don't touch me!" and Mrs. Morton assumed the resentful air of offended beauty.

"Pshaw!" growled the spouse; and he reseated himself and resumed his pipe. There was a dead silence. Sidney crouched near his uncle, looking very pale. Mrs. Morton, who was knitting, knitted away with the excited energy of nervous irritation.

"Ring the bell, Sidney," said Mr. Morton. The boy obeyed—the parlor-maid entered. "Take Master Sidney to his room; keep the boys away from him, and give him a large slice of bread and jam, Martha."

"Jam, indeed! Treacle," said Mrs. Morton.

"Jam, Martha!" repeated the uncle, authoritatively.

"Treacle!" reiterated the aunt.

"Jam, I say!"

"Treacle, you hear: and, for that matter, Martha has no jam to give!"

The husband had nothing more to say.

"Good-night, Sidney; there's a good boy, go and kiss your aunt and make your bow and, I say, my lad, don't mind those plagues. I'll talk to them to-morrow, that I will; no one shall be unkind to you in my house."

Sidney muttered something, and went timidly up to Mrs. Morton. His look, so gentle and subdued; his eyes full of tears; his pretty mouth, which, though silent, pleaded so eloquently; his willingness to forgive, and his wish to be forgiven, might have melted many a heart harder, perhaps, than Mrs. Morton's. But there reigned, what is worse than hardness, prejudice and wounded vanity—maternal vanity. His contrast to her own rough, coarse children grated on her, and set the teeth of her mind on edge.

"There, child, don't tread on my gown; you are so awkward: say your prayers, and don't throw off the counterpane! I don't like slovenly boys."

Sidney put his finger in his mouth, drooped, and vanished.

"Now, Mrs. M." said Mr. Morton, abruptly, and knocking out the ashes of his pipe, "now, Mrs. M., one word for all: I have told you that I promised poor Catharine to be a father to that child, and it goes to my heart to see him so snubbed. Why you dislike him I can't guess for the life of me; I never saw a sweeter-tempered child."

"Go on, sir—go on: make your personal reflections on your own lawful wife. They don't hurt me—oh, no, not at all! Sweet-tempered, indeed! I suppose your own children are not sweet-tempered?"

"That's neither here nor there," said Mr. Morton; "my own children are such as God made them, and I am very well satisfied."

"Indeed, you *may* be proud of such a family; and to think of the pains I have taken with them, and how I have saved you in nurses, and the bad times I have had; and now, to find their noses put out of joint by that little mischief-making interloper—it is too bad of you, Mr. Morton; you will break my heart, *that* you will."

Mrs. Morton put her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbed.

The husband was moved; he got up and attempted to take her hand. "Indeed, Margaret, I did not mean to vex you."

"And I, who have been such a fa—fai—faithful wi—wi—wife, and brought you such a deal of mon—mon—money, and always stud—stud—studied your interests; many's the time when you have been fast asleep, that I have sat up half the night men—men—mending the house linen; and you have not been the same man, Roger, since that boy came!"

"Well, well!" said the good man, quite overcome, and fairly taking her round the waist and kissing her, "no words between us; it makes life quite unpleasant. If it pains you to have Sidney here, I will put him to some school in the town where they'll be kind to him. Only, if you would, Margaret, for my sake—old girl! come, now! there's a darling!—just be more tender with him. You see he frets so after his mother. Think how little Tom would fret if he was away from you! Poor little Tom!"

"La! Mr. Morton, you are such a man! there's no resisting your ways! You know how to come over me, don't you?"

And Mrs. Morton smiled benignly as she escaped from his conjugal arms and smoothed her cap.

Peace thus restored, Mr. Morton refilled his pipe, and the good lady, after a pause, resumed, in a very mild, conciliatory tone—

"I'll tell you what it is, Roger, that vexes me with that there child. He is so deceitful, and he does tell such fibs!"

"Fibs! That is a very bad fault," said Mr. Morton, gravely. "*That* must be corrected."

"It was but the other day that I saw him break a pane of glass in the shop; and when I taxed him with it, he denied it; and with such a face! I can't abide story-telling."

"Let me know the next story he tells; I'll cure him," said Mr. Morton, sternly. "You know how I broke Tom of it. Spare the rod and spoil the child. And when I promised to be kind to the boy, of course I did not mean that I was not to take care of his morals, and see that he grew up an honest man. Tell truth and shame the devil—that's my motto."

"Spoke like yourself, Roger!" said Mrs. Morton, with great animation. "But you see he has not had the advantage of such a father as you. I wonder your sister don't write to you. Some people make a great fuss about their feelings; but out of sight out of mind."

"I hope she is not ill. Poor Catharine! she looked in a very bad way when she was here," said Mr. Morton, and he turned uneasily to the fire-place and sighed.

Here the servant entered with the supper-tray, and the conversation fell upon other topics.

Mrs. Roger Morton's charge against Sidney was, alas! too true. He had acquired under that roof a terrible habit of telling stories. He had never incurred that vice with his mother, because then and there he had nothing to fear; *now* he had every thing to fear; the grim aunt—even the quiet, cold, austere uncle—the apprentices—the strange servants—and oh! more than all, those hard-eyed, loud-laughing tormentors, the boys of his own age! Naturally timid, severity made him actually a coward; and, when the nerves tremble, a lie sounds as surely as, when I vibrate that wire, the bell at the end of it will ring. Beware of the man who has been roughly treated as a child.

The day after the conference just narrated, Mr. Morton, who was subject to erysipelas, had taken a little cooling medicine. He breakfasted, therefore, later than usual—after the rest of the family; and at this meal—*pour lui soulager*—he ordered the luxury of a muffin. Now it so chanced that he had only finished half the muffin and drank one cup of tea, when he was called into the shop by a customer of great importance: a prosy old lady, who always gave her orders with remarkable precision, and who valued herself on a character for affability, which she maintained by never buying a penny ribbon without asking the shopman how all his family were, and talking news about every other family in the place. At the time Mr. Morton left the parlor, Sidney and Master Tom were therein, seated on two stools, and casting up division sums on their respective slates: a point of education to which Mr. Morton attended with great care. As soon as his father's back was turned, Master Tom's eyes wandered from the slate to the muffin, as it leered at him from the slop-basin. Never did Pythian sibyl, seated above the bubbling spring, utter more oracular eloquence to her priest than did that muffin—at least the parts of it yet extant—utter to the fascinated senses of Master Tom. First he sighed; then he moved round on his stool; then he got up; then he peered at the muffin from a respectful distance; then he gradually approached, and walked round, and round, and round it, his eyes getting bigger and bigger; then he peeped through the glass-door into the shop, and saw his father busily engaged with the old lady; then he began to calculate and philosophize—perhaps his father had done breakfast; perhaps he would not come back at all; if he came back, he would not miss one corner of the muffin; and if he did miss it, why should Tom be supposed to have taken it? As he thus communed with himself, he drew nearer to the fatal vortex, and at last, with a desperate plunge, he seized the triangular temptation:

"And ere a man had power to say 'Behold,'
The jaws of *Thomas* had devoured it up."

Sidney, disturbed from his studies by the agitation of his companion, witnessed this proceeding with great and conscientious alarm. "Oh, Tom!" said he, "what will your papa say?"

"Look at that!" said Tom, putting his fist under Sidney's reluctant nose. "If father misses it, you'll say the cat took it. If you don't, my eye! what a wapping I'll give you!"

Here Mr. Morton's voice was heard wishing

the lady "Good-morning!" and Master Tom, thinking it better to leave the credit of the invention solely to Sidney, whispered, "Say I'm gone up-stairs for my pocket-hanker," and hastily absconded.

Mr. Morton, already in a very bad humor, partly at the effects of the cooling medicine, partly at the suspension of his breakfast, stalked into the parlor. His tea—the second cup already poured out—was cold. He turned toward the muffin, and missed the lost piece at a glance.

"Who has been at my muffin?" said he, in a voice that seemed to Sidney like the voice he had already supposed an ogre to possess. "Have you, Master Sidney?"

"N—n—no, sir; indeed, sir!"

"Then Tom has. Where is he?"

"Gone up-stairs for his handkerchief, sir."

"Did he take my muffin? Speak the truth!"

"No, sir; it was the—it was the—the cat, sir!"

"Oh, you wicked, wicked boy!" cried Mrs. Morton, who had followed her husband into the shop; "the cat kittened last night, and is locked up in the coal-cellar!"

"Come here, Master Sidney! No! first go down, Margaret, and see if the cat *is* in the cellar: it might have got out, Mrs. M." said Mr. Morton, just even in his wrath.

Mrs. Morton went, and there was a dead silence, except, indeed, in Sidney's heart, which beat louder than a clock ticks. Mr. Morton, meanwhile, went to a little cupboard; while still there, Mrs. Morton returned: the cat *was* in the cellar—the key turned on her—in no mood to eat muffins, poor thing!—she would not even lap her milk! Like her mistress, she had had a very bad time!

"Now, come here, sir!" said Mr. Morton, withdrawing himself from the cupboard, with a small horsewhip in his hand. "I will teach you how to speak the truth in future. Confess that you have told a lie!"

"Yes, sir, it was a lie! Pray—pray forgive me; but Tom made me!"

"What! when poor Tom is up stairs! Worse and worse!" said Mrs. Morton, lifting up her hands and eyes. "What a viper!"

"For shame, boy, for shame! Take that—and that—and that—"

Writhing, shrinking, still more terrified than hurt, the poor child cowered beneath the lash.

"Mamma! mamma!" he cried, at last, "oh, why—why did you leave me?"

At these words Mr. Morton stayed his hand—the whip fell to the ground.

"Yet it is all for the boy's good," he muttered. "There, child, I hope this is the last time. There, you are not much hurt. Zounds, don't cry so!"

"He will alarm the whole street," said Mrs. Morton; "I never see such a child! Here, take this parcel to Mrs. Birnie's—you know the house—only next street, and dry your eyes before you get there. Don't go through the shop, this way out."

She pushed the child, still sobbing with a vehemence that she could not comprehend, through the private passage into the street, and returned to her husband.

"You are convinced now, Mr. M.?"

"Pshaw! ma'am, don't talk. But, to be sure, that's how I cured Tom of fibbing. The tea's as cold as a stone!"

CHAPTER IV.

"Le bien nous le faisons: le mal c'est la Fortune,
On a toujours raison, le Destin toujours tort."
LA FONTAINE.

UPON the early morning of the day commemorated by the historical events of our last chapter, two men were deposited by a branch coach at the inn of a hamlet about ten miles distant from the town in which Mr. Roger Morton resided. Though the hamlet was small, the inn was large, for it was placed close by a huge finger-post that pointed to three great roads: one led to the town before mentioned; another to the heart of a manufacturing district; and a third to a populous seaport. The weather was fine, and the two travelers ordered breakfast to be taken into an arbor in the garden, as well as the basins and towels necessary for ablution. The elder of the travelers appeared to be unequivocally foreign; you would have guessed him at once for a German. He wore what was then very uncommon in this country, a loose brown linen *blouse*, buttoned to the chin, with a leathern belt, into which were stuck a German meerschaum and a tobacco-pouch. He had very long flaxen hair, false or real, that streamed half way down his back, large, light mustaches, and a rough, sun-burned complexion, which made the fairness of the hair more remarkable. He wore an enormous pair of green spectacles, and complained much, in broken English, of the weakness of his eyes. All about him, even to the smallest minutiæ, indicated the German; not only the large, muscular frame, the broad feet, and vast though well-shaped hands, but the brooch—evidently purchased of a Jew in some great fair—stuck ostentatiously and superfluously into his stock; the quaint, droll-looking carpet-bag, which he refused to trust to the boots; and the great, massive, dingy ring which he wore on his fore-finger. The other was a slender, remarkably upright and sinewy youth, in a blue frock, over which was thrown a large cloak; a traveling cap, with a shade that concealed all of the upper part of his face except a dark, quick eye of uncommon fire, and a shawl handkerchief, which was equally useful in concealing the lower part of the countenance. On descending from the coach, the German, with some difficulty, made the hostler understand that he wanted a post-chaise in a quarter of an hour; and then, without entering the house, he and his friend strolled to the arbor. While the maid-servant was covering the table with bread, butter, tea, eggs, and a huge round of beef, the German was busy in washing his hands, and talking in his national tongue to the young man, who returned no answer. But, as soon as the servant had completed her operations, the foreigner turned round, and, observing her eyes fixed on his brooch with much female admiration, he made one stride to her.

"Der Teufel, mein goot madchen, but you are von var—pretty—vat you call it?" and he gave her, as he spoke, so hearty a smack, that the girl was more flustered than flattered by the courtesy

"Keep yourself to yourself, sir," said she, very tartly—for chambermaids never like to be kissed by middle-aged gentlemen when a younger one is by: whereupon the German replied by a pinch—it is immaterial to state the exact spot to which that delicate caress was directed. But this last offense was so inexpiable, that the "madchen" bounced off with a face of scarlet, and a "Sir, you are no gentleman—that's what you ar'n't!" The German thrust his head out of the arbor, and followed her with a loud laugh; then, drawing himself in again, he said, in quite another accent and in excellent English, "There, Master Philip, we have got rid of the girl for the rest of the morning, and that's exactly what I wanted to do; women's wits are confoundedly sharp. Well, did I not tell you right: we have baffled all the bloodhounds!"

"And here, then, Gawtrey, we are to part," said Philip, mournfully.

"I wish you would think better of it, my boy," returned Mr. Gawtrey, breaking an egg; "how can you shift for yourself—no kith nor kin—not even that important machine for giving advice called a friend—no, not a friend, when I am gone? I foresee how it must end. [D— it, salt butter, by Jove!"]

"If I were alone in the world, as I have told you again and again, perhaps I might pin my fate to yours. But my brother!"

"There it is: always wrong when we act from our feelings. My whole life, which some day or other I will tell you, proves that. Your brother—bah! Is he not very well off with his own uncle and aunt? Plenty to eat and drink, I dare say. Come, man, you must be as hungry as a hawk—a slice of the beef. Let well alone, and shift for yourself. What good can you do your brother?"

"I don't know, but I must see him; I have sworn it."

"Well, go and see him, and then strike across the country to me. I will wait a day for you—there, now!"

"But tell me first," said Philip, very earnestly, and fixing his dark eyes on his companion, "tell me—yes, I must speak frankly—tell me, you who would link my fortune with your own—tell me what and who are you?"

Gawtrey looked up.

"What do you suppose?" said he, dryly.

"I fear to suppose any thing, lest I wrong you: but the strange place to which you took me the evening on which you saved me from pursuit—the persons I met there—"

"Well-dressed, and very civil to you?"

"True; but with a certain wild looseness in their talk that—But *I* have no right to judge others by mere appearance. Nor is it this that has made me anxious, and, if you will, suspicious."

"What then?"

"Your dress, your disguise."

"Disguised *yourself!* ha! ha! Behold the world's charity! You fly from some danger, some pursuit, disguised—you, who hold yourself guiltless: I do the same, and you hold me criminal—a robber, perhaps—a murderer, it may be! I will tell you what I am: I am a son of Fortune—an adventurer; I live by my wits—so do poets and lawyers, and all the charlatans of the world; I am a charlatan—a chameleon. 'Each man in his time plays many parts;' I play any part in which the manager of the Vast Boards—Money—promises me a livelihood. Are you satisfied?"

"Perhaps," answered the boy, sadly, "when I know more of the world, I shall understand you better. Strange, strange, that you out of all men should have been kind to me in distress!"

"Not at all strange. Ask the beggar whom he gets the most pence from: the fine lady in her carriage, the beau smelling of Eau de Cologne? Pish! the people nearest to being beggars themselves keep the beggar alive. You were friendless, and the man who has all earth for a foe befriends you. It is the way of the world, sir—the way of the world. Come, eat while you can, this time next year you may have no beef to your bread."

Thus masticating and moralizing at the same time, Mr. Gawtrey finished a breakfast that would have astonished the whole Corporation of London; and then, taking out a large old watch with an enameled back—doubtless more German than its master—he said, as he lifted up his carpet-bag, "I must be off—*tempus fugit*, and I must arrive just in time to nick the vessels. Shall get to Ostend or Rotterdam safe and snug, thence to Paris. How my pretty Fan will have grown! Ah, you don't know Fan; make you a nice little wife one of these days! Cheer up, man, we shall meet again. Be sure of it; and, hark ye, that strange place, as you call it, where I took you—you can find it again?"

"Not I."

"Here, then, is the address. Whenever you want me, go there; ask to see Mr. Gregg—old fellow with one eye, you recollect—shake him by the hand just so—you catch the trick—practice it again. No, the forefinger thus—that's right. Say 'blater,' no more—'blater'—stay, I will write it down for you—and then ask for William Gawtrey's direction. He will give it you at once, without questions, these signs understood; and, if you want money for your passage, he will give you that also, with advice into the bargain. Always a warm welcome with me. And so take care of yourself, and good-by. I see my chaise is at the door."

As he spoke, Gawtrey shook the young man's hand with cordial vigor, and strode off to his chaise, muttering, "Money well laid out—fee money; I shall have him, and, Gad, I like him—poor devil!"

CHAPTER V.

"He is a cunning coachman that can turn well in a narrow room."—*Old Play: from* LAMB's *Specimens.*

"Here are two pilgrims,
And neither knows one footstep of the way."
HEYWOOD's *Duchess of Suffolk. Ibid.*

THE chaise had scarce driven from the inn door, when a coach stopped to change horses on its last stage to the town to which Philip was bound. The name of the destination, in gilt letters on the coach-door, caught his eye as he walked from the arbor toward the road, and in a few moments he was seated as the fourth passenger in the "Nelson Slow and Sure." From under the shade of his cap he darted that quick, quiet glance which a man who hunts or is hunted—in other words, who observes or shuns—soon

acquires. At his left hand sat a young woman in a cloak lined with yellow; she had taken off her bonnet and pinned it to the roof of the coach, and looked fresh and pretty in a silk handkerchief which she had tied round her head, probably to serve as a nightcap during the drowsy length of the journey. Opposite to her was a middle-aged man of pale complexion, and a grave, pensive, studious expression of face; and *vis-à-vis* to Philip sat an overdressed, showy, very good-looking man of about two or three-and-forty. This gentleman wore auburn whiskers, which met at the chin; a foraging cap, with a gold tassel; a velvet waistcoat, across which, in various folds, hung a golden chain, at the end of which dangled an eye-glass, that from time to time he screwed, as it were, into his right eye; he wore, also, a blue silk stock, with a frill much crumpled; dirty kid gloves; and over his lap lay a cloak lined with red silk. As Philip glanced toward this personage, the latter fixed his glass also at him with a scrutinizing stare, which drew fire from Philip's dark eyes. The man dropped his glass, and said, in a half provincial, half *haw-haw* tone, like the stage-exquisite of a minor theater, "Pawdon me, and split legs!" therewith stretching himself between Philip's limbs, in the approved fashion of inside passengers! A young man in a white greatcoat now came to the door with a glass of warm sherry and water.

"You must take this—you *must* now; it will keep the cold out" (the day was broiling), said he to the young woman.

"Gracious me!" was the answer, "but I never drink wine of a morning, James; it will get into my head."

"To oblige *me!*" said the young man, sentimentally; whereupon the young lady took the glass, and, looking very kindly at her Ganymede, said, "Your health!" and sipped, and made a wry face; then she looked at the passengers, tittered, and said, "I can't bear wine!" and so, very slowly and daintily, supped up the rest. A silent and expressive squeeze of the hand, on returning the glass, rewarded the young man, and proved the salutary effect of his prescription.

"All right!" cried the coachman: the hostler twitched the cloths from the leaders, and away went the "Nelson Slow and Sure," with as much pretension as if it had meant to do the ten miles in an hour. The pale gentleman took from his waistcoat-pocket a little box containing gum-arabic, and, having inserted a couple of morsels between his lips, he next drew forth a little thin volume, which, from the manner the lines were printed, was evidently devoted to poetry.

The smart gentleman, who, since the episode of the sherry and water, had kept his glass fixed upon the young lady, now said, with a genteel smirk, "That young gentleman seems very auttentive, miss!"

"He is a very good young man, sir, and takes great care of me."

"Not your brother, miss, eh?"

"La, sir! why not?"

"No faumily likeness—noice-looking fellow enough! But your oiyes and mouth—ah, miss!"

Miss turned away her head, and uttered, with pert vivacity,

"I never likes compliments, sir! But the young man is not my brother."

"A sweetheart, eh?" Oh fy, miss! Haw! haw!" and the auburn-whiskered Adonis poked Philip in the knee with one hand, and the pale gentleman in the ribs with the other. The latter looked up, and reproachfully; the former drew in his legs, and uttered an angry ejaculation.

"Well, sir, there is no harm in a sweetheart, is there?"

"None in the least, ma'am; I advoise you to double the dose. We often hear of two strings to a *bow*. Daun't you think it would be noicer to have two *beaux* to your string?"

As he thus wittily expressed himself, the gentleman took off his cap, and thrust his fingers through a very curling and comely head of hair; the young lady looked at him with evident coquetry, and said, "How you *do* run on, you gentlemen!"

"I may well run on, miss, as long as I run aufter you," was the gallant reply.

Here the pale gentleman, evidently annoyed by being talked across, shut his book up and looked round. His eye rested on Philip, who, whether from the heat of the day or from the forgetfulness of thought, had pushed his cap from his brows; and the gentleman, after staring at him for a few moments with great earnestness, sighed so heavily that it attracted the notice of all the passengers.

"Are you unwell, sir?" asked the young lady, compassionately.

"A little pain in my side—nothing more!"

"Chaunge plauces with me, sir," cried the Lothario, officiously. "Now do!" The pale gentleman, after a short hesitation and a bashful excuse, accepted the proposal. In a few moments the young lady and the beau were in deep and whispered conversation, their heads turned toward the window. The pale gentleman continued to gaze at Philip, till the latter, perceiving the notice he excited, colored and replaced his cap over his face.

"Are you going to N——?" asked the gentleman, in a gentle, timid voice.

"Yes!"

"Is it the first time you have ever been there?"

"Sir!" returned Philip, in a voice that spoke surprise and distaste at his neighbor's curiosity.

"Forgive me," said the gentleman, shrinking back; "but you remind me of—of—a family I once knew in the town. Do you know the—the Mortons?"

One in Philip's situation, with, as he supposed, the officers of justice in his track (for Gawtrey, for reasons of his own, rather encouraged than allayed his fears), might well be suspicious. He replied, therefore, shortly, "I am quite a stranger to the town," and ensconced himself in the corner as if to take a nap. Alas! that answer was one of the many obstacles he was doomed to build up between himself and a fairer fate.

The gentleman sighed again, and never spoke more to the end of the journey. When the coach halted at the inn—the same inn which had before given its shelter to poor Catharine—the young man in the white coat opened the door, and offered his arm to the young lady.

"Do you make any stay here, sir?" said she to the beau, as she unpinned her bonnet from the roof.

"Perhaps so: I am waiting for my phe-aton, which my faellow is to bring down—tauking a little tour."

"We shall be very happy to see you, sir," said the young lady, on whom the phe-aton completed the effect produced by the gentleman's previous gallantries; and with that she dropped a very neat card, on which was printed, "Wavers and Snow, staymakers, High-street," into his hand.

The beau put it gracefully into his pocket, leaped from the coach, nudged aside his rival of the white coat, and offered his arm to the lady, who leaned on it affectionately as she descended.

"This gentleman has been so perlite to me, James," said she. James touched his hat, the beau clapped him on the shoulder: "Ah! you are not a happy man—are you? Oh, no, not at all a happy man! Good-day to you! Guard, that hat-box is mine."

While Philip was paying the coachman, the beau passed and whispered him,

"Recollect old Gregg—any thing on the lay here? don't spoil my sport if we meet!" and bustled off into the inn, whistling "God save the king!"

Philip started, then tried to bring to mind the faces which he had seen at the "strange place," and thought he recalled the features of his fellow-traveler. However, he did not seek to renew the acquaintance, but inquired the way to Mr. Morton's house, and thither he now proceeded.

He was directed, as a short cut, down one of those narrow passages, at the entrance of which posts are placed, as an indication that they are appropriated solely to foot-passengers. A dead white wall, which screened the garden of the physician of the place, ran on one side; a high fence to a nursery-ground was on the other; the passage was lonely, for it was now the hour when few persons walk either for business or pleasure in a provincial town, and no sound was heard save the fall of his own step on the broad flag-stones. At the end of the passage, in the main street to which it led, he saw already the large, smart, showy shop, with the hot sun shining full on the gilt letters that conveyed to the eyes of the customer the respectable name of "Morton," when suddenly the silence was broken by choked and painful sobs. He turned, and beneath a compo portico, jutting from the wall, which adorned the physician's door, he saw a child, seated on the stone steps, weeping bitterly. A thrill shot through Philip's heart! Did he recognize, disguised as it was by pain and sorrow, that voice? He paused, and laid his hand on the child's shoulder: "Oh, don't—don't—pray don't; I am going, I am, indeed!" cried the child, quailing, and still keeping his hands clasped before his face.

"Sidney!" said Philip. The boy started to his feet, uttered a cry of rapturous joy, and fell upon his brother's breast.

"Oh, Philip! dear, dear Philip! you are come to take me away back to my own, own mamma; I will be so good! I will never tease her again—never, never! I have been so wretched!"

"Sit down, and tell me what they have done to you," said Philip, checking the rising heart that heaved at his mother's name.

So there they sat, on the cold stone under the stranger's porch, these two orphans: Philip's arm round his brother's waist, Sidney leaning on his shoulder, and imparting to him (perhaps with pardonable exaggeration) all the sufferings he had gone through; and when he came to that morning's chastisement, and showed the wale across the little hands which he had vainly held up in supplication, Philip's passion shook him from limb to limb. His impulse was to march straight into Mr. Morton's shop, and gripe him by the throat; and the indignation he betrayed encouraged Sidney to color yet more highly the tale of his wrongs and pain.

When he had done, and clinging tightly to his brother's broad chest, said,

"But never mind, Philip; now we will go home to mamma."

Philip replied,

"Listen to me, my dear brother. We can not go back to my mother. I will tell you why, later. We are alone in the world, we two! If you will come with me, God help you! for you will have many hardships: we shall have to work and drudge, and you may be cold, and hungry, and tired very often, Sidney—very, very often! But you know that, long ago, when I was so passionate, I never was knowingly unkind to you; and I declare now that I would bite out my tongue rather than it should say a harsh word to you. That is all I can promise. Think well. Will you never miss all the comforts you have now?"

"Comforts!" repeated Sidney, ruefully, and looking at the wale over his hand. "Oh! let—let—let me go with you: I shall die if I stay here. I shall, indeed—indeed!"

"Hush!" said Philip; for at that moment a step was heard, and the pale gentleman walked slowly down the passage, and started, and turned his head wistfully as he looked at the boys.

When he was gone, Philip rose.

"It is settled, then," said he, firmly. "Come with me at once. You shall return to their roof no more. Come, quick: we shall have many miles to go to-night."

CHAPTER VI.

"He comes—
Yet careless what he brings; his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn;
And, having dropped the expected bag, pass on—
To him indifferent whether grief or joy."
COWPER: *Description of the Postman*

THE pale gentleman entered Mr. Morton's shop; and, looking round him, spied the worthy trader showing shawls to a young lady just married. He seated himself on a stool, and said to the bowing foreman,

"I will wait till Mr. Morton is disengaged."

The young lady, having closely examined seven shawls, and declared they were beautiful, said "she would think of it," and walked away. Mr. Morton now approached the stranger.

"Mr. Morton," said the pale gentleman, "you are very little altered. You do not recollect me?"

"Bless me, Mr. Spencer! is it really you? Well, what a time since we met! I am very glad to see you. And what brings you to N——? Business?"

"Yes, business. Let us go within."

Mr. Morton led the way to the parlor, where Master Tom, reperched on the stool, was rapidly digesting the plundered muffin. Mr. Morton dismissed him to play, and the pale gentleman took a chair.

"Mr. Morton," said he, glancing over his

dress, "you see I am in mourning. It is for your sister. I never got the better of that early attachment—never."

"My sister! Good Heavens!" said Mr. Morton, turning very pale; "is she dead?—poor Catharine!—and I not know of it! When did she die?"

"Not many days since; and—and—" said Mr. Spencer, greatly affected, "I fear in want. I had been abroad for some months; on my return last week, looking over the newspapers (for I always order them to be filed), I read a short account of her lawsuit against Mr. Beaufort some time back. I resolved to find her out. I did so through the solicitor she employed: it was too late; I arrived at her lodgings two days after her corpse left it for the grave. I then determined to visit poor Catharine's brother, and learn if any thing could be done for the children she had left behind."

"She left but two. Philip, the elder, is very comfortably placed at R——; the youngest has his home with me; and Mrs. Morton is a moth—that is to say, she takes great pains with him. Ehem! and my poor, poor sister!"

"Is he like his mother?"

"Very much, when she was young; poor, dear Catharine!"

"What age is he?"

"About ten, perhaps; I don't know exactly; much younger than the other. And so she's dead!"

"Mr. Morton, I am an old bachelor" (here a sickly smile crossed Mr. Spencer's face); "a small portion of my fortune is settled, it is true, on my relations; but the rest is mine, and I live within my income. The elder one is probably old enough to begin to take care of himself. But the younger—perhaps—you have a family of your own, and can spare *him?*"

Mr. Morton hesitated, and twitched up his trowsers.

"Why," said he, "this is very kind in you. I don't know—we'll see. The boy is out now; come and dine with us at two—pot-luck. Well, so she is no more! heigho! Meanwhile, I'll talk it over with Mrs. M."

"I will be with you," said Mr. Spencer, rising.

"Ah!" sighed Mr. Morton, "if Catharine had but married you, she would have been a happy woman."

"I would have tried to make her so," said Mr. Spencer, as he turned away his face, and took his departure.

Two o'clock came, but no Sidney. They had sent to the place whither he had been dispatched: he had never arrived there. Mr. Morton grew alarmed; and, when Mr. Spencer came to dinner, his host was gone in search of the truant. He did not return till three. Doomed that day to be belated both at breakfast and dinner, this decided him to part with Sidney, whenever he should be found. Mrs. Morton was persuaded that the child only sulked, and would come back fast enough when he was hungry. Mr. Spencer tried to believe her, and eat his mutton, which was burned to a cinder; but when five, six, seven o'clock came, and the boy was still missing, even Mrs. Morton agreed that it was high time to institute a regular search. The whole family set off different ways. It was ten o'clock before they were reunited; and then, all the news picked up was, that a boy answering Sidney's description had been seen with a young man in three different parts of the town; the last time at the outskirts, on the high road toward the manufacturing districts. These tidings so far relieved Mr. Morton's mind that he dismissed the chilling fear that had crept there—that Sidney might have drowned himself. Boys *will* drown themselves sometimes! The description of the young man coincided so remarkably with the fellow-passenger of Mr. Spencer, that he did not doubt it was the same; the more so when he recollected having seen him with a fair-haired child under the portico; and yet more when he recalled the likeness to Catharine that had struck him in the coach, and caused the inquiry that had roused Philip's suspicion. The mystery was thus made clear: Sidney had fled with his brother. Nothing more, however, could be done that night. The next morning active measures should be devised; and, when the morning came, the mail brought to Mr. Morton the two following letters. The first was from Arthur Beaufort.

"Sir—I have only been prevented by severe illness from writing to you before. I can now scarcely hold a pen; but the instant my health is recovered, I shall be with you at N——.

"On her death-bed the mother of the boy under your charge, Sidney Morton, committed him solemnly to me, the heir and representative of his father. I make his fortunes my care, and shall hasten to claim him at your kindly hands. But the elder son, this poor Philip, who has suffered so unjustly; for our lawyer has seen Mr. Plaskwith, and heard the whole story, what has become of *him?* All our inquiries have failed to track him. Alas! I was too ill to institute them myself while it was yet time. Perhaps he may have sought shelter with you, his uncle; if so, assure him that he is in no danger from the pursuit of the law; that his innocence is fully recognized; and that my father and myself implore him to accept our affection. I can write no more now, but in a few days I shall hope to see you.

"I am, sir, &c.,

"Arthur Beaufort.

"Berkeley-square."

The second letter was from Mr. Plaskwith, and ran thus:—

"Dear Morton—Something very awkward has happened—not my fault, and very unpleasant for me. Your relation, Philip, as I wrote you word, was a painstaking lad, though odd and bad-mannered, for want, perhaps, poor boy, of being taught better; and Mrs. P. is, you know, a very genteel woman—women go too much by manners—so she never took much to him. However, to the point, as the French emperor used to say: one evening he asked me for money for his mother, who, he said, was ill, in a very insolent way; I may say, threatening. It was in my own shop, and before Plimmins and Mrs. P.; I was forced to answer with dignified rebuke, and left the shop. When I returned, he was gone, and some shillings—fourteen, I think, and three sovereigns, evidently from the till, scattered on the floor. Mrs. P. and Mr. Plimmins were very much frightened; thought it was clear

I was robbed, and that we were to be murdered. Plimmins slept below that night, and we borrowed butcher Johnson's dog. Nothing happened. I did not think I was robbed, because the money when we came to calculate, was all right. I know human nature: he had thought to take it, but repented—quite clear. However, I was naturally very angry; thought he'd come back again—meant to reprove him properly—waited several days—heard nothing of him—grew uneasy—would not attend any longer to Mrs. P. (for, as Napoleon Bonaparte observed, 'women are well in *their* way, not in *ours*');' made Plimmins go with me to town—hired a Bow-street runner to track him out; cost me £1. 1*s*., and two glasses of brandy and water. Poor Mrs. Morton was just buried — quite shocked! Suddenly saw the boy in the streets. Plimmins rushed forward in the kindest way; was knocked down—hurt his arm—paid 2*s*. 6*d*. for lotion. Philip ran off; we ran after him—we could not find him. Forced to return home. Next day, a lawyer from a Mr. Beaufort, Mr. George Blackwell, a gentleman-like man, called. Mr. Beaufort will do any thing for him in reason. Is there any thing more *I* can do? I really am very uneasy about the lad, and Mrs. P. and I have had a tiff about it; but that's nothing—thought I had best write to you for instructions.

"Yours, truly,

"C. Plaskwith.

"P. S. Just open my letter to say, Bow-street officer just been here; has found out that the boy has been seen with a very suspicious character: they think he has left London. Bow-street officer wants to go after him—very expensive: so now you can decide."

Mr. Spencer scarce listened to the former letter, but of the latter he felt jealous. He would fain have been the only protector to Catharine's children: but he was the last man fitted to head the search, now so necessary to prosecute with equal tact and energy.

A soft-hearted, soft-headed man, a confirmed valetudinarian—a day-dreamer, who had wasted away his life in dawdling and maundering over simple poetry, and sighing over his unhappy attachment; no child, no babe, was so thoroughly helpless as Mr. Spencer.

The task of investigation devolved, therefore, on Mr. Morton, and he went about it in a regular, plain, straightforward way. Handbills were circulated, constables employed, and a lawyer, accompanied by Mr. Spencer, dispatched to the manufacturing districts, toward which the orphans had been seen to direct their path

CHAPTER VII.

"Give the gentle South
Yet leave to court those shils."
Beaumont and Fletcher: *Beggar's Bush.*

"Cut your cloth, sir,
According to your calling."—*Ibid.*

Meanwhile the brothers were far away, and He who feeds the young ravens made their paths pleasant to their feet. Philip had broken to Sidney the sad news of their mother's death, and Sidney had wept with bitter passion. But children what can *they* know of death? Their tears over graves dry sooner than the dews. It is melancholy to compare the depth, the endurance, the far-sighted, anxious, prayerful love of a parent, with the inconsiderate, frail, and evanescent affection of the infant, whose eyes the hues of the butterfly yet dazzle with delight. It was the night of their flight, and in the open air, when Philip (his arms round Sidney's waist) told his orphan-brother that they were motherless. And the air was balmy, the skies filled with the effulgent presence of the August moon; the cornfields stretched round them wide and far, and not a leaf trembled on the beech-tree beneath which they had sought shelter. It seemed as if Nature herself smiled pityingly on their young sorrow, and said to them, "Grieve not for the dead; I, who live forever, *I* will be your mother!"

They crept, as the night deepened, into the warmer sleeping-place afforded by stack of hay, mown that summer, and still fragrant. And the next morning the birds woke them betimes, to feel that Liberty, at least, was with them, and to wander with her at will.

Who in his boyhood has not felt the delight of freedom and adventure—to have the world of woods and sward before him—to escape restriction—to lean, for the first time, on his own resources—to rejoice in the wild but manly luxury of independence—to act the Crusoe—and to fancy a Friday in every footprint—an island of his own in every field? Yes, in spite of their desolation, their loss, of the melancholy past, of the friendless future, the orphans were happy; happy in their youth, their freedom, their love, their wanderings in the delicious air of the glorious August. Sometimes they came upon knots of reapers lingering in the shade of the hedgerows over their noonday meal; and, grown sociable by travel and bold by safety, they joined and partook of the rude fare with the zest of fatigue and youth. Sometimes, too, at night, they saw, gleam afar and red by the woodside, the fires of gipsy tents. But these, with the superstition derived from old nursery tales, they scrupulously shunned, eying them with a mysterious awe! What heavenly twilights belong to that golden month! the air so lucidly serene, as the purple of the clouds fades gradually away, and up soars, broad, round, intense, and luminous, the full moon which belongs to the joyous season! The fields then are greener than in the heats of July and June; they have got back the luxury of a second spring. And still, beside the paths of the travelers, lingered on the hedges the clustering honeysuckle; the convolvulus glittered in the tangles of the brake; the hardy heath-flower smiled on the green waste.

And ever, at evening, they came, field after field, upon those circles which recall to children so many charmed legends, and are fresh and frequent in that month—the Fairy Rings! They thought, poor boys, that it was a good omen, and half fancied that the fairies protected them, as in the old time they had often protected the desolate and outcast.

They avoided the main roads, and all towns, with suspicious care. But sometimes they paused, for food and rest, at the obscure hostels of some scattered hamlets; though, more often, they loved to spread the simple food they purchased by the way under some thick tree, or beside a stream, through whose limpid waters they could

watch the trout glide and play. And they often preferred the chance-shelter of a haystack or a shed to the less romantic repose afforded by the small inns they alone dared to enter. They went, in this, much by the face and voice of the host or hostess. Once only Philip had entered a town, on the second day of their flight, and that solely for the purchase of ruder clothes, and a change of linen for Sidney, with some implements of use necessary in their present course of shift and welcome hardship. A wise precaution; for, thus clad, they escaped suspicion.

So journeying, they consumed several days; and, having taken a direction quite opposite to that which led to the manufacturing districts, whither pursuit had been directed, they were now in the center of another county—in the neighborhood of one of the most considerable towns of England; and here Philip began to think their wanderings ought to cease, and it was time to settle on some definite course of life. He had carefully hoarded about his person, and most thriftily managed, the little fortune bequeathed by his mother. But Philip looked on this capital as a deposit sacred to Sidney; it was not to be spent, but kept and augmented—the nucleus for future wealth. Within the last few weeks his character was greatly ripened, and his powers of thought enlarged. He was no more a boy, he was a man; he had another life to take care of. He resolved, then, to enter the town they were approaching, and to seek for some situation by which he might maintain both. Sidney was very loth to abandon their present roving life; but he allowed that the warm weather could not always last, and that in winter the fields would be less pleasant. He therefore, with a sigh, yielded to his brother's reasonings.

They entered the fair and busy town of —— one day at noon; and, after finding a small lodging, at which he deposited Sidney, who was fatigued with their day's work, Philip sallied forth alone.

After his long rambling, Philip was pleased and struck with the broad, bustling streets, the gay shops—the evidences of opulence and trade. He thought it hard if he could not find there a market for the health and heart of sixteen. He strolled slowly and alone along the streets till his attention was caught by a small corner-shop, in the window of which was placed a board bearing this inscription:

"OFFICE FOR EMPLOYMENT.—RECIPROCAL ADVANTAGE.

"Mr. John Clump's bureau open every day from ten till four. Clerks, servants, laborers, &c., provided with suitable situations. Terms moderate. N.B.—The oldest established office in the town.

"Wanted, a good cook. An under-gardener."

What he sought was here. Philip entered, and saw a short, fat man, with spectacles, seated before a desk, poring upon the well-filled leaves of a long register.

"Sir," said Philip, "I wish for a situation; I don't care what."

"Half a crown for entry, if you please. That's right. Now for particulars. Hum! you don't look like a servant!"

"No; I wish for any place where my education can be of use. I can read, write—I know Latin and French—I can draw—I know arithmetic and summing."

"Very well; very genteel young man—prepossessing appearance (that's a fudge!)—highly educated—usher in a school, eh?"

"What you like."

"References?"

"I have none."

"Eh! none?" and Mr. Clump fixed his spectacles full upon Philip.

Philip was prepared for the question, and had the art to perceive that a frank reply was his best policy. "The fact is," said he, boldly, "I was well brought up; my father died; I was bound apprentice to a trade I disliked; I left it, and have now no friends."

"If I can help you, I will," said Mr. Clump, coldly. "Can't promise much. If you were a laborer, character might not matter; but educated young men must have a character. Hands always more useful than head. Education no avail nowadays—common, quite common. Call again on Monday."

Somewhat disappointed and chilled, Philip turned from the bureau; but he had a strong confidence in his own resources, and recovered his spirits as he mingled with the throng. He passed at length by a livery-stable, and paused, from old associations, as he saw a groom in the mews attempting to manage a young, hot horse, evidently unbroken. The master of the stables, in a green short jacket and top boots, with a long whip in his hand, was standing by, with one or two men who looked like horse-dealers.

"Come off, clumsy! You can't manage that 'ere fine hanimal," cried the liveryman. "Ah! he's a lamb, sir, if he were backed properly. But I has not a man in the yard as can ride since Will died. Come off, I say, lubber!"

But to come off without being thrown off was more easily said than done. The horse was now plunging as if Juno had send her gad-fly to him; and Philip, interested and excited, came near and nearer, till he stood by the side of the horse-dealers. The other hostlers ran to the help of their comrade, who, at last, with white lips and shaking knees, found himself on *terra firma*; while the horse, snorting hard, and rubbing his head against the breast and arms of the hostler who held him tightly by the rein, seemed to ask, in his own way, "Are there any more of you?"

A suspicion that the horse was an old acquaintance crossed Philip's mind; he went up to him, and a white spot over the left eye confirmed his doubts. It had been a foal reserved and reared for his own riding; one that, in his prosperous days, had ate bread from his hand, and followed him round the paddock like a dog; one that he had mounted in sport, without saddle, when his father's back was turned: a friend, in short, of the happy *lang syne;* nay, the very friend to whom he had boasted his affection, when, standing with Arthur Beaufort under the summer sky, the whole world seemed to him full of friends. He put his hand on the horse's neck, and whispered, "Soho! So, Billy!" and the horse turned sharp round with a quick, joyous neigh.

"If you please, sir," said Philip, appealing to the liveryman, "I will undertake to ride this horse, and take him over yon leaping-bar. Just let me try him."

"There's a fine-spirited lad for you!" said the liveryman, much pleased at the offer. "Now, gentlemen, did I not tell you that ere hanimal had no vice if he was properly managed?"

The horse-dealers shook their heads.

"May I give him some bread first?" asked Philip; and the hostler was dispatched to the house. Meanwhile, the animal evinced various signs of pleasure and recognition as Philip stroked and talked to him; and, finally, when he ate the bread from the young man's hands, the whole yard seemed in as much delight and surprise as if they had witnessed one of Monsieur Van Amburgh's exploits.

And now Philip, still caressing him, slowly and cautiously mounted; the horse made one bound half across the yard—a bound which sent all the horse-dealers into a corner—and then went through his paces, one after the other with as much ease and calm as if he had been broke in at Mr. Fozard's to carry a young lady. And when he crowned all by going thrice over the leaping-bar, and Philip, dismounting, threw the reins to the hostler, and turned triumphantly to the horse-dealer, that gentleman slapped him on the back, and said emphatically, "Sir, you are a man! and I am proud to see you here."

Meanwhile, the horse-dealers gathered round the animal; looked at his hoofs, felt his legs, examined his windpipe, and concluded the bargain, which, but for Philip, would have been very abruptly broken off. When the horse was led out of the yard, the liveryman, Mr. Stubmore, turned to Philip, who, leaning against the wall, followed the poor animal with mournful eyes.

"My good sir, you have sold that horse for me—that you have! Any thing as I can do for you? One good turn deserves another. Here's a brace of shiners."

"Thank you, sir; I want no money, but I do want some employment. I can be of use to you, perhaps, in your establishment. I have been brought up among horses all my life."

"Saw it, sir! that's very clear. I say that 'ere horse knows you!" and the dealer put his finger to his nose. "Quite right to be mum! He came from an old customer of mine—famous rider!—Mr. Beaufort. Aha! that's where you knew him, I 'spose. Were you in his stables?"

"Hem—I knew Mr. Beaufort well."

"Did you? You could not know a better man. Well, I shall be very glad to engage you, though you seem, by your hands, to be a bit of a gentleman, eh? Never mind; don't want you to groom, but superintend things. D'ye know how to keep accounts, eh?"

"Yes."

"Character?"

Philip repeated to Mr. Stubmore the story he had imparted to Mr. Clump. Somehow or other, men who live much with horses are always more lax in their notions than the rest of mankind. Mr. Stubmore did not seem to grow more distant at Philip's narration.

"Understand you perfectly, my man. Brought up with them 'ere fine creturs, how could you nail your nose to a desk? I'll take you without more palaver. What's your name?"

"Philips."

"Come to-morrow, and we'll settle about wages. Sleep here?"

"No. I have a brother whom I must lodge with, and for whose sake I wish to work. I should not like him to be at the stables—he is too young. But I can come early every day, and go home late."

"Well, just as you like, man. Good-day."

And thus, not from any mental accomplishment—not from the result of his intellectual education, but from the mere physical capacity and brute habit of sticking fast in his saddle, did Philip Morton, in this great, intelligent, civilized, enlightened community of Great Britain, find the means of earning his bread without stealing it.

CHAPTER VIII.

"*Don Salluste (souriant).* Je parie.
Que vous ne pensiez pas à moi?"—*Ruy Blas.*

"*Don Salluste.* Cousin!
"*Don César.* De vos bienfaits je n'aurai nulle envie,
Tant que je trouverai vivant ma libre vie."—*Ibid.*

PHILIP'S situation was agreeable to his habits. His great courage and skill in horsemanship were not the only qualifications useful to Mr. Stubmore: his education answered a useful purpose in accounts, and his manners and appearance were highly to the credit of the yard. The customers and loungers soon grew to like Gentleman Philips, as he was styled in the establishment. Mr. Stubmore conceived a real affection for him. So passed several weeks; and Philip, in this humble capacity, might have worked out his destinies in peace and comfort, but for a new cause of vexation that arose in Sidney. This boy was all in all to his brother. For him he had resisted the hearty and joyous invitations of Gawtrey (whose gay manner and high spirits had, it must be owned, captivated his fancy, despite the equivocal mystery of the man's avocations and condition); for him he now worked and toiled, cheerful and contented; and him he sought to save from all to which he subjected himself. He could not bear that that soft and delicate child should ever be exposed to the low and menial associations that now made up his own life—to the obscene slang of grooms and hostlers—to their coarse manners and rough contact. He kept him, therefore, apart and aloof in their little lodging, and hoped in time to lay by, so that Sidney might ultimately be restored, if not to his bright original sphere, at least to a higher grade than that to which Philip was condemned. But poor Sidney could not bear to be thus left alone—to lose sight of his brother from daybreak till bedtime—to have no one to amuse him; he fretted and pined away: all the little inconsiderate selfishness, uneradicated from his breast by his sufferings, broke out the more, the more he felt that he was the first object on earth to Philip. Philip, thinking he might be more cheerful at a day-school, tried the experiment of placing him at one where the boys were much of his own age. But Sidney, on the third day, came back with a black eye, and he would return no more. Philip several times thought of changing their lodging for one where there were young people. But Sidney had taken a fancy to the kind old widow who was their landlady, and cried at the thought of removal. Unfortunately, the old woman was deaf and rheumatic; and, though she bore teasing *ad*

libitum, she could not entertain him long on a stretch. Too young to be reasonable, Sidney could not or would not comprehend why his brother was so long away from him; and once he said peevishly,

"If I had thought I was to be moped up so, I would not have left Mrs. Morton. Tom was a bad boy, but still it was somebody to play with. I wish I had not gone away with you!"

This speech cut Philip to the heart. What, then, he had taken from the child a respectable and safe shelter—the sure provision of a life—and the child now reproached him! When this was said to him, the tears gushed from his eyes.

"God forgive me, Sidney," said he, and turned away.

But then Sidney, who had the most endearing ways with him, seeing his brother so vexed, ran up and kissed him, and scolded himself for being naughty. Still the words were spoken, and their meaning rankled deep. Philip himself, too, was morbid in his excessive tenderness for this boy. There is a certain age, before the love for the sex commences, when the feeling of friendship is almost a passion. You see it constantly in girls and boys at school. It is the first vague craving of the heart after the master food of human life—Love. It has its jealousies, and humors, and caprices, like love itself. Philip was painfully acute to Sidney's affection—was jealous of every particle of it. He dreaded lest his brother should ever be torn from him.

He would start from his sleep at night, and go to Sidney's bed to see that he was there. He left him in the morning with forebodings, he returned in the dark with fear. Meanwhile, the character of this young man, so sweet and tender to Sidney, was gradually becoming more hard and stern to others. He had now climbed to the post of command in that rude establishment; and premature command in any sphere tends to make men unsocial and imperious.

One day Mr. Stubmore called him into his own counting-house, where stood a gentleman with one hand in his coat-pocket, the other tapping his whip against his boots.

"Philips, show this gentleman the brown mare. She is a beauty in harness, is not she? This gentleman wants a match for his pheaton."

"She must step very hoigh," said the gentleman, turning round; and Philip recognized the beau in the stage-coach.

The recognition was simultaneous. The beau nodded, then whistled, and winked.

"Come, my man, I am at your service," said he.

Philip, with many misgivings, followed him across the yard. The gentleman then beckoned him to approach.

"You, sir—moind, I never peach—setting up here in the honest line? Dull work, honesty, eh!"

"Sir, I really don't know you."

"Daun't you recollect old Gregg's, the evening you came there with jolly Bill Gawtrey? Recollect that, eh?"

Philip was mute.

"I was among the gentlemen in the back-parlor who shook you by the hand. Bill's off to France, then. I am tauking the provinces. I want a good horse—the best in the yard, moind! Cutting such a swell here! My name is Captain De Burgh Smith—never moind yours, my fine fellow. Now, then, out with your rattlers, and keep your tongue in your mouth."

Philip mechanically ordered out the brown mare, which Captain Smith did not seem much to approve of; and, after glancing round the stables with great disdain of the collection, he sauntered out of the yard without saying more to Philip, though he stopped and spoke a few sentences to Mr. Stubmore. Philip hoped he had no design of purchasing, and that he was rid, for the present, of so awkward a customer. Mr. Stubmore approached Philip.

"Drive over the grays to Sir John," said he. "My lady wants a pair to job. A very pleasant man, that Captain Smith. I did not know you had been in the yard before—says you were the pet at Elmore's, in London. Served him many a day. Pleasant, gentlemanlike man!"

"Y—e—s!" said Philip, hardly knowing what he said, and hurrying back into the stables to order out the grays.

The place to which he was bound was some miles distant, and it was sunset when he returned. As he drove into the main street, two men observed him closely.

"That is he! I am almost sure it is," said one.

"Oh! then it's all smooth sailing," replied the other.

"But, bless my eyes! you must be mistaken! See whom he's talking to now!"

At that moment Captain De Burgh Smith, mounted on the brown mare, stopped Philip.

"Well, you see I've bought her—hope she'll turn out well. What do you really think she's worth—not to buy, but to sell?"

"Sixty guineas."

"Well, that's a good day's work, and I owe it to you. The old faellow would not have trusted me if you had not served me at Elmore's—ha! ha! If he gets scent and looks shy at you, my lad, come to me. I'm at the Star Hotel for the next few days. I want a tight faellow like you, and you shall have a fair per centage. I'm none of your stingy ones. I say, I hope this devil is quiet. She cocks up her ears dawmnably!"

"Look you, sir!" said Philip, very gravely, and rising up in his break, "I know very little of you, and that little is not much to your credit. I give you fair warning, that I shall caution my employer against you."

"Will you, my fine faellow? Then take care of yourself."

"Stay! and if you dare utter a word against me," said Philip, with that frown to which his swarthy complexion and flashing eyes gave an expression of fierce power beyond his years, "you will find that as I am the last to care for a threat, so I am the first to resent an injury!"

Thus saying, he drove on. Captain Smith affected a cough, and put his brown mare into a canter. The two men followed Philip as he drove into the yard.

"What do you knew against the person he spoke to?" said one of them.

"Merely that he is one of the cunningest swells on this side the Bay," returned the other. "It looks bad for your young friend."

The first speaker shook his head and made no reply.

On gaining the yard, Philip found that Mr. Stubmore had gone out, and was not expected home till next day. He had some relations who were farmers, whom he often visited; to them he was probably gone.

Philip, therefore, deferring his intended caution against the gay captain till the morrow, and, musing how the caution might be most discreetly given, walked homeward. He had just entered the lane that led to his lodgings, when he saw the two men I have spoken of on the other side of the street. The taller and better-dressed of the two left his comrade, and, crossing over to Philip, bowed, and thus accosted him:

"Fine evening, Mr. Philip Morton. I am rejoiced to see you at last. You remember me—Mr. Blackwell, Lincoln's Inn?"

"What is your business?" said Philip, halting, and speaking short and fiercely.

"Now don't be in a passion, my dear sir—now don't. I am here on behalf of my clients, Messrs. Beaufort, sen. and jun. I have had such work to find you! Dear, dear! but you are a sly one! Ha! ha! Well, you see, we have settled that little affair of Plaskwith's for you (might have been ugly), and now I hope you will—"

"To your business, sir! What do you want with me?"

"Why, now, don't be so quick! 'Tis not the way to do business. Suppose you step to my hotel. A glass of wine, now Mr. Philip! We shall soon understand each other."

"Out of my path, or speak plainly!"

Thus put to it, the lawyer, casting a glance at his stout companion, who appeared to be contemplating the sunset on the other side of the way, came at once to the marrow of his subject.

"Well, then—well, my say is soon said. Mr. Arthur Beaufort takes a most lively interest in you—it is he who has directed this inquiry. He bids me say that he shall be most happy—yes, most happy—to serve you in any thing; and if you will but see him—he is in the town—I am sure you will be charmed with him—most amiable young man!"

"Look you, sir," said Philip, drawing himself up; neither from father, nor from son, nor from one of that family, on whose heads rest the mother's death and the orphan's curse, will I ever accept boon or benefit—with them, voluntarily, I will hold no communion; if they force themselves in my path, let them beware! I am earning my bread in the way I desire—I am independent—I want them not. Begone!"

With that, Philip pushed aside the lawyer and strode on rapidly. Mr. Blackwell, absorbed and perplexed, returned to his companion.

Philip regained his home, and found Sidney stationed at the window alone, and with wistful eyes noting the flight of the gray moths as they darted to and fro across the dull shrubs, that, variegated with lines for washing, adorned the the plot of ground which the landlady called a garden. The elder brother had returned at an earlier hour than usual, and Sidney did not at first perceive him enter. When he did, he clapped his hands and ran to him.

"This is so good in you, Philip! I have been so dull! You will come and play now?"

"With all my heart. Where shall we play!" said Philip, with a cheerful smile.

"Oh, in the garden! it's such a nice time for hide-and-seek."

"But is it not chill and damp for you?" said Philip.

"There, now, you are always making excuses. I see you don't like it. I have no heart to play now."

Sidney seated himself and pouted.

"Poor Sidney! you *must* be dull without me. Yes, let us play; but put on this handkerchief;" and Philip took off his own cravat, and tied it round his brother's neck, and kissed him.

Sidney whose anger seldom lasted long, was reconciled, and they went into the garden to play. It was a little spot, screened by an old moss-grown paling from the neighboring garden on the one side, and a lane on the other. They played with great glee till the night grew darker and the dews heavier.

"This must be the last time," cried Philip. "It is my turn to hide."

"Very well! Now, then."

Philip secreted himself behind a poplar; and, as Sidney searched for him, and Philip stole round and round the tree, the latter, happening to look across the paling, saw the dim outline of a man's figure in the lane, who appeared watching them. A thrill shot across his breast. These Beauforts, associated in his thoughts with every ill omen and augury, had they set a spy upon his movements? He remained erect and gazing at the form, when Sidney discovered and ran up to him with his noisy laugh.

As the child clung to him, shouting with gladness, Philip, unheeding his playmate, called aloud and imperiously to the stranger,

"What are you gaping at? Why do you stand watching us?"

The man muttered something, moved on, and disappeared.

"I hope there are no thieves here! I am much afraid of thieves," said Sidney, tremulously.

The fear grated on Philip's heart. Had he not himself, perhaps, been judged and treated as a thief? He said nothing, but drew his brother within; and there, in their little room, by the one poor candle, it was touching and beautiful to see these boys—the tender patience of the elder lending itself to every whim of the younger—now building houses with cards—now telling stories of fairy and knight-errant, the sprightliest he could remember, or invent. At length, as all was over, and Sidney was undressing for the night, Philip, standing apart, said to him, in a mournful voice,

"Are you sad now, Sidney?"

"No! not when you are with me; but that is so seldom!"

"Do you read none of the story-books I bought for you?"

"Sometimes! but one can't read all day."

"Ah! Sidney, if ever we should part, perhaps you will love me no longer!"

"Don't say so," said Sidney. "But we sha'n't part, Philip?"

Philip sighed and turned away as his brother leaped into bed. Something whispered to him that danger was near; and as it was, could Sidney grow up, neglected and uneducated: was it thus that he was to fulfill his trust?

CHAPTER IX.

"But oh, what storm was in that mind?"
CRABBE: *Ruth.*

WHILE Philip mused and his brother fell into the happy sleep of boyhood, in a room in the principal hotel of the town sat three persons, Arthur Beaufort, Mr. Spencer, and Mr. Blackwell.

"And so," said the first, "he rejected every overture from the Beauforts?"

"With a scorn I can not convey to you!" replied the lawyer. "But the fact is, that he is evidently a lad of low habits—to think of his being a sort of helper to a horse-dealer! I suppose, sir, he was always in the stables in his father's time. Bad company depraves the taste very soon; but that is not the worst. Sharp declares that the man he was talking with, as I told you, is a common swindler. Depend on it, Mr. Arthur, *he* is incorrigible; all we can do is to save the brother."

"It is too dreadful to contemplate!" said Arthur, who, still ill and languid, reclined on a sofa.

"It is, indeed," said Mr. Spencer; "I am sure I should not know what to do with such a character; but the other poor child, it would be a mercy to get hold of *him*."

"Where is Mr. Sharp?" asked Arthur.

"Why," said the lawyer, "he has followed Philip at a distance to find out his lodgings, and learn if his brother is with him. Oh! here he is!" and Blackwell's companion in the earlier part of the evening entered.

"I have found him out, sir," said Mr. Sharp, wiping his forehead. "What a fierce 'un he is! I thought he would have had a stone at my head; but we officers are used to it; we does our duty, and Providence makes our heads unkimmon hard!"

"Is the child with him?" asked Mr. Spencer.

"Yes, sir."

"A little, quiet, subdued boy?" asked the melancholy inhabitant of the Lakes.

"Quiet! Lord love you! never heard a noisier little urchin! There they were, romping and rouping in the garden like a couple of jail-birds."

"You see," groaned Mr. Spencer, "he will make that poor child as bad as himself."

"What shall us do, Mr. Blackwell?" asked Sharp, who longed for his brandy and water.

"Why, I was thinking you might go to the horse-dealer the first thing in the morning; find out whether Philip is really thick with the swindler; and perhaps Mr. Stubmore may have some influence with him, if, without saying who he is—"

"Yes," interrupted Arthur; "do not expose his name."

"You could still hint that he ought to be induced to listen to his friends, and go with them. Mr. Stubmore may be a respectable man, and—"

"I understand," said Sharp; "I have no doubt as how I can settle it. We learns to know human nature in our perfession—'cause why, we gets at its blind side. Good-night, gentlemen!"

"You seem very pale, Mr. Arthur, you had better go to bed: you promised your father, you know."

"Yes, I am not well; I will go to bed;" and Arthur rose, lighted his candle, and sought his room.

"I will see Philip to-morrow," he said to himself; "he will listen to *me*."

The conduct of Arthur Beaufort, in executing the charge he had undertaken, had brought into full light all the most amiable and generous parts of his character. As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he had expressed so much anxiety as to the fate of the orphans, that, to quiet him, his father was forced to send for Mr. Blackwell. The lawyer had ascertained, through Dr. ——, the name of Philip's employer at R——. At Arthur's request, he went down to Mr. Plaskwith, and, arriving there the day after the return of the bookseller, learned those particulars with which Mr. Plaskwith's letter to Roger Morton has already made the reader acquainted. The lawyer then sent for Mr. Sharp, the officer before employed, and commissioned him to track the young man's whereabout. That shrewd functionary soon reported that a youth every way answering to Philip's description had been introduced, the night of the escape, by a man celebrated, not, indeed, for robberies, or larcenies, or crimes of the coarser kind, but for address in all that more large and complex character which comes under the denomination of living upon one's wits, to a polite rendezvous frequented by persons of a similar profession. Since then, however, all clew of Philip was lost. But, though Mr. Blackwell, in the way of his profession, was thus publicly benevolent toward the fugitive, he did not the less privately represent to his patrons, senior and junior, the very equivocal character that Philip must be allowed to bear. Like most lawyers, hard upon all who wander from the formal tracks, he unaffectedly regarded Philip's flight and absence as proofs of a very reprobate disposition; and this conduct was greatly aggravated in his eyes by Mr. Sharp's report, by which it appeared that, after his escape, Philip had so suddenly, and, as it were, so naturally, taken to such equivocal companionship. Mr. Robert Beaufort, already prejudiced against Philip, viewed matters in the same light as the lawyer; and the story of his supposed predilections reached Arthur's ears in so distorted a shape, that even he was staggered and revolted; still, Philip was so young—Arthur's oath to the orphans' mother so recent—and, if thus early inclined to wrong courses, should not every effort be made to lure him back to the broad path? With these views and reasonings, as soon as he was able, Arthur himself visited Mrs. Lacy; and the note from Philip, which that good lady put into his hands, affected him deeply, and confirmed all his previous resolutions. Mrs. Lacy was very anxious to get at his name; but Arthur, having heard that Philip had refused all aid from his father and Mr. Blackwell, thought that the young man's pride might work equally against himself, and therefore evaded the landlady's curiosity. He wrote the next day the letter we have seen to Mr. Roger Morton, whose address Catharine had given to him; and by return of post came a letter from the linen-draper, narrating the flight of Sidney, as it was supposed, with his brother. This news so excited Arthur, that he insisted on going down to N—— at once, and joining in the search. His father, alarmed for his health, pos-

itively refused; and the consequence was an increase of fever, a consultation with the doctors, and a declaration that Mr. Arthur was in that state that it would be dangerous not to let him have his own way. Mr. Beaufort was forced to yield, and, with Blackwell and Mr. Sharp, accompanied his son to N——. The inquiries, hitherto fruitless, then assumed a more regular and business-like character. By little and little they came, through the aid of Mr. Sharp, upon the right clew up to a certain point. But here there was a double scent: two youths answering the description had been seen at a small village; then there came those who asserted that they had seen the same youths at a sea-port in one direction; others, who deposed to their having taken the road to an inland town in the other. This had induced Arthur and his father to part company. Mr. Beaufort, accompanied by Roger Morton, went to the sea-port, and Arthur, with Mr. Spencer and Mr. Sharp, more fortunate, tracked the fugitives to their retreat. As for Mr. Beaufort senior, now that his mind was more at ease about his son, he was thoroughly sick of the whole thing; greatly bored by the society of Mr. Morton; very much ashamed that he, so respectable and great a man, should be employed on such an errand; more afraid of, than pleased with, any chance of discovering the fierce Philip; and secretly resolving upon slinking back to London at the first reasonable excuse.

The next morning Mr. Sharp entered betimes Mr. Stubmore's counting-house. In the yard he caught a glimpse of Philip, and managed to keep himself unseen by that young gentleman.

"Mr. Stubmore, I think?"

"At your service, sir."

Mr. Sharp shut the glass door mysteriously, and, lifting up the corner of the green curtain that covered the panes, beckoned to the startled Stubmore to approach.

"You see that 'ere young man in the velveteen jacket—you employs him?"

"I do, sir; he is my right hand."

"Well, now, don't be frightened; but his friends are arter him. He has got into bad ways, and we want you to give him a little good advice."

"Pooh! I know he has run away, like a fine-spirited lad as he is; and, as long as he likes to stay with me, they as comes after him may get a ducking in the horse-trough!"

"Be you a father—a father of a family, Mr. Stubmore?" said Sharp, thrusting his hands into his breeches pockets, swelling out his stomach, and pursing up his lips with great solemnity.

"Nonsense! no gammon with me! Take your chaff to the goslings. I tells you I can't do without that 'ere lad. Every man to himself."

"Oho!" thought Sharp, "I must change the tack. "Mr. Stubmore," said he, taking a stool, "you speak like a sensible man. No one can reasonably go for to ask a gentleman to go for to inconvenience his-self. But what do you know of that 'ere youngster? Had you a *carakter* with him?"

"What's that to you?"

"Why it's more to yourself, Mr. Stubmore; he is but a lad, and if he goes back to his friends, they may take care of him; but he got into a bad set afore he come here. Do you know a good-looking chap with whiskers, who talks of his pheaton, and was riding last night on a brown mare?"

"Y—e—s!" said Mr. Stubmore, growing rather pale, "and I knows the mare too. Why, sir, I sold him that mare!"

"Did he pay you for it?"

"Why, to be sure; he gave me a check on Coutts."

"And you took it! My eyes, what a flat!" Here Mr. Sharp closed those orbs he had invoked, and whistled with that sort of self-hugging delight which men invariably feel when another man is taken in.

Mr. Sharp became evidently nervous.

"Why, what now! You don't think I'm done? I did not let him have the mare till I went to the hotel, found he was cutting a great dash there, a groom, a pheaton, and a fine horse, and as extravagant as the devil!"

"Oh Lord! oh Lord! what a world this is! What does he call his-self?"

"Why, here's the check—George Frederic De—de Burgh Smith."

"Put it in your pipe, my man, put it in your pipe; not worth a d—!"

"And who the deuce are you, sir?" bawled out Mr. Stubmore, in an equal rage both with himself and his guest.

"I, sir," said the visitor, rising with great dignity, "I, sir, am of the great Bow-street Office, and my name is John Sharp!"

Mr. Stubmore nearly fell off his stool; his eyes rolled in his head, and his teeth chattered. Mr. Sharp perceived the advantage he had gained, and continued,

"Yes, sir; and I could have much to say against that chap, who is nothing more or less than Dashing Jerry, as has ruined more girls and more tradesmen than any lord in the land. And so I called to give you a bit of a caution; for, says I to myself, 'Mr. Stubmore is a respectable man.'"

"I hope I am, sir," said the crest-fallen horse-dealer; "that was always my character."

"And a father of a family?"

"Three boys and a babe at the buzzom," said Mr. Stubmore, pathetically.

"And he shan't be taken in if I can help it! That 'ere young man as I am arter, you see, knows Captain Smith—ha! ha! smell a rat now, eh?"

"Captain Smith said he knew him—the wiper! and that's what made me so green."

"Well, we must not be hard on the youngster: 'cause why, he has friends as is gemmen. But you tell him to go back to his poor, dear relations, and all shall be forgiven; and say as how you won't keep him; and if he don't go back, he'll have to get his livelihood without a carakter; and use your influence with him like a man and a Christian, and, what's more, like a father of a family—Mr. Stubmore—with three boys and a babe at the buzzom. You won't keep him now?"

"Keep him! I have had a precious escape. I'd better go and see after the horse."

"I doubt if you'll find him: the captain caught a sight of me this morning. Why, he lodges at our hotel! He's off by this time!"

"And why the devil did you let him go?"

"'Cause I had no writ agin him!" said the

Bow-street officer; and he walked straight out of the counting-office, satisfied that he had "done the job."

To snatch his hat—to run to the hotel—to find that Captain Smith had indeed gone off in his phaeton, bag and baggage, the same as he came, except that he had now two horses to the phaeton instead of one, having left with the landlord the amount of his bill in another check upon Coutts, was the work of five minutes with Mr. Stubmore. He returned home, panting and purple with indignation and wounded feeling.

"To think that chap, whom I took into my yard like a son, should have connived at this! 'Taint the money—'tis the willany that 'flicts me!" muttered Mr. Stubmore, as he re-entered the mews.

Here he came plump upon Philip, who said,

"Sir, I wished to see you, to say that you had better take care of Captain Smith."

"Oh, you did, did you, now he's gone? 'seonded off to America, I dare say, by this time. Now look ye, young man, your friends are after you; I won't say any thing agin you; but you go back to them—I wash my hands of you. Quite too much for me. There's your week, and never let me catch you in my yard agin, that's all!"

Philip dropped the money which Stubmore had put into his hand. "My friends!—friends have been with you, have they? I thought so—I thank them. And so you part with me? Well, you have been kind, very kind; let us part kindly;" and he held out his hand.

Mr. Stubmore was softened; he touched the hand held out to him, and looked doubtful a moment; but Captain De Burgh Smith's check for eighty guineas suddenly rose before his eyes. He turned on his heel abruptly, and said, over his shoulder,

"Don't go after Captain Smith (he'll come to the gallows); mend your ways, and be ruled by your poor, clear relatives, whose hearts you are breaking."

"Captain Smith! Did my relations tell you?"

"Yes—yes—they told me all—that is, they sent to tell me; so you see I'm d—d soft not to lay hold of you. But perhaps if they be gemmen, they'll act as sich, and cash me this here check!"

But the last words were said to air. Philip had rushed from the yard.

With a heaving breast, and every nerve in his body quivering with wrath, the proud, unhappy boy strode through the gay streets. They had betrayed him, then, these accursed Beauforts! They circled his steps with schemes to drive him like a deer into the snare of their loathsome charity! The roof was to be taken from his head, the bread from his lips, so that he might fawn at their knees for bounty. "But they shall not break my spirit, nor steal away my curse. No, my dead mother, never!"

As he thus muttered, he passed through a patch of waste land that led to the row of houses in which his lodging was placed. And here a voice called to him, and a hand was laid on his shoulder. He turned, and Arthur Beaufort, who had followed him from the street, stood behind him. Philip did not, at the first glance, recognize his cousin. Illness had so altered him, and his dress was so different from that in which he had first and last beheld him. The contrast between the two young men was remarkable. Philip was clad in the rough garb suited to his late calling: a jacket of black velveteen, ill-fitting and ill-fashioned; loose fustian trowsers, coarse shoes, his hat set deep over his pent eyebrows, his raven hair long and neglected. He was just at that age when one with strong features and robust frame is at the worst in point of appearance: the sinewy proportions not yet sufficiently fleshed, and seeming inharmonious and undeveloped, precisely in proportion, perhaps, to the symmetry toward which they insensibly mature; the contour of the face sharpened from the roundness of boyhood, and losing its bloom without yet acquiring that relief and shadow which make the expression and dignity of the masculine countenance. Thus accoutered, thus gaunt and uncouth, stood Morton. Arthur Beaufort, always refined in his appearance, seemed yet more so from the almost feminine delicacy which ill health threw over his pale complexion and graceful figure; that sort of unconscious elegance which belongs to the dress of the rich when they are young—seen most in minutiæ—not observable, perhaps, by themselves—marked forcibly and painfully the distinction of rank between the two. That distinction Beaufort did not feel; but, at a glance, it was visible to Philip.

The past rushed back on him. The sunny lawn—the gun, offered and rejected—the pride of old, much less haughty than the pride of to-day.

"Philip," said Beaufort, feebly, "they tell me you will not accept any kindness from me or mine. Ah! if you knew how we have sought you!"

"Knew!" cried Philip, savagely, for that unlucky sentence recalled to him his late interview with his employer, and his present destitution. "Knew! And why have you dared to hunt me out, and halloo me down? Why must this insolent tyranny, that assumes the right over these limbs and this free will, betray and expose me and my wretchedness wherever I turn?"

"Your poor mother—" began Beaufort.

"Name her not with your lips—name her not!" cried Philip, growing livid with his emotions. "Talk not of the mercy—the forethought—a Beaufort could show to her and her offspring! I accept it not—I believe it not. Oh, yes! You follow me now with your false kindness; and why? Because your father—your vain, hollow, heartless father—"

"Hold!" said Beaufort, in a tone of such reproach that it startled the wild heart on which it fell; "it is my father you speak of. Let the son respect the son."

"No—no—no! I will respect none of your race. I tell you, your father fears me. I tell you that my last words to him ring in his ears! My wrongs! Arthur Beaufort, when you are absent I seek to forget them; in your abhorred presence they revive—they—"

He stopped, almost choked with his passion; but continued instantly, with equal intensity of fervor.

"Were yon tree the gibbet, and to touch your hand could alone save me from it, I would scorn your aid. Aid! the very thought fires my blood and nerves my hand. Aid! Will a Beaufort

give me back my birth-right—restore my dead mother's fair name? Minion! sleek, dainty, luxurious minion! out of my path! You have my fortune, my station, my rights; I have but poverty, and hate, and disdain. I swear, again and again, that you shall not purchase these from me."

"But, Philip—Philip," cried Beaufort, catching his arm, "hear one—hear one who stood by your—"

The sentence that would have saved the outcast from the demons that were darkening and swooping round his soul died upon the young protector's lips. Blinded, maddened, excited, and exasperated almost out of humanity itself, Philip fiercely, brutally swung aside the enfeebled form that sought to cling to him, and Beaufort fell at his feet. Morton stopped—glared at him with clinched hands and a smiling lip—sprung over his prostrate form, and bounded to his home.

He slackened his pace as he neared the house, and looked behind; but Beaufort had not followed him. He entered the house, and found Sidney in the room, with a countenance so much more gay than that he had lately worn, that, absorbed as he was in thought and passion, it did not fail to strike him.

"What has pleased you, Sidney?"

The child smiled.

"Ah! it is a secret: I was not to tell you. But I'm sure you are not the naughty boy he says you are."

"He! Who?"

"Don't look so angry, Philip: you frighten me!"

"And you torture me. Who could malign one brother to the other?"

"Oh! it was all meant very kindly; there's been such a nice, dear, good gentleman here, and he cried when he saw me, and said he knew dear mamma. Well, and he has promised to take me home with him, and give me a pretty pony—as pretty—as pretty—oh, as pretty as it can be got! And he is to call again and tell me more: I think he is a fairy, Philip."

"Did he say that he was to take *me*, too, Sidney?" said Morton, seating himself, and looking very pale. At that question Sidney hung his head.

"No, brother: he says you won't go, and that you are a bad boy, and that you associate with wicked people, and that you want to keep me shut up here, and not let any one be good to me. But I told him I did not believe that—yes, indeed, I told him so."

And Sidney endeavored caressingly to withdraw the hands that his brother placed before his face.

Morton started up, and walked hastily to and fro the room. "This," thought he, "is another emissary of the Beauforts—perhaps the lawyer: they will take *him* from me—the last thing left to love and hope for. I will foil them. Sidney," he said aloud, "we must go hence to-day—this very hour—nay, instantly."

"What! away from this nice, good gentleman?"

"Curse him! yes, away from him. Do not cry—it is of no use; you *must* go."

This was said more harshly than Philip had ever yet spoken to Sidney; and when he had said it, he left the room to settle with the landlady and to pack up their scanty effects. In another hour the brothers had turned their backs on the town.

CHAPTER X.

"I'll carry thee
In Sorrow's arms to welcome Misery."
HEYWOOD'S *Duchess of Suffolk.*

"Who's here besides foul weather?"
SHAKSPEARE: *Lear.*

THE sun was as bright and the sky as calm during this journey of the orphans as in the last. They avoided, as before, the main roads, and their way lay through landscapes that might have charmed a Gainsborough's eye: Autumn scattered his last hues of gold over the various foliage, and the poppy glowed from the hedges, and the wild convolvuluses, here and there, still gleamed on the wayside with a parting smile.

At times, over the sloping stubbles, broke the sound of the sportsman's gun; and ever and anon, by stream and sedge, they startled the shy wild fowl, just come from the far lands, nor yet settled in the new haunts too soon to be invaded.

But there was no longer in the travelers the same hearts that had made light of hardship and fatigue. Sidney was no longer flying from a harsh master, and his step was not elastic with the energy of fear that looked behind, and of hope that smiled before. He was going a toilsome, weary journey, he knew not why nor whither; just, too, when he had made a friend, whose soothing words haunted his childish fancy. He was displeased with Philip, and, in sullen and silent thoughtfulness, slowly plodded behind him; and Morton himself was gloomy, and knew not where in the world to seek a future.

They arrived at dusk at a small inn, not so far distant from the town they had left as Morton could have wished; but then the days were shorter than in their first flight.

They were shown into a small, sanded parlor, which Sidney eyed with great disgust; nor did he seem more pleased with the hacked and jagged leg of cold mutton which was all that the hostess set before them for supper. Philip in vain endeavored to cheer him up, and ate to set him the example. He felt relieved when, under the auspices of a good-looking, good-natured chamber-maid, Sidney retired to rest, and he was left in the parlor to his own meditations. Hitherto it had been a happy thing for Morton that he had had some one dependent on him; that feeling had given him perseverance, patience, fortitude, and hope. But now, dispirited and sad, he felt rather the horror of being responsible for a human life, without seeing the means to discharge the trust. It was clear, even to his experience, that he was not likely to find another employer as facile as Mr. Stubmore; and, wherever he went, he felt as if his Destiny stalked at his back. He took out his little fortune and spread it on the table, counting it over and over; it had remained pretty stationary since his service with Mr. Stubmore, for Sidney had swallowed up the wages of his hire. While thus employed, the door opened, and the chamber-maid, showing in a gentleman, said, "We have no other room, sir."

"Very well, then—I'm not particular; a

tumbler of braundy and water, stiffish, cold—without—the newspaper—and a cigar. You'll excuse smoking, sir?"

Philip looked up from his hoard, and Captain De Burgh Smith stood before him.

"Ah!" said the latter, "well met!" And, closing the door, he took off his greatcoat, seated himself near Philip, and bent both his eyes with considerable wistfulness on the neat rows into which Philip's bank-notes, sovereigns, and shillings were arrayed.

"Pretty little sum for pocket-money; caush in hand goes a great way, properly invested. You must have been very lucky. Well, so I suppose you are surprised to see me here without my pheaton?"

"I wish I had never seen you at all," replied Philip, uncourteously, and restoring his money to his pocket; "your fraud upon Mr. Stubmore, and your assurance that you knew me, have sent me adrift upon the world."

"What's one man's meat is another man's poison," said the captain, philosophically; "no use fretting; care killed a cat. I am as badly off as you; for, hang me, if there was not a Bow-street runner in the town. I caught his eye fixed on me like a gimlet, so I bolted; went to N——, left my pheaton and groom there for the present, and have doubled back, to baffle pursuit, and cut across the country. You recollect that noice girl we saw in the coach: 'gad, I served her spouse that is to be a pretty trick! Borrowed his money under pretence of investing it in the New Grand Anti-Dry-Rot Company—cool hundred—it's only just gone, sir."

Here the chamber-maid entered with the brandy and water, the newspaper, and cigar; the captain lighted the last, took a deep sup at the beverage, and said gayly,

"Well, now, let us join fortunes; we are both, as you say, 'adrift.' Best way to stand the breeze is to unite the caubles."

Philip shook his head, and displeased with his companion, sought his pillow. He took care to put his money under his head and to lock his door.

The brothers started at daybreak; Sidney was even more discontented than on the previous day. The weather was hot and oppressive; they rested for some hours at noon, and in the cool of the evening renewed their way. Philip had made up his mind to steer for a town in the thick of a hunting district, where he hoped his equestrian capacities might again befriend him; and their path now lay through a chain of vast, dreary commons, which gave them, at least, the advantage to skirt the roadside unobserved. But, somehow or other, either Philip had been misinformed as to an inn where he had proposed to pass the night, or he had missed it; for the clouds darkened, and the sun went down, and no vestige of human habitation was discernible. Sidney, footsore and querulous, began to weep, and declare that he could stir no farther; and while Philip, whose iron frame defied fatigue, compassionately paused to rest his brother, a low roll of thunder broke upon the gloomy air. "There will be a storm," said he, anxiously. "Come on—pray, Sidney come on."

"It is so cruel in you, brother Philip," replied Sidney, sobbing. "I wish I had never, never gone with you."

A flash of lightning, that illuminated the whole heavens, lingered round Sidney's pale face as he spoke; and Philip threw himself instinctively on the child, as if to protect him even from the wrath of the unshelterable flame. Sidney, hushed and terrified, clung to his brother's breast; after a pause, he silently consented to resume their journey. But now the storm came near and nearer to the wanderers. The darkness grew rapidly more intense, save when the lightning lit up heaven and earth alike with intolerable luster. And when at length the rain began to fall in merciless and drenching torrents, even Philip's brave heart failed him. How could he ask Sidney to proceed, when they could scarcely see an inch before them? All that could now be done was to gain the high road, and hope for some passing conveyance. With fits and starts, and by the glare of the lightning, they attained their object, and stood at last on the great broad thoroughfare, along which, since the day when the Roman carved it from the waste, Misery hath plodded and Luxury rolled their common way.

Philip had stripped handkerchief, coat, vest, all to shelter Sidney; and he felt a kind of strange pleasure through the dark even to hear Sidney's voice wail and moan. But that voice grew at last more languid and faint—it ceased—Sidney's weight hung heavy—heavier on the fostering arm.

"For Heaven's sake, speak! Speak, Sidney! only one word. I will carry you in my arms!"

"I think I am dying," replied Sidney, in a low murmur; "I am so tired and worn out, I can go no farther—I must lie here." And he sunk at once upon the reeking grass beside the road. At this time the rain gradually relaxed, the clouds broke away, a gray light succeeded to the darkness, the lightning was more distant, and the thunder rolled onward in its awful path. Kneeling on the ground Philip supported his brother in his arms, and cast his pleading eyes upward to the softening terrors of the sky. A star—a solitary star—broke out for one moment, as if to smile comfort upon him, and then vanished. But, lo! in the distance there suddenly gleamed a red, steady light, like that in some solitary window; it was no will o'-the-wisp, it was too stationary; human shelter was then nearer than he had thought for. He pointed to the light, and whispered, "Rouse yourself—one struggle more—it can not be far off."

"It is impossible—I can not stir," answered Sidney; and a sudden flash of lightning showed his countenance, ghastly, as if with the damps of death. What could the brother do?—stay there, and see the boy perish before his eyes?—leave him on the road, and fly to the friendly light? The last plan was the sole one left, yet he shrunk from it in greater terror than the first. Was that a step that he heard across the road? He held his breath to listen: a form became dimly visible—it approached.

Philip shouted aloud.

"What now?" answered the voice?" and it seemed familiar to Morton's ear. He sprung forward, and, putting his face close to the wayfarer, thought to recognize the features of Captain De Burgh Smith The captain, whose eyes were yet more accustomed to the dark, made the first overture.

"Why, my lad, it is you, then! Gad, you frightened me!"

Odious as this man had hitherto been to Philip, he was as welcome to him as daylight now; he grasped his hand: "My brother—a child—is here, dying, I fear, with cold and fatigue; he can not stir. Will you stay with him—support him—but for a few moments, while I make to you light? See, I have money—plenty of money!"

"My good lad, it is very ugly work staying here at this hour: still—where's the child?"

"Here, here! make haste! raise him! that's right! God bless you! I shall be back ere you think me gone."

He sprung from the road, and plunged through the heath, the furze, the rank, glistening pools, straight toward the light, as the swimmer toward the shore.

The captain, though a rogue, was human; and when life—an innocent life—is at stake, even a rogue's heart rises up from its silent and weedy bed. He muttered a few oaths, it is true, but he held the child in his arms, and, taking out a little tin case, poured some brandy down Sidney's throat, and then, by way of company, down his own. The cordial revived the boy; he opened his eyes, and said, "I think I can go on now Philip."

We must return to Arthur Beaufort. He was naturally, though gentle, a person of high spirit, and not without pride. He rose from the ground with bitter, resentful feelings and a blushing cheek, and went his way to the hotel. Here he found Mr. Spencer just returned from his visit to Sidney. Enchanted with the soft and endearing manners of his lost Catharine's son, and deeply affected with the resemblance the child bore to the mother as *he* had seen her last at the gay and rosy age of fair sixteen, his description of the younger brother drew Beaufort's indignant thoughts from the elder. He cordially concurred with Mr. Spencer in the wish to save one so gentle from the domination of one so fierce; and this, after all, was the child Catharine had most strongly commended to him. She had said little of the elder; perhaps she had been aware of his ungracious and untractable nature, and, as it seemed to Beaufort, his predilections for a coarse and low career.

"Yes," said he, "this boy, then, shall console me for the perverse brutality of the other. He shall indeed drink of my cup, and eat of my bread, and be to me as a brother."

"What!" said Mr. Spencer, changing countenance, "you do not intend to take Sidney to live with *you?* I meant him for *my* son—my adopted son."

"No; generous as you are," said Arthur, pressing his hand, "this charge devolves on me; it is my right. I am the orphan's relation; his mother consigned him to me. But he shall be taught to love you not the less."

Mr. Spencer was silent. He could not bear the thought of losing Sidney as an inmate of his cheerless home, a tender relic of his early love. From that moment he began to contemplate the possibility of securing Sidney to himself unknown to Beaufort.

The plans both of Arthur and Spencer were interrupted by the sudden retreat of the brothers. They determined to depart different ways in search of them. Spencer, as the more helpless of the two, obtained the aid of Mr. Sharp; Beaufort departed with the lawyer.

Two travelers, in a hired barouche, were slowly dragged by a pair of jaded posters along the commons I have just described.

"I think," said one, "that the storm is very much abated. Heigh-ho! what an unpleasant night!"

"Unkimmon ugly, sir," answered the other; "and an awful long stage, eighteen miles. These here remote places are quite behind the age, sir—quite. However, I think we shall kitch them now."

"I am very much afraid of that eldest boy, Sharp. He seems a dreadful vagabond."

"You see, sir, quite hand in glove with Dashing Jerry—met in the same inn last night—preconcerted, you may be quite sure. It would be the best day's job I have done this many a day to save that ere little feller from being corrupted. You sees he is just of a size to be useful to these bad karakters. If they took to burglary, he would be a treasure to them: slip him through a pane of glass like a ferret, sir."

"Don't talk of it, Sharp," said Mr. Spencer, with a groan; "and, recollect, if we get hold of him, that you are not to say a word to Mr. Beaufort."

"I understand, sir; and I always goes with the gemman who behaves most like a gemman."

Here a loud halloo was heard close by the horses' heads.

"Good Heavens, if that is a footpad!" said Mr. Spencer, shaking violently.

"Lord, sir, I have my barkers with me. Who's there?"

The barouche stopped: a man came to the window.

"Excuse me, sir," said the stranger, "but there is a poor boy here so tired and ill that I fear he will never reach the next toon unless you will koindly give him a lift."

"A poor boy!" said Mr. Spencer, poking his head over the head of Mr. Sharp. "Where?"

"If you would just drop him at the King's Awrms it would be a chaurity," said the man.

Sharp pinched Mr. Spencer on the shoulder. "That's Dashing Jerry: I'll get out." So saying, he opened the door, jumped into the road, and presently reappeared with the lost and welcome Sidney in his arms. "Ben't this the boy?" he whispered to Mr. Spencer; and, taking the lamp from the carriage, he raised it to the child's face. "It is! it is! God be thanked!" exclaimed the worthy man.

"Will you leave him at the King's Awrms? We shall be there in an hour or two," cried the captain.

"We! Who's *we?*" said Sharp, gruffly.

"Why, myself and the child's brother."

"Oh!" said Sharp, raising the lantern to his own face, "you knows me, I think, Master Jerry? Let me kitch you again, that's all. And give my compliments to your 'sociate, and say, if he prosecutes this here hurchin any more, we'll settle his business for him; and so take a hint, and make yourself scarce, old boy!"

With that Mr. Sharp jumped into the barouche, and bade the post-boy drive on as fast as he could.

Ten minutes after this abduction, Philip, fol-

lowed by two laborers, with a barrow, a lantern, and two blankets, returned from the hospitable farm to which the light had conducted him. The spot where he had left Sidney, and which he knew by a neighboring milestone, was vacant; he shouted in alarm, and the captain answered from the distance of some threescore yards. Philip came to him. "Where is my brother?"

"Gone away in a barouche and pair. Devil take me if I understand it." And the captain proceeded to give a confused account of what had passed.

"My brother! my brother! they have torn thee from me, then!" cried Philip; and he fell to the earth insensible.

CHAPTER XI.

"Vous me rendrez mon frère!"
CASIMER DELAVIGNE: *Les Enfans d'Edouard.*

ONE evening, a week after this event, a wild, tattered, haggard youth knocked at the door of Mr. Robert Beaufort.

The porter slowly presented himself.

"Is your master at home? I must see him instantly."

"That's more than you can, my man; my master does not see the like of you this time of night," replied the porter, eying the ragged apparition before him with great disdain.

"See me he must and shall," replied the young man; and, as the porter blocked up the entrance, he grasped his collar with a hand of iron, swung him, huge as he was, aside, and strode into the spacious hall.

"Stop! stop!" cried the porter, recovering himself. "James! John! here's a go!"

Mr. Robert Beaufort had been back in town several days. Mrs. Beaufort, who was waiting his return from his club, was in the dining-room. Hearing a noise in the hall, she opened the door, and saw the strange, grim figure I have described advancing toward her. "Who are you?" she said; "what do you want?"

"I am Philip Morton. Who are you?"

"My husband," said Mrs. Beaufort, shrinking into the parlor, while Morton followed her and closed the door, "my husband, Mr. Beaufort, is not at home."

"You are Mrs. Beaufort, then! Well, you can understand me. I want my brother. He has been basely reft from me. Tell me where he is, and I will forgive all. Restore him to me, and I will bless you and yours." And Philip fell on his knees, and grasped the train of her gown.

"I know nothing of your brother, Mr. Morton," cried Mrs. Beaufort, surprised and alarmed. "Arthur, whom we expect every day, writes us word that all search for him has been in vain."

"Ha! you admit the search?" cried Morton, rising and clenching his hands. "And who else but you or yours would have parted brother and brother? Answer me where he is. No subterfuge, madam: I am desperate!"

Mrs. Beaufort, though a woman of that worldly coldness and indifference which, on ordinary occasions, supply the place of courage, was extremely terrified by the tone and mien of her rude guest. She laid her hand on the bell, but Morton seized her arm, and, holding it sternly, said, while his dark eyes shot fire through the glimmering room, "I will not stir hence till you have told me. Will you reject my gratitude—my blessing? Beware! Again, where have you hid my brother?"

At that instant the door opened, and Mr. Robert Beaufort entered. The lady, with a shriek of joy, wrenched herself from Philip's grasp, and flew to her husband.

"Save me from this ruffian!" she said, with an hysterical sob.

Mr. Beaufort, who had heard from Blackwell strange accounts of Philip's obdurate perverseness, vile associates, and unredeemable character, was roused from his usual timidity by the appeal of his wife.

"Insolent reprobate!" he said, advancing to Philip; "after all the absurd goodness of my son and myself—after rejecting all our offers, and persisting in your miserable and vicious conduct, how dare you presume to force yourself into this house? Begone, or I will send for the constables to remove you!"

"Man—man," cried Philip, restraining the fury that shook him from head to foot, "I care not for your threats—I scarcely hear your abuse: your son or yourself have stolen away my brother; tell me only where he is; let me see him once more. Do not drive me hence without one word of justice—of pity. I implore you—on my knees I implore you—yes, I, *I* implore you, Robert Beaufort, to have mercy on your brother's son. Where is Sidney?"

Like all mean and cowardly men, Robert Beaufort was rather encouraged than softened by Philip's abrupt humility.

"I know nothing of your brother; and, if this is not all some villainous trick—which it may be—I am heartily rejoiced that he, poor child! is rescued from the contamination of such a companion," answered Beaufort.

"I am at your feet still; again, for the last time, clinging to you, a suppliant: I pray you to tell me the truth."

Mr. Beaufort, more and more exasperated by Morton's forbearance, raised his hand as if to strike; when, at that moment, one hitherto unobserved—one who, terrified by the scene she had witnessed but could not comprehend, had slunk into a dark corner of the room—now came from her retreat. And a child's soft voice was heard, saying—

"Do not strike him, papa! Let him have his brother!"

Mr. Beaufort's arm fell to his side: kneeling before him, and by the outcast's side, was his own young daughter; she had crept into the room unobserved when her father entered. Through the dim shadows, relieved only by the red and fitful gleam of the fire, he saw her fair, meek face looking up wistfully at his own, with tears of excitement, and perhaps of pity—for children have a quick insight into the reality of grief in those not far removed from their own years—glistening in her soft eyes. Philip looked round bewildered; and he saw that face, which seemed to him, at such a time, like the face of an angel.

"Hear her!" he murmured: "oh, hear her! For her sake, do not sever one orphan from the other!"

"Take away that child, Mrs. Beaufort," cried Robert, angrily. "Will you let her disgrace herself thus? And you, sir, begone from this roof; and when you can approach me with due respect, I will give you, as I said I would, the means to get an honest living!"

Philip rose; Mrs. Beaufort had already led away her daughter, and she took that opportunity of sending in the servants: their forms filled up the doorway.

"Will you go," continued Mr. Beaufort, more and more emboldened as he saw the menials at hand, "or shall *they* expel you?"

"It is enough, sir," said Philip, with a sudden calm and dignity that surprised, and almost awed his uncle. "My father, if the dead yet watch over the living, has seen and heard you. There will come a day for justice. Out of my path, hirelings!"

He waved his arm, and the menials shrunk back at his tread, stalked across the inhospitable hall, and vanished.

When he had gained the street, he turned and looked up at the house. His dark and hollow eyes, gleaming through the long and raven hair that fell profusely over his face, had in them an expression of menace almost preternatural from its settled calmness; the wild and untutored majesty, which, through rags and squalor, never deserted his form, as it never does the forms of men in whom the will is strong and the sense of injustice deep—the outstretched arm—the haggard, but noble features—the bloomless and scathed youth—all gave to his features and his stature an aspect awful in its sinister and voiceless wrath. There he stood a moment, like one to whom woe and wrong have given a prophet's power, guiding the eye of the unforgetful Fate to the roof of the oppressor. Then slowly, and with a half smile, he turned away, and strode through the streets till he arrived at one of the narrow lanes that intersect the more equivocal quarters of the huge city. He stopped at the private entrance of a small pawnbroker's shop; the door was opened by a slipshod boy; he ascended the dingy stairs till he came to the second floor; and there, in a small back room, he found Captain De Burgh Smith, seated before a table with a couple of candles on it, smoking a cigar, and playing at cards by himself.

"Well, what news of your brother, Bully Phil?"

"None: they will reveal nothing."

"Do you give him up?"

"Never! My hope now is in you!"

"Well, I thought you would be driven to come to me, and I will do something for you that I should not like to do for myself. I told you that I knew the Bow-street runner who was in the barouche. I will find him out—Heaven knows, that is easily done—and, if you can pay well, you will get your news."

"You shall have all I possess if you restore my brother. See what it is—one hundred pounds—it was his fortune. It is useless to me without him. There, take fifty now, and if—"

Philip stopped, for his voice trembled too much to allow him farther speech. Captain Smith thrust the notes into his pocket, and said,

"We'll consider it settled."

Captain Smith fulfilled his promise. He saw the Bow-street officer. Mr. Sharp had been bribed too high by the opposite party to tell tales, and he willingly encouraged the suspicion that Sidney was under the care of the Beauforts. He promised, however, for the sake of ten guineas, to procure Philip a letter from Sidney himself. This was all he would undertake.

Philip was satisfied. At the end of another week, Mr. Sharp transmitted to the captain a letter, which he, in his turn, gave to Philip. It ran thus, in Sidney's own sprawling hand:

"Dear Brother Philip—I am told you wish to know how I am, and therfore take up my pen, and assure you that I write all out of my own head. I am very comfortable and happy—much more so than I have been since poor deir mama died; so I beg you won't vex yourself about me: and pray don't try and Find me out, For I would not go with you again for the world. I am so much better off here. I wish you would be a good boy, and leave off your Bad ways; for I am sure, as every one says, I don't know what would have become of me if I had staid with you. Mr. —— [the Mr. half scratched out], the gentleman I am with, says, if you turn out properly, he will be a friend to *you* too; but he advises you to go, like a Good boy, to Arthur Beaufort, and ask his pardon for the past, and then Arthur will be very kind to you. I send you a great big sum of £20, and the gentleman says he would send more, only it might make you naughty, and set up. I go to church now every Sunday, and read good books, and always pray that God may open your eyes. I have such a nice pony, with such a long tale. So no more at present from your affectionate brother,

"Sidney Morton.

"*Oct.* 8, 18—.

"Pray, pray don't come after me any more. You know I neerly died of it, but for this deir good gentleman I am with."

So this, then, was the crowning reward of all his sufferings and all his love. There was the letter, evidently undictated, with its errors of orthography, and in the child's rough scrawl: the serpent's tooth pierced to the heart, and left there its most lasting venom.

"I have done with him forever," said Philip, brushing away the bitter tears, "I will molest him no farther: I care no more to pierce this mystery. Better for him as it is: he is happy! Well, well, and I—*I* will never care for a human being again."

He bowed his head over his hands, and when he rose, his heart felt to him like stone. It seemed as if Conscience herself had fled from his soul on the wings of departed Love.

CHAPTER XII.

"But you have found the mountain's top: there sit
On the calm, flourishing head of it;
And while with wearied steps we upward go,
See us and clouds below."—Cowley.

It was true that Sidney was happy in his new home, and thither we must now trace him.

On reaching the town where the travelers in the barouche had been requested to leave Sidney, "the King's Arms" was precisely the inn eschewed by Mr. Spencer. While the horses

were being changed, he summoned the surgeon of the town to examine the child, who had already much recovered; and, by stripping his clothes, wrapping him in warm blankets, and administering cordials, he was permitted to reach another stage, so as to baffle pursuit that night; and in three days Mr. Spencer had placed his new charge with his maiden sister, 150 miles from the spot where he had been found. He would not take him to his own home yet. He feared the claims of Arthur Beaufort. He artfully wrote to that gentleman, stating that he had abandoned the chase of Sidney in despair, and desiring to know if he had discovered him; and a bribe of £300 to Mr. Sharp, with a candid exposition of his reasons for secreting Sidney—reasons in which the worthy officer professed to sympathize—secured the discretion of his ally. But he would not deny himself the pleasure of being in the same house with Sidney, and was therefore, for some months, the guest of his sisters. At length he heard that young Beaufort had been ordered abroad for his health, and he then deemed it safe to transfer his new idol to his Lares by the lakes. During this interval, the current of the younger Morton's life had indeed flowed through flowers. At his age the cares of females were almost a want as well as a luxury, and the sisters spoiled and petted him as much as any elderly nymphs in Cytherea ever petted Cupid. They were good, excellent, high-nosed, flat-bosomed spinsters, sentimentally fond of their brother, whom they called "the poet," and dotingly attached to children. The cleanness, the quiet, the good cheer of their neat abode, all tended to revive and invigorate the spirits of their young guest, and every one there seemed to vie which should love him the most. Still his especial favorite was Mr. Spencer: for Spencer never went out without bringing back cakes and toys; and Spencer gave him his pony; and Spencer rode a little crop-eared nag by his side; and Spencer, in short, was associated with his every comfort and caprice. He told them his little history; and when he said how Philip had left him alone for long hours together, and how Philip had forced him to his last and nearly fatal journey, the old maids groaned, and the old bachelor sighed, and they all cried in a breath that "Philip was a very wicked boy." It was not only their obvious policy to detach him from his brother, but it was their sincere conviction that they did right to do so. Sidney began, it is true, by taking Philip's part; but his mind was ductile, and he still looked back with a shudder to the hardships he had gone through; and so, by little and little, he learned to forget all the endearing and fostering love Philip had evinced to him; to connect his name with dark and mysterious fears; to repeat thanksgivings to Providence that he was saved from him; and to hope that they might never meet again. In fact, when Mr. Spencer learned from Sharp that it was through Captain Smith, the swindler, that application had been made by Philip for news of his brother, and having also learned before, from the same person, that Philip had been implicated in the sale of a horse, swindled, if not stolen, he saw every additional reason to widen the stream that flowed between the wolf and the lamb. The older Sidney grew, the better he comprehended and appreciated the motives of his protector; for he was brought up in a formal school of propriety and ethics, and his mind naturally revolted from all images of violence or fraud. Mr. Spencer changed both the Christian and the surname of his *protégé*, in order to elude the search whether of Philip, the Mortons, or the Beauforts, and Sidney passed for his nephew by a younger brother who had died in India.

So there, by the calm banks of the placid lake, amid the fairest landscapes of the island garden, the youngest born of Catharine passed his tranquil days. The monotony of the retreat did not fatigue a spirit which, as he grew up, found occupation in books, music, poetry, and the elegances of the cultivated, if quiet life, within his reach. To the rough past he looked back as to an evil dream, in which the image of Philip stood dark and threatening. His brother's name, as he grew older, he rarely mentioned: and if he did volunteer it to Mr. Spencer, the bloom on his cheek grew paler. The sweetness of his manners, his fair face and winning smile, still combined to secure him love, and to screen from the common eye whatever of selfishness yet lurked in his nature. And, indeed, that fault in so serene a career, and with friends so attached, was seldom called into action. So thus was he severed from both the protectors, Arthur and Philip, to whom poor Catharine had bequeathed him. By a perverse and strange mystery, they to whom the charge was most intrusted were the very persons who were forbidden to redeem it. On our death beds, when we think we have provided for those we leave behind, should we lose the last smile that gilds the solemn agony if we could look one year into the Future?

Arthur Beaufort, after, as might be expected, an ineffectual search for Sidney, on returning to his home, heard no unexaggerated narrative of Philip's visit, and listened with deep resentment to his mother's distorted account of the language addressed to her. It is not to be surprised that, with all his romantic generosity, he felt sickened and revolted at violence that seemed to him without excuse. Though not a revengeful character, he had not that meekness which never resents. He looked upon Philip Morton as upon one rendered incorrigible by bad passions and evil company. Still Catharine's last bequest, and Philip's note to him, the unknown comforter, often recurred to him, and he would have willingly yet aided had Philip been thrown in his way. But as it was, when he looked around, and saw the examples of that charity that begins at home, in which the world abounds, he felt as if he had done his duty; and prosperity having, though it could not harden his heart, still sapped the habits of perseverance, so by little and little the image of the dying Catharine, and the thought of her sons, faded from his remembrance. And for this there was the more excuse after the receipt of an anonymous letter, which relieved all his apprehensions on behalf of Sidney. The letter was short, and stated simply that Sidney Morton had found a friend who would protect him throughout life, but who would not scruple to apply to Beaufort if ever he needed his assistance. So one son, and that the youngest and the best-loved, was safe. And the other, had he not chosen his own career? Alas, poor Catharine! when you fancied that Philip was the one sure to force his way into fortune, and Sidney

the one most helpless, how ill did you judge of the human heart! It was that very strength in Philip's nature which tempted the winds, that scattered the blossoms, and shook the stem to its roots; while the lighter and frailer nature bent to the gale, and bore transplanting to a happier soil. If a parent read these pages, let him pause and think well on the characters of his children; let him at once fear and hope the most for the one whose passions and whose temper lead to a struggle with the world. That same world is a tough wrestler, and has a bear's gripe for the poor.

Meanwhile, Arthur Beaufort's own complaints, which grew serious and menaced consumption, recalled his thoughts more and more every day to himself. He was compelled to abandon his career at the University, and to seek for health in the softer breezes of the South. His parents accompanied him to Nice; and when, at the end of a few months, he was restored to health, the desire of travel seized the mind and attracted the fancy of the young heir. His father and mother, satisfied with his recovery, and not unwilling that he should acquire the polish of Continental intercourse, returned to England; and young Beaufort, with gay companions and munificent income, already courted, spoiled, and flattered, commenced his tour with the fair climes of Italy.

So, oh dark mystery of the moral world!—so, unlike the order of the external universe, glide together, side by side, the shadowy steeds of Night and Morning. Examine life in its own world: confound not *that* world, the inner one, the practical one, with the more visible, yet airier and less substantial system, doing homage to the sun, to whose throne, afar in the infinite space, the human heart has no wings to flee. In life, the mind and the circumstance give the true seasons, and regulate the darkness and the light. Of two men standing on the same foot of earth, the one revels in the joyous noon, the other shudders in the solitude of night. For Hope and Fortune the daystar is ever shining. The "Anmuth-Strahlendes"* live ever in the air. For Care and Penury, night changes not with the ticking of the clock or the shadow on the dial. Morning for the heir, night for the houseless, and God's eye in both!

BOOK III.

„Berge lagen mir im Wege;
Ströme hemmten meinen Fuß:
Ueber Schlünde baut' ich Stege,
Brücken durch den wilden Fluß."
Schiller: *Der Pilgrim.*

CHAPTER I.

"The knight of arts and industry,
And his achievements fair."
Thomson's *Castle of Indolence: Explanatory Verse to Canto II.*

In a popular and respectable, but not very fashionable *quartier* in Paris, and in the tolerably broad and effective *locale* of the Rue ——, there might be seen, at the time I now treat of, a curious-looking building, that jutted out semicircularly from the neighboring shops, with plaster pilasters and compo ornaments. The *virtuosi* of the *quartier* had discovered that the building was constructed in imitation of an ancient temple in Rome; this erection, then fresh and new, reached only to the *entresol*. The pilasters were painted light green, and gilded in the cornices, while surmounting the architrave were three little statues—one held a torch, another a bow, and a third a bag; they were therefore rumored, I know not with what justice, to be the artistical representatives of Hymen, Cupid, and Fortune.

On the door was neatly engraved, on a brass plate, the following inscription:

"Monsieur Love, Anglais.
A l'entresol."

And if you had crossed the threshold, and mounted the stairs, and gained that mysterious story inhabited by Monsieur Love, you would have seen upon another door to the right another epigraph, informing those interested in the inquiry that the *bureau* of M. Love was open daily, from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon.

The office of M. Love—for office it was, and of a nature not unfrequently designated in the "*petites affiches*" of Paris—had been established about six months; and, whether it was the popularity of the profession, or the shape of the shop, or the manners of M. Love himself, I can not pretend to say, but certain it is that the Temple d'Hymen, as M. Love classically termed it, had become exceedingly in vogue in the Faubourg St. ——. It was rumored that no less than nine marriages in the immediate neighborhood had been manufactured at this fortunate office, and that they had all turned out happily except one, in which the bride being sixty, and the bridegroom twenty-four, there had been rumors of domestic dissension; but, as the lady had been delivered—I mean, of her husband, who had drowned himself in the Seine about a month after the ceremony—things had turned out, in the long run, better than might have been expected, and the widow was so little discouraged that she had been seen to enter the office already: a circumstance that was greatly to the credit of M. Love.

Perhaps the secret of M. Love's success, and of the marked superiority of his establishment in rank and popularity over similar ones, consisted in the spirit and liberality with which the business was conducted. He seemed resolved to destroy all formality between parties who might desire to draw closer to each other, and he hit upon the lucky device of a *table d'hôte*, very well managed, and held twice a week, and often followed by a *soirée dansante*; so that, if they pleased, the aspirants to matrimonial happiness might become acquainted without *gêne*. As he himself was a jolly, convivial fellow of much *savoir vivre*, it is astonishing how well he made these entertainments answer. Persons who had not seemed to take to each other in the first distant interview grew extremely enamored when the corks of the champagne—an extra, of course, in the *abonnement*—bounced against the wall. Added to this, M. Love took great pains to know the tradesmen in his neighborhood;

* Schiller.

and, what with his jokes, his appearance of easy circumstances, and the fluency with which he spoke the language, he became a universal favorite. Many persons, who were uncommonly starch in general, and who professed to ridicule the *bureau*, saw nothing improper in dining at the *table d'hôte*. To those who wished for secrecy he was said to be wonderfully discreet; but there were others who did not affect to conceal their discontent at the single state: for the rest, the entertainments were so contrived as never to shock the delicacy, while they always forwarded the suit.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and M. Love was still seated at dinner, or, rather, at dessert, with a party of guests. His apartments, though small, were somewhat gaudily painted and furnished, and his dining-room was decorated *à la Turque*. The party consisted, first, of a rich *épicier*, a widower, Monsieur Goupille by name, an eminent man in the faubourg; he was in his grand climacteric, but still *belhomme;* wore a very well-made *perruque* of light auburn, with tight pantaloons, which contained a pair of very respectable calves; and his white neckcloth and his large frill were washed and got up with especial care. Next to Monsieur Goupille sat a very demure and very spare young lady of about two-and-thirty, who was said to have saved a fortune—Heaven knows how—in the family of a rich English *milord*, where she had officiated as governess; she called herself Mademoiselle Adèle de Courval, and was very particular about the *de*, and very melancholy about her ancestors. Monsieur Goupille generally put his finger through his *perruque*, and fell away a little on his left pantaloon when he spoke to Mademoiselle de Courval; and Mademoiselle de Courval generally pecked at her bouquet when she answered Monsieur Goupille. On the other side of this young lady sat a fine-looking, fair man, M. de Sovolofski, a Pole, buttoned up to the chin, and rather threadbare, though uncommonly neat. He was flanked by a little fat lady, who had been very pretty, and who kept a boarding-house or *pension* for the English, she herself being English, though long established in Paris. Rumor said she had been gay in her youth, and dropped in Paris by a Russian nobleman, with a very pretty settlement—she and the settlement having equally expanded by time and season: she was called Madame Beavor. On the other side of the table was a red-headed Englishman, who spoke very little French; who had been told that French ladies were passionately fond of light hair; and who, having £2000 of his own, intended to quadruple that sum by a prudent marriage. Nobody knew what his family was, but his name was Higgins. His neighbor was an exceedingly tall, large-boned Frenchman, with a long nose and a red ribbon, who was much seen at Frescati's, and had served under Napoleon. Then came another lady, extremely pretty, very *piquante* and very gay, but past the *première jeunesse*, who ogled M. Love more than she did any of his guests: she was called Rosalie Caumartin, and was at the head of a large *bonbon* establishment: married, but her husband had gone four years ago to the Isle of France, and she was a little doubtful whether she might not be justly entitled to the privileges of a widow. Next to M. Love, in the place of honor, sat no less a person than the Vicomte de Vaudemont, a French gentleman really well-born, but whose various excesses, added to his poverty, had not served to sustain that respect for his birth which he considered due to it. He had already been twice married; once to an Englishwoman, who had been decoyed by the title; by this lady, who died in childbed, he had one son: a fact which he sedulously concealed from the world of Paris by keeping the unhappy boy, who was now some eighteen or nineteen years old, a pepetual exile in England. Monsieur de Vaudemont did not wish to pass for more than thirty, and he considered that to produce a son of eighteen would be to make the lad a monster of ingratitude by giving the lie every hour to his own father! In spite of this precaution, the vicomte found great difficulty in getting a third wife, especially as he had no actual and visible income; was, not seamed, but plowed up with the smallpox; small of stature, and was considered more than *un peu bête*. He was, however, a prodigious dandy, and wore a lace frill and embroidered waistcoat. M. Love's *vis-à-vis* was Mr. Birnie, an Englishman, a sort of assistant in the establishment, with a hard, dry, parchment face, and —a remarkable talent for silence. The host himself was a splendid animal; his vast chest seemed to occupy more space at the table than any four of his guests, yet he was not corpulent or unwieldy; he was dressed in black, wore a velvet stock very high, and four gold studs glittered in his shirt front; he was bald to the crown, which made his forehead appear singularly lofty, and what hair he had left was a little grayish and curled; his face was shaved smoothly, except a close-clipped mustache; and his eyes, though small, were bright and piercing. Such was the party.

"These are the best *bonsbons* I ever ate," said M. Love, glancing at Madame Caumartin. "My fair friends have compassion on the table of a poor bachelor."

"But you ought not to be a bachelor, Monsieur Lofe," replied the fair Rosalie, with an arch look; "you, who make others marry, should set the example."

"All in good time," answered M. Love, nodding; "one serves one's customers so much happiness that one has none left for one's self."

Here a loud explosion was heard. Monsieur Goupille had pulled one of the *bonbon* crackers with Mademoiselle Adèle.

"I've got the motto! no—monsieur has it: I'm always unlucky," said the gentle Adèle.

The *épicier* solemnly unrolled the little slip of paper; the print was very small, and he longed to take out his spectacles, but he thought that would make him look old. However, he spelled through the motto with some difficulty:

"Comme elle fait sommettre un cœur,
En refusant son doux hommage,
On peut traiter la coquette en vainqueur
De la beauté modeste on chérit l'esclavage."

"I present it to mademoiselle," said he, laying the motto solemnly in Adèle's plate, upon a little mountain of chestnut-husks.

"It is very pretty," said she, looking down.

"It is very *àpropos*," whispered the *épicier*, caressing the *perruque* a little too roughly in his emotion. M. Love gave him a kick under the

table, and put his finger to his own bald head, and then to his nose, significantly. The intelligent *épicier* smoothed back the irritated *perruque*.

"Are you fond of *bonsbons*, Mademoiselle Adèle? I have a very fine stock at home," said Monsieur Goupille.

Mademoiselle Adèle de Courval sighed, "*Helas!* they remind me of happier days. When I was a *petite*, and my dear grandmamma took me in her lap, and told me how she escaped the guillotine—she was an *émigrée*, and you know her father was a marquis."

The *épicier* bowed and looked puzzled. He did not quite see the connection between the *bonsbons* and the guillotine.

"You are *triste*, monsieur," observed Madame Beavor, in rather a piqued tone, to the Pole, who had not said a word since the *rôti*.

"Madame, an exile is always *triste*: I think of my *pauvre pays*."

"Bah!" cried M. Love. "Think that there is no exile by the side of a *belle dame*."

The Pole smiled mournfully.

"Pull it," said Madame Beavor, holding a cracker to the patriot, and turning away her face.

"Yes, madame; I wish it were a cannon in defense of *La Pologne*."

With this magniloquent aspiration, the gallant Sovolofski pulled lustily, and then rubbed his fingers with a little grimace, observing that crackers were sometimes dangerous, and that the present combustible was *d'une force immense*.

"Helas! J'ai cru jusqu'é ce jour
Pouvoir triompher de l'amour,"

said Madame Beavor, reading the motto. "What do you say to that?"

"Madame, there is no triumph for *La Pologne!*"

Madame Beavor uttered a little, peevish exclamation, and glanced in despair at her red-headed countryman. "Are you, too, a great politician, sir?" said she, in English.

"No, mem! I'm all for the ladies."

"What does he say?" asked Madame Caumartin.

"*Monsieur Higgins est tout pour les dames.*"

"To be sure he is," cried M. Love; "all the English are, especially with that colored hair; a lady who likes a passionate adorer should always marry a man with gold-colored hair—always. What do *you* say, Mademoiselle Adèle?"

"Oh, I like fair hair," said mademoiselle, looking bashfully askew at Monsieur Goupille's *perruque*. "Grandmamma said her papa—the marquis—used yellow powder: it must have been very pretty."

"Rather *à la sucre d'orge*," remarked the *épicier*, smiling on the right right side of his mouth, where his best teeth were.

Mademoiselle de Courval looked displeased. "I fear you are a Republican, Monsieur Goupille?"

"I, mademoiselle? No, I'm for the Restoration;" and again the *épicier* perplexed himself to discover the association of idea between republicanism and *sucre d'orge*.

"Another glass of wine. Come, another," said M. Love, stretching across the vicomte to help Madame Caumartin.

"Sir," said the tall Frenchman with the ribbon, eying the *épicier* with great disdain, "you say you are for the Restoration—I am for the Empire—*Moi!*"

"No politics!" cried M. Love. "Let us adjourn to the *salon*."

The vicomte, who had seemed supremely *ennuyé* during this dialogue, plucked M. Love by the sleeve as he rose, and whispered petulantly, "I do not see any one here to suit me, Monsieur Love—none of my rank."

"*Mon Dieu!*" answered M. Love; "*point d'argent, point Suisse.* I could introduce you to a duchess, but then the fee is high. There's Mademoiselle de Courval—she dates from the Carlovingians."

"She is very like a boiled sole," answered the vicomte, with a wry face. "Still—what dower *has* she?"

"Forty thousand francs, and sickly," replied M. Love: "but she likes a tall man, and Monsieur Goupille is—"

"Tall men are never well made," interrupted the vicomte, angrily; and he drew himself aside as M. Love, gallantly advancing, gave his arm to Madame Beavor, because the Pole had, in rising, folded both his arms across his breast.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said M. Love to Madame Beavor, as they adjourned to the *salon*, "I don't think you manage than brave man well."

"*Ma foi, comme il est ennuyeux avec sa Pologne*," replied Madame Beavor, shrugging her shoulders.

"True, but he is a very fine-shaped man; and it is a comfort to think that one will have no rival but his country. Trust me, and encourage him a little more; I think he would suit you to a T."

Here the *garçon* engaged for the evening announced Monsieur and Madame Girand; whereupon there entered a little—little couple, very fair, very plump, and very like each other. This was M. Love's show couple—his decoy ducks—his last best example of match-making; they had been married two months out of the *bureau*, and were the admiration of the neighborhood for their conjugal affection. As they were now united, they had ceased to frequent the *table d'hote;* but M. Love often invited them after the dessert, *pour encourager les autres*.

"My *dear* friends," cried M. Love, shaking each by the hand, "I am ravished to see you. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the happiest couple in Christendom; if I had done nothing else in my life but to bring them together, I should not have lived in vain!"

The company eyed the objects of this eulogium with great attention.

"Monsieur, my prayer is to deserve my *bonheur*," said Monsieur Giraud.

"*Cher ange!*" murmured madame: and the happy pair seated themselves next to each other.

M. Love, who was all for those innocent pastimes which do away with conventional formality and reserve, now proposed a game at "Hunt the Slipper," which was welcomed by the whole party except the Pole and the vicomte; though Mademoiselle Adèle looked prudish, and observed to the *épicier* "that Monsieur Lofe was so droll! but she should not have liked her *pauvre grandmaman* to see her."

The vicomte had stationed himself opposite to Mademoiselle de Courval, and kept his eyes fixed on her very tenderly.

"Mademoiselle, I see, does not approve of such *bourgeois* diversions," said he.

"No, monsieur," said the gentle Adèle. "But I think we must sacrifice our own tastes to those of the company."

"It is a very amiable sentiment," said the *épicier*.

"It was one attributed to grandmamma's papa, the Marquis de Courval. It has become quite a hackneyed remark since," said Adèle.

"Come, ladies," said the joyous Rosalie, "I volunteer my slipper."

"*Asseyez-vous donc*," said Madame Beavor to the Pole. "Have you no games of this sort in Poland?"

"Madame, *La Pologne* is no more," said the Pole. "But with the swords of her brave—"

"No swords here, if you please," said M. Love, putting his vast hands on the Pole's shoulders, and sinking him forcibly down into the circle now formed.

The game proceeded with great vigor and much laughter from Rosalie, M. Love, and Madame Beavor, especially whenever the last thumped the Pole with the heel of the slipper. Monsieur Giraud was always sure that Madame Giraud had the slipper about her, which persuasion on his part gave rise to many little endearments, which are always so innocent among married people. The vicomte and the *épicier* were equally certain the slipper was with Mademoiselle Adèle, who defended herself with much more energy than might have been supposed in one so gentle. The *épicier*, however, grew jealous of the attentions of his noble rival, and told him that he *gênê*'d mademoiselle; whereupon the vicomte called him an *impertinent;* and the tall Frenchman with the red ribbon sprung up and said,

"Can I be of any assistance, gentlemen?"

Therewith M. Love, the great peace-maker, interposed, and, reconciling the rivals, proposed to change the game to *Colin Maillard, Anglice*, "Blind Man's Buff." Rosalie clapped her hands, and offered herself to be blindfolded. The tables and chairs were cleared away; and Madame Beavor pushed the Pole into Rosalie's arms, who, having felt him about the face for some moments, guessed him to be the tall Frenchman. During this time Monsieur and Madame Giraud hid themselves behind the window-curtain.

"Amuse yourself, *mon ami*," said Madame Beavor to the liberated Pole.

"Ah, madame," sighed Monsieur Sovolofski, "how can I be gay! All my property confiscated by the Emperor of Russia! Has *La Pologne* no Brutus?"

"I think you are in love," said the host, clapping him on the back.

"Are you *quite* sure," whispered the Pole to the match-maker, "that Madame Beavor has *vingt mille livres de rentes?*"

"Not a *sous* less."

The Pole mused, and glancing at Madame Beavor, said, "And yet, madame, your charming gayety consoles me amid all my sufferings;" upon which Madame Beavor called him "flatterer," and rapped his knuckles with her fan: the latter proceeding the brave Pole did not seem to like, for he immediately buried his hands in his trowsers pockets.

The game was now at its meridian. Rosalie was uncommonly active, and flew about here and there, much to the harassment of the Pole, who repeatedly wiped his forehead, and remarked that it was warm work, and put him in mind of the last sad battle for *La Pologne*. Monsieur Goupille, who had lately taken lessons in dancing, and was vain of his agility, mounted the chairs and tables, as Rosalie approached, with great grace and gravity. It so happened that in these saltations he ascended a stool near the curtain behind which Monsieur and Madame Giraud were ensconced. Somewhat agitated by a slight fluttering behind the folds, which made him fancy, on the sudden panic, that Rosalie was creeping that way, the *épicier* made an abrupt *pirouette*, and the hook on which the curtains were suspended caught his left coat-tail:

"The fatal gesture left the unguarded side."

just as he turned to extricate the garment from that dilemma, Rosalie sprung upon him, and, naturally lifting her hands to that height where she fancied the human face divine, took another extremity of Monsieur Goupille's graceful frame, thus exposed, by surprise.

"I don't know who this is. *Quelle drôle de visage!*" muttered Rosalie.

"*Mais*, madame," faltered Monsieur Goupille, looking greatly disconcerted.

The gentle Adèle, who did not seem to relish this adventure, came to the relief of her wooer, and pinched Rosalie very sharply in the arm.

"That's not fair. But I will know who this is," cried Rosalie, angrily; "you sha'n't escape!"

A sudden and universal burst of laughter roused her suspicions—she drew back—and exclaiming, "*Mais, quelle mauvaise plaisanterie; c'est trop fort!*" applied her fair hand to the place in dispute with so hearty a good-will, that Monsieur Goupille uttered a dolorous cry, and sprung from the chair, leaving the coat-tail (the cause of all his woe) suspended upon the hook.

It was just at this moment, and in the midst of the excitement caused by Monsieur Goupille's misfortune, that the door opened, and the *garçon* reappeared, followed by a young man in a large cloak.

The new-comer paused at the threshold, and gazed around him in evident surprise.

"*Diable!*" said M. Love, approaching, and gazing hard at the stranger. "Is it possible? You are, then, come at last? Welcome!"

"But said the stranger, apparently still bewildered, "there is some mistake; you are not—"

"Yes, I am M. Love!—Love all the world over. How is our friend Gregg? Told you to address yourself to M. Love, eh? Mum! Ladies and gentlemen, an acquisition to our party. Fine fellow, eh? Five feet eleven without his shoes, and young enough to hope to be thrice married before he dies. When did you arrive?"

"To-day."

And thus Philip Morton and Mr. William Gawtrey met once more.

CHAPTER II.

"Happy the man who, void of care and strife,
In silken or in leathern purse retains
A splendid shilling!"

The Splendid Shilling.

"And wherefore should they take or care for thought,
The unreasoning vulgar willingly obey,
And leaving toil and poverty behind,
Run forth by different ways, the blissful boon to find."

WEST'S *Education.*

"Poor boy! your story interests me. The events are romantic, but the moral is practical, old, everlasting—life, boy, life. Poverty by itself is no such great curse; that is, if it stops short of starving. And passion by itself is a noble thing, sir; but poverty and passion together—poverty and feeling—poverty and pride—the poverty not of birth, but reverse; and the man who ousts you out of your easy-chair, kicking you with every turn he takes as he settles himself more comfortably—why, there's no romance in that—hard every-day life, sir! Well, well: so, after your brother's letter, you resigned yourself to that fellow, Smith."

"No; I gave him my money, not my soul. I turned from his door with a few shillings that he himself thrust into my hand, and walked on—I cared not whither—out of the town, into the fields, till night came; and then just as I suddenly entered on the high-road, many miles away, the moon rose, and I saw by the hedgeside something that seemed like a corpse! it was an old beggar, in the last stage of raggedness, disease, and famine. He had lain himself down to die. I shared with him what I had, and helped him to a little inn. As he crossed the threshold, he turned round and blessed me. Do you know, the moment I heard that blessing, a stone seemed rolled away from my heart. I said to myself, 'What, then! even *I* can be of use to some one; and I am better off than that old man, for I have youth and health.' As these thoughts stirred in me, my limbs before heavy with fatigue, grew light; a strange kind of excitement seized me. I ran on gayly beneath the moonlight that smiled over the crisp, broad road. I felt as if no house, not even a palace, were large enough for me that night. And when, at last wearied out, I crept into a wood and laid myself down to sleep, I still murmured to myself, 'I have youth and health.' But in the morning, when I rose, I stretched out my arms, and missed my brother! . . . . In two or three days I found employment with a farmer; but we quarreled after a few weeks, for once he wished to strike me; and, somehow or other, I could work, but not serve. Winter had begun when we parted—oh, such a winter! Then—then I knew what it was to be houseless. How I lived for some months—if to live it can be called—it would pain you to hear, and humble me to speak. At last, I found myself again in London; and one evening, not many days since I resolved at last—for nothing else seemed left, and I had not touched food for two days—to come to you."

"And why did that never occur to you before?"

"Because," said Philip, with a deep blush, "because I trembled at the power over my actions and my future life that I was to give to one whom I was to bless as a benefactor, yet distrust as a guide."

"Well," said Love or Gawtrey, with a singular mixture of irony and compassion in his voice, "and it was hunger then, that terrified you at last, even more than I?"

"Perhaps hunger, or perhaps rather the reasoning that comes from hunger. I had not, I say, touched food for two days; and I was standing on that bridge from which on one side, you see the palace of a head of the Church, on the other the towers of the Abbey, within which the men I have read of in history lie buried. It was a cold, frosty evening, and the river below looked bright with the lamps and stars. I leaned, weak and sickening, against the wall of the bridge; and in one of the arched recesses beside me a cripple held out his hat for pence. I envied him! He had a livelihood: he was inured to it—perhaps bred to it; he had no shame. By a sudden impulse, I too turned abruptly round held out my hand to the first passenger, and started at the shrillness of my own voice as it cried 'Charity.'"

Gawtrey threw another log on the fire, looked complacently round the comfortable room, and rubbed his hands. The young man continued:

"'You should be ashamed of yourself. I've a great mind to give you up to the police,' was the answer in a pert and sharp tone. I looked up and saw the livery my father's menials had worn. I had been begging my bread from Robert Beaufort's lackey! I said nothing; the man went on his business on tiptoe, that the mud might not splash above the soles of his shoes. Then thoughts so black that they seemed to blot out every star from the sky—thoughts I had often wrestled against, but to which I now gave myself up with a sort of mad joy—seized me, and I remembered you. I had still preserved the address you gave me; I went straight to the house. Your friend, on naming you, received me kindly, and, without question, placed food before me—pressed on me clothing and money—procured me a passport—gave me your address—and now I am beneath your roof. Gawtrey, I know nothing yet of the world but the dark side of it. I know not what to deem of you; but, as you alone have been kind to me, so it is to your kindness rather than your aid that I now cling—your kind words and kind looks—yet—" he stopped short and breathed hard.

"Yet you would know more of me. Faith, my boy, I can not tell you more at this moment. I believe, to speak fairly, I don't live exactly within the pale of the law. But I'm not a villain! I never plundered my friend, and called it play! I never murdered my friend, and called it honor! I never seduced my friend's wife and called it gallantry!" As Gawtrey said this, he drew the words out, one by one, through his grinded teeth, paused and resumed more gayly, "I struggle with Fortune—*voilà tout!* I am not—what you seem to suppose—exactly a swindler, certainly not a robber! But, as I before told you, I am a charlatan: so is every man who strives to be richer or greater than he is. I too want kindness as much as you do. My bread and my cup are at your service. I will try and keep you unsullied even by the clean dirt that now and then sticks to me. On the other hand, youth, my young friend, has no right to play the censor; and you must take me as you take the world, without being over scrupulous and dainty. My present vocation pays well; in

fact, I am beginning to lay by. My real name and past life are thoroughly unknown, and, as yet, unsuspected in this *quartier;* for, though I have seen much of Paris, my career hitherto has passed in other parts of the city; and, for the rest, own that I am well disguised! What a benevolent air this bald forehead gives me, eh? True," added Gawtrey, somewhat more seriously, "if I saw how you could support yourself in a broader path of life than that in which I pick out my own way, I might say to you, as a gay man of fashion might say to some sober stripling —nay, as many a dissolute father says (or ought to say) to his son, 'It's no reason you should be a sinner because I am not a saint.' In a word, if you were well off in a respectable profession, you might have safer acquaintances than myself. But as it is, upon my word, as a plain man, I don't see what you can do better." Gawtrey made this speech with so much frankness and ease, that it seemed greatly to relieve the listener; and when he wound up with, "What say you? In fine, my life is that of a great schoolboy, getting into scrapes for the fun of it, and fighting his way out as he best can! Will you see how you like it?" Philip, with a confiding and grateful impulse, put his hand into Gawtrey's. The host shook it cordially, and, without saying another word, showed his guest into a little cabinet where there was a sofa-bed, and they parted for the night.

The new life upon which Philip Morton entered was so odd, so grotesque, and so amusing, that at his age it was perhaps natural that he should not be clear-sighted as to its danger.

William Gawtrey was one of those men who are born to exert a certain influence and ascendency wherever they may be thrown; his vast strength, his redundant health, had a power of themselves—a moral as well as physical power. He naturally possessed high animal spirits, beneath the surface of which, however, at times there was visible a certain under-current of malignity and scorn. He had evidently received a superior education, and could command at will the manners of a man not unfamiliar with a politer class of society. From the first hour Philip had seen him on the top of the coach on the R—— road, this man had attracted his curiosity and interest; the conversation he had heard in the church-yard, the obligations he owed to Gawtrey in his escape from the officers of justice, the time afterward passed in his society till they separated at the little inn, the rough and hearty kindliness Gawtrey had shown him at that period, and the hospitality extended to him now, all contributed to excite his fancy, and in much—indeed, very much—entitled this singular person to his gratitude. Morton, in a word, was fascinated; this man was the only friend he had made. I have not thought it necessary to detail to the reader the conversations that had taken place between them during that passage of Morton's life when he was before for some days Gawtrey's companion; yet those conversations had sunk deep in his mind. He was struck, and almost awed, by the profound gloom which lurked under Gawtrey's broad humor; a gloom, not of temperament, but of knowledge. His views of life, of human justice and human virtue, were (as, to be sure, is commonly the case with men who have had reason to quarrel with the world) dreary and despairing; and Morton's own experience had been so sad, that these opinions were more influential than they could ever have been with the happy. However, in this, their second reunion, there was a greater gayety than in their first; and, under his host's roof, Morton insensibly, but rapidly, recovered something of the early and natural tone of his impetuous and ardent spirits. Gawtrey himself was generally a boon companion; their society, if not select, was merry. When their evenings were disengaged, Gawtrey was fond of haunting *cafés* and theaters, and Morton was his companion; Birnie (Mr. Gawtrey's partner) never accompanied them. Refreshed by this change of life, the very person of this young man regained its bloom and vigor, as a plant, removed from some choked atmosphere and unwholesome soil, where it had struggled for light and air, expands on transplanting; the graceful leaves burst from the long, drooping boughs, and the elastic crest springs upward to the sun in the glory of its young prime. If there was still a certain fiery sternness in his aspect, it had ceased, at least, to be haggard and savage; it even suited the character of his dark and expressive features. He might not have lost the something of the tiger in his fierce temper, but, in the sleek hues and the sinewy symmetry of the frame, he began to put forth also something of the tiger's beauty.

Mr. Birnie did not sleep in the house; he went home nightly to a lodging at some little distance. We have said but little about this man, for, to all appearance, there was little enough to say; he rarely opened his own mouth except to Gawtrey, with whom Philip often observed him engaged in whispered conferences, to which he was not admitted. His eye, however, was less idle than his lips; it was not a bright eye; on the contrary, it was dull, and, to the unobservant, lifeless, of a pale blue, with a dim film over it—the eye of a vulture; but it had in it a calm, heavy, stealthy watchfulness, which inspired Morton with great distrust and aversion. Mr. Birnie not only spoke French like a native, but all his habits, his gestures, his tricks of manner were French; not the French of good society, but more idiomatic, as it were, and popular. He was not exactly a vulgar person—he was too silent for that—but he was evidently of low extraction and coarse breeding; his accomplishments were of a mechanical nature; he was an extraordinary arithmetician; he was a very skillful chemist, and kept a laboratory at his lodgings; he mended his own clothes and linen with incomparable neatness. Philip suspected him of blacking his own shoes—but that was prejudice. Once he found Morton sketching horses' heads—*pour se désennuyer;* and he made some short criticisms on the drawings, which showed him well acquainted with the art. Philip, surprised, sought to draw him into conversation; but Birnie eluded the attempt, and observed that he had once been an engraver.

Gawtrey himself did not seem to know much of the early life of this person, or, at least, he did not seem to like much to talk of him. The footstep of Mr. Birnie was gliding, noiseless, and cat-like; he had no sociality in him—enjoyed nothing—drank hard, but was never drunk. Somehow or other, he had evidently over Gawtrey an influence little less than Gawtrey had over

Morton, but it was of a different nature: Morton had conceived an extraordinary affection for his friend, while Gawtrey seemed secretly to dislike Birnie, and to be glad whenever he quitted his presence. It was, in truth, Gawtrey's custom, when Birnie retired for the night, to rub his hands, bring out the punch-bowl, squeeze the lemons, and while Philip, stretched on the sofa, listened to him, between sleep and waking, to talk on for the hour together, often till daybreak, with that *bizarre* mixture of knavery and feeling, drollery and sentiment, which made the dangerous charm of his society.

One evening, as they thus sat together, Morton, after listening for some time to his companion's comments on men and things, said abruptly.

"Gawtrey! there is so much in you that puzzles me, so much which I find it difficult to reconcile with your present pursuits, that, if I ask no indiscreet confidence, I should like greatly to hear some account of your early life. It would please me to compare it with my own; when I am your age, I will then look back and see what I owed to your example."

"My early life! Well—you shall hear it. It will put you on your guard, I hope, betimes against the two rocks of youth—love and friendship." Then, while squeezing the lemon into his favorite beverage, which Morton observed he made stronger than usual, Gawtrey thus commenced

THE HISTORY OF A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.

CHAPTER III.

"All his success must on himself depend,
He had no money, counsel, guide, or friend;
With spirit high, John learn'd the world to brave,
And in both senses was a ready knave."—CRABBE.

"My grandfather sold walking-sticks and umbrellas in the little passage by Exeter 'Change; he was a man of genius and speculation. As soon as he had scraped together a little money, he lent it to some poor devil with a hard landlord, at twenty per cent., and made him take half the loan in umbrellas or bamboos. By these means he got his foot into the ladder, and climbed upword and upward, till, at the age of forty, he had amassed £5000. He then looked about for a wife. An honest trader in the Strand, who dealt largely in cotton prints, possessed an only daughter; this young lady had a legacy, from a great aunt, of £3220, with a small street in St. Giles's, where the tenants paid weekly (all thieves or rogues—all, so the rents were sure). Now, my grandfather conceived a great friendship for the father of this young lady; gave him a hint as to a new pattern in spotted cottons; enticed him to take out a patent, and lent him £700 for the speculation; applied for the money at the very moment cottons were at their worst, and got the daughter instead of the money; by which exchange, you see, he won £2520, to say nothing of the young lady. My grandfather then entered into partnership with the worthy trader, carried on the patent with spirit, and begat two sons. As he grew older, ambition seized him; his sons should be gentlemen: one was sent to college, the other put into a marching regiment. My grandfather meant to die worth a plum; but a fever he caught in visiting his tenants in St. Giles's, prevented him, and he only left £20,000, equally divided between the sons. My father, the college man" (here Gawtrey paused a moment, took a large draught of the punch, and resumed with a visible effort)—"my father, the college man, was a person of rigid principles; bore an excellent character; had a great regard for the world. He married early and respectably: I am the sole fruit of that union. He lived soberly; his temper was harsh and morose, his home gloomy; he was a very severe father, and my mother died before I was ten years old. When I was fourteen, a little old Frenchman came to lodge with us; he had been persecuted under the old *régime* for being a philosopher; he filled my head with odd crotchets, which, more or less, have stuck there ever since. At eighteen I was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge. My father was rich enough to have let me go up in the higher rank of a pensioner, but he had lately grown avaricious; he thought that I was extravagant; he made me a sizar, perhaps to spite me. Then, for the first time, those inequalities in life which the Frenchman had dinned into my ears, met me practically. A sizar! another name for a dog! I had such strength, health, and spirits, that I had more life in my little finger than half the fellow-commoners—genteel, spindle-shanked striplings, who might have passed for a collection of my grandfather's walking-canes—had in their whole bodies. And I often think," continued Gawtrey, "that health and spirits have a great deal to answer for! When we are young, we so far resemble savages—who are Nature's young people—that we attach prodigious value to physical advantages. My feats of strength and activity—the clods I thrashed, and the railings I leaped, and the boat-races I won—are they not written in the chronicle of St. John's? These achievements inspired me with an extravagant sense of my own superiority; I could not but despise the rich fellows whom I could have blown down with a sneeze. Nevertheless, there was an impassable barrier between me and them: a sizar was not a proper associate for the favorites of fortune! But there was one young man, a year younger than myself, of high birth, and the heir to considerable wealth, who did not regard me with the same supercilious insolence as the rest; his very rank, perhaps, made him indifferent to the little conventional formalities which influence persons who can not play at foot-ball with this round world: he was the wildest youngster in the University; lamp-breaker; tandem-driver; mob-fighter; a very devil, in short; clever, but not in the reading line; small and slight, but brave as a lion. Congenial habits made us intimate, and I loved him like a brother; better than a brother—as a dog loves his master. In all our rows I covered him with my body. He had but to say to me, 'Leap into the water,' and I would not have stopped to pull off my coat. In short, I loved him as a proud man loves one who stands betwixt him and contempt, as an affectionate man loves one who stands between him and solitude. To cut short a long story, my friend, one dark night, committed an outrage against discipline, of the most unpardonable character. There was a sanctimonious, grave old fellow of the college crawling home from a tea-party;

my friend and another of his set seized, blindfolded, and handcuffed this poor wretch; carried him, *vi et armis*, back to the house of an old maid whom he had been courting for the last ten years, fastened his pigtail (he wore a long one) to the knocker, and so left him. You may imagine the infernal hubbub which his attempts to extricate himself caused in the whole street; the old maid's old maid-servant, after emptying on his head all the vessels of wrath she could lay her hand to, screamed 'Rape and murder!' The proctor and his bull-dogs came up, released the prisoner, and gave chase to the delinquents, who had incautiously remained near to enjoy the sport. The night was dark, and they reached the college in safety, but they had been tracked to the gates. For this offence *I* was expelled."

"Why, you were not concerned in it?" said Philip.

"No; but I was suspected and accused. I could have got off by betraying the true culprits; but my friend's father was in public life, a stern, haughty old statesman: young Lilburne was mortally afraid of him, the only person he *was* afraid of. If I had too much insisted on my innocence. I might have set inquiry on the right track. In fine, I was happy to prove my friendship for him. He shook me most tenderly by the hand on parting, and promised never to forget my generous devotion. I went home in disgrace: I need not tell you what *my* father said to me; I do not think he ever loved me from that hour. Shortly after this, my uncle, George Gawtrey, the captain, returned from abroad; he took a great fancy to me, and I left my father's house (which had grown insufferable) to live with him. He had been a very handsome man, a gay spendthrift; he had got through his fortune, and now lived on his wits: he was a professed gambler. His easy temper, his lively humor fascinated me; he knew the world well, and, like all gamblers, was generous when the dice were lucky, which, to tell you the truth, they generally were with a man who had no scruples. Though his practices were a little suspected, they had never been discovered. We lived in an elegant apartment, mixed familiarly with men of various ranks, and enjoyed life extremely. I brushed off my college rust, and conceived a taste for expense: I knew not why it was, but in my new existence every one was kind to me; to be sure, they were all *ne vaut rien*, and I had spirits that made me welcome every where. I was a scamp, but a frolicsome scamp, and that is always a popular character. As yet I was not dishonest, but saw dishonesty around me, and it seemed a very pleasant, jolly mode of making money, and now I again fell into contact with the young heir. My college friend was as wild in London as he had been at Cambridge; but the boy-ruffian, though not then twenty years of age, had grown into a man-villain."

Here Gawtrey paused, and frowned darkly.

"He had great natural parts, this young man; much wit, readiness, and cunning, and he became very intimate with my uncle. He learned of him how to play the dice and to pack the cards; he paid him £1000 for the knowledge!"

"How! a cheat? You said he was rich."

"His father was very rich, and he had a liberal allowance, but he was very extravagant; and rich men love gain as well as poor men do. He had no excuse but the grand excuse for all vice —SELFISHNESS. Young as he was, he became the fashion, and he fattened upon the plunder of his equals, who desired the honor of his acquaintance. Now I had seen my uncle cheat, but I had never imitated his example; when the man of fashion cheated, and made a jest of his earnings and my scruples, when I saw him courted, flattered, honored, and his acts unsuspected, because his connections embraced half the peerage, the temptation grew strong, but I still resisted it. However, my father always said I was born to be a good-for-nothing, and I could not escape my destiny. And now I suddenly fell in love: you don't know what that is yet; so much the better for you. The girl was beautiful, and I thought she loved me—perhaps she did—but I was too poor, so her friends said, for marriage. We courted, as the saying is, in the mean while. It was my love for her, my wish to deserve her, that made me iron against my friend's example. I was fool enough to speak to him of Mary, to present him to her: this ended in her seduction." (Again Gawtrey paused, and breathed hard.) "I discovered the treachery; I called out the seducer: he sneered, and refused to fight the low-born adventurer. I struck him to the earth, and *then* we fought; I was satisfied by a ball through my side! but *he*," added Gawtrey, rubbing his hands, and with a vindictive chuckle, "*he* was a cripple for life! When I recovered, I found that my foe, whose sick chamber was crowded with friends and comforters, had taken advantage of my illness to ruin my reputation. He, the swindler, accused me of his own crime: the equivocal character of my uncle confirmed the charge. *Him*, his own high-born pupil was enabled to unmask, and his disgrace was visited on me. I left my bed to find my uncle (all disguise over) an avowed partner in a hell; and myself, blasted alike in name, love, past and future. And then, Philip, then I recommenced that career which I have trodden since, the prince of good fellows and good-for-nothings, with ten thousand aliases, and as many strings to my bow. Society cast me off when I was innocent. Egad, I have had my revenge on society since! Ho! ho! ho!"

The laugh of this man had in it a moral infection. There was a sort of glorying in its deep tone: it was not the hollow hysteric of shame and despair—it spoke a sanguine joyousness! William Gawtrey was a man whose animal constitution had led him to take animal pleasure in all things: he had enjoyed the poisons he had lived on.

"But your father—surely your father—"

"My father," interrupted Gawtrey, "refused me the money (but a small sum) that, once struck with the strong impulse of a sincere penitence, I begged of him to enable me to get an honest living in an humble trade: his refusal soured the penitence; it gave me an excuse for my career; and conscience grapples to an excuse as a drowning wretch to a straw. And yet this hard father—this cautious, moral, money-loving man—three months afterward, suffered a rogue—almost a stranger—to decoy him into a speculation that promised to bring him fifty per

cent.: he invested in the traffic of usury what had sufficed to save a hundred such as I am from perdition, and he lost it all; it was nearly his whole fortune, but he lives, and has his luxuries still: he can not speculate, but he can save: he cared not if I starved, for he finds an hourly happiness in starving himself."

"And your friend," said Philip, after a pause, in which his young sympathies went dangerously with the excuses for his benefactor, "what has become of him, and the poor girl?"

"My friend became a great man; he succeeded to his father's peerage—a very ancient one—and to a splendid income—he is living still. Well, you shall hear about the *poor girl!* We are told of victims of seduction dying in a workhouse or on a dunghill, penitent, broken-hearted, and uncommonly ragged and sentimental; may be a frequent case, but it is not the worst. It is worse, I think, when the fair, penitent, innocent, credulous dupe becomes in her turn the deceiver; when she catches vice from the breath upon which she has hung; when she ripens, and mellows, and rots away into painted, blazing, staring, wholesale harlotry; when, in her turn, she ruins warm youth with false smiles and long bills; and when, worse, worse than all, when she has children—daughters, perhaps—brought up to the same trade, cooped, plumped for some hoary lecher, without a heart in their bosoms, unless a balance for weighing money may be called a heart: Mary became this; and I wish to Heaven she had rather died in an hospital! Her lover polluted her soul as well as her beauty: he found her another lover when he was tired of her. When she was at the age of thirty-six, I met her in Paris with a daughter of sixteen. I was then flush with money, frequenting *salons*, and playing the part of a fine gentleman; she did not know me at first, and she sought my acquaintance. For you must know, my dear friend," said Gawtrey, abruptly breaking off the thread of his narrative, "that I am not altogether the low dog you might suppose in seeing me here. At Paris—ah! you don't know Paris—there is a glorious ferment in society, in which the dregs are often uppermost. I came here at the Peace; and here have I resided the greater part of each year ever since. The vast masses of energy and life, broken up by the great thaw of the Imperial system, floating along the tide, are terrible icebergs for the vessel of the state. Some think Napoleonism over; its effects are only begun. Society is shattered from one end to the other, and I laugh at the little rivets by which they think to keep it together. But to return: Paris, I say, is the atmosphere for adventurers; new faces and new men are so common here that they excite no impertinent inquiry, it is so usual to see fortunes made in a day and spent in a month; except in certain circles, there is no walking round a man's character to spy out where it wants piecing! Some lean Greek poet put lead in his pockets to prevent being blown away; put gold in your pockets, and at Paris you may defy the sharpest wind in the world—yea, even the breath of that old Æolus—Scandal! Well, then, I had money—no matter how I came by it—and health, and gayety; and I was well received in the coteries that exist in all capitals, but mostly in France, where pleasure is the cement that joins many discordant atoms: here, I say, I met Mary, and her daughter by my old friend—the daughter, still innocent, but, *sacré!* in what an element of vice! We knew each other's secrets, Mary and I, and kept them: she thought me a greater knave than I was, and she intrusted to me her intention of selling her child to a rich English marquis. On the other hand, the poor girl confided to me her horror of the scenes she witnessed and the snares that surrounded her. What do you think preserved her pure from all danger? Bah! you will never guess! It was partly because, if example corrupts, it as often deters, but principally because she loved. A girl who loves one man purely has about her an amulet which defies the advances of the profligate. There was a handsome young Italian, an artist, who frequented the house—he was the man. I had to choose, then, between mother and daughter: I chose the last."

Philip seized hold of Gawtrey's hand, grasped it warmly, and the Good-for-nothing continued:

"Do you know that I loved that girl as well as I had ever loved the mother, though in another way? She *was* what I had fancied the mother *to be;* still more fair, more graceful, more winning, with a heart as full of love as her mother's had been of vanity. I loved that child as if she had been my own daughter; I induced her to leave her mother's house—I secreted her—I saw her married to the man she loved—I gave her away, and saw no more of her for several months."

"Why?"

"Because I spent them in prison! The young people could not live upon air; I gave them what I had, and in order to do more, I did something which displeased the police. I narrowly escaped that time; but I am popular—very popular; and, with plenty of witnesses, not over scrupulous, I got off! When I was released, I would not go to see them, for my clothes were ragged: the police still watched me, and I would not do *them* harm in the world! Ay! poor wretches! they struggled so hard: he could get very little by his art, though I believe he was a cleverish fellow at it, and the money I had given them could not last forever. They lived near the Champs Elysées, and at night I used to steal out and look at them through the window. They seemed so happy, and so handsome, and so good; but he looked sickly, and I saw that, like all Italians, he languished for his own warm climate. But man is born to act as well as to contemplate," pursued Gawtrey, changing his tone into the *allegro*, "and I was soon driven into my old ways, though in a lower line. I went to London just to give my reputation an airing; and when I returned, pretty flush again, the poor Italian was dead, and Fanny was a widow, with one boy, and *enceinte* with a second child. So then I sought her again, for her mother had found her out, and was at her with her devilish kindness; but Heaven was merciful, and took her away from both of us: she died in giving birth to a girl, and her last words were uttered to me, imploring me—the adventurer—the charlatan—the good-for-nothing—to keep her child from the clutches of her own mother. Well, sir, I did what I could for both the chil-

dren; but the boy was consumptive, like his father, and sleeps at Père la Chaise. The girl is here—you shall see her some day. Poor Fanny! if ever the devil will let me, I shall reform for her sake; meanwhile, for her sake I must get grist for the mill. My story is concluded, for I need not tell you of all my pranks—of all the parts I have played in life. I have never been a murderer, or a burglar, or a highway robber, or what the law calls a thief. I can only say as I said before, I have lived upon my wits, and they have been a tolerable capital on the whole. I have been an actor, a moneylender, a physician, a professor of animal magnetism (*that* was lucrative till it went out of fashion—perhaps it will come in again); I have been a lawyer, a house-agent, a dealer in curiosities and china; I have kept a hotel; I have set up a weekly newspaper; I have seen almost every city in Europe, and made acquaintance with some of its jails: but a man who has plenty of brains generally falls on his legs."

"And your father?" said Philip: and here he informed Gawtrey of the conversation he had overheard in the church-yard, but on which a scruple of natural delicacy had hitherto kept him silent.

"Well, now," said his host, while a slight blush rose to his cheeks, "I will tell you, that though to my father's sternness and avarice I attribute many of my faults, I yet always had a sort of love for him; and when in London, I accidentally heard that he was growing blind, and living with an artful old jade of a housekeeper, who might send him to rest with a dose of magnesia the night after she had coaxed him to make a will in her favor, I sought him out—and—but you say you heard what passed?"

"Yes; and I heard him also call you by name when it was too late, and I saw the tears on his cheeks."

"Did you? Will you swear to that?" exclaimed Gawtrey, with vehemence; and then shading his brow with his hand, he fell into a reverie that lasted some moments. "If any thing happen to me, Philip," he said, abruptly, "perhaps he may yet be a father to poor Fanny; and if he takes to her, she will repay him for whatever pain I may, perhaps, have cost him. Stop! now I think of it, I will write down his address for you—never forget it—there! It is time to go to bed."

Gawtrey's tale made a deep impression on Philip. He was too young, too inexperienced, too much borne away by the passion of the narrator, to see that Gawtrey had less cause to blame Fate than himself. True, he had been unjustly implicated in the disgrace of an unworthy uncle; but he had lived with that uncle, though he knew him to be a common cheat: true, he had been betrayed by a friend; but he had before known that friend to be a man without principle or honor. But what wonder that an ardent boy saw nothing of this—saw only the good heart that had saved a poor girl from vice, and sighed to relieve a harsh and avaricious parent? Even the hints that Gawtrey unawares let fall, of practices scarcely covered by the jovial phrase of "a great schoolboy's scrapes," either escaped the notice of Philip, or were charitably construed by him, in the compassion and the ignorance of a young, hasty, and grateful heart.

CHAPTER IV.

"And she's a stranger!
Women—beware women."
MIDDLETON.

"As we love our youngest children best,
So the last fruit of our affection,
Wherever we bestow it, is most strong:
Since 'tis indeed our latest harvest-home,
Last merriment 'fore winter!"
WEBSTER: *Devil's Law Case.*

"I would fain know what kind thing a man's heart is?
I will report it to you: 'tis a thing framed
With divers corners!"
ROWLEY.

I HAVE said that Gawtrey's tale made a deep impression on Philip; that impression was increased by subsequent conversations, more frank even than their talk had hitherto been. There was certainly about this man a fatal charm which concealed his vices. It arose, perhaps, from the perfect combination of his physical frame; from a health which made his spirits buoyant and hearty under all circumstances; and a blood so fresh, so sanguine, that it could not fail to keep the pores of the heart open. But he was not the less—for all his kindly impulses and generous feelings, and despite the manner in which, naturally anxious to make the least unfavorable portrait of himself to Philip, he softened and glossed over the practices of his life—a thorough and complete rogue; a dangerous, desperate, reckless dare-devil: it was easy to see when any thing crossed him, by the cloud on his shaggy brow, by the swelling of the veins on the forehead, by the dilation of the broad nostril, that he was one to cut his way through every obstacle to an end—choleric, impetuous, fierce, determined; such, indeed, were the qualities that made him respected among his associates, as his more bland and humorous ones made him beloved: he was, in fact, the incarnation of that great spirit which the laws of the world raise up against the world, and by which the world's injustice, on a large scale, is awfully chastised; on a small scale, merely nibbled at and harassed, as the rat that gnaws the hoof of the elephant: the spirit which, on a vast theater, rises up, gigantic and sublime, in the heroes of war and revolution—in Mirabeaus, Marats, Napoleons; on a minor stage, it shows itself in demagogues, fanatical philosophers, and mob-writers; and on the forbidden boards, before whose reeking lamps outcasts sit, at once audience and actors, it never produced a knave more consummate in his part, or carrying it off with more buskined dignity, than William Gawtrey. I call him by his aboriginal name; as for his other appellations, Bacchus himself had not so many!

One day a lady, richly dressed, was ushered by Mr. Birnie into the *bureau* of Mr. Love, alias Gawtrey. Philip was seated by the window, reading, for the first time, the "Candide;" that work, next to "Rasselas," the most hopeless and gloomy of the sports of genius with mankind. The lady seemed rather embarrassed when she perceived Mr. Love was not alone. She drew back, and, drawing her vail still more closely around her, said in French,

"Pardon me, I would wish a private conversation."

Philip rose to withdraw, when the lady, observing him with eyes whose luster shone through the vail, said gently,

"But perhaps the young gentleman is discreet."

"He is not discreet, he is discretion! my adopted son. You may confide in him—upon my honor you may, madam!" and Mr. Love placed his hand on his heart.

"He is very young," said the lady, in a tone of involuntary compassion, as, with a very white hand, she unclasped the buckle of her cloak.

"He can the better understand the curse of celibacy," returned Mr. Love, smiling.

The lady lifted part of her vail, and discovered a handsome mouth, and a set of small, white teeth; for she, too, smiled, though gravely, as she turned to Morton and said,

"You seem, sir, more fitted to be a votary of the temple than one of its officers. However, Monsieur Love, let there be no mistake between us: I do not come here to form a marriage, but to prevent one. I understand that Monsieur the Vicomte de Vaudemont has called into request your services. I am one of the vicomte's family; we are all anxious that he should not contract an engagement of the strange, and, pardon me, unbecoming character which must stamp a union formed at a public office."

"I assure you, madam," said Mr. Love, with dignity, "that we have contributed to the very first—"

"*Mon Dieu!*" interrupted the lady, with much impatience, "spare me a eulogy on your establishment: I have no doubt it is very respectable; and for *grisettes* and *épiciers* may do extremely well. But the vicomte is a man of birth and connections. In a word, what he contemplates is preposterous. I know not what fee Monsieur Love expects; but if he contrive to amuse Monsieur Vaudemont, and to frustrate every connection he proposes to form, that fee, whatever it may be, shall be doubled. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly, madam; yet it is not your offer that will bias me, but the desire to oblige so charming a lady."

"It is agreed, then?" said the lady, carelessly; and, as she spoke, she again glanced at Philip.

"If madame will call again, I will inform her of my plans," said Mr. Love.

"Yes, I will call again. Good-morning!" As she rose and passed Philip, she wholly put aside her vail, and looked at him with a gaze entirely free from coquetry, but curious, searching, and perhaps admiring: the look that an artist may give to a picture, that seems of more value than the place where he finds it would seem to indicate. The countenance of the lady herself was fair and noble, and Philip felt a strange thrill at his heart, as, with a slight inclination of her head, she turned from the room.

"Ah!" said Gawtrey, laughing, "this is not the first time I have been paid by relations to break off the marriages I had formed. Egad! if one could open a *bureau* to make married people single, one would be a Crœsus in no time! Well, then, this decides me to complete the union between Monsieur Goupille and Mademoiselle de Courval. I had balanced a little hitherto between the *épicier* and the vicomte. Now I will conclude matters. Do you know, Phil, I think you have made a conquest?"

"Pooh!" said Philip, coloring.

In effect, that very evening Mr. Love saw both the *épicier* and Adèle, and fixed the marriage-day. As Monsieur Goupille was a person of great distinction in the faubourg, this wedding was one that Mr. Love congratulated himself greatly upon; and he cheerfully accepted an invitation for himself and his partners to honor the *noces* with their presence.

A night or two before the day fixed for the marriage of Monsieur Goupille and the aristocratic Adèle, when Mr. Birnie had retired, Gawtrey made his usual preparations for enjoying himself. But this time the cigar and the punch seemed to fail of their effect; Gawtrey remained moody and silent; and Morton was thinking of the bright eyes of the lady who was so much interested against the amours of the Vicomte de Vaudemont.

At last Gawtrey broke silence:

"My young friend," said he, "I told you of my little *protégé*—I have been buying toys for her this morning—she is a beautiful creature: to-morrow is her birthday—she will then be six years old. But—but—" here Gawtrey sighed, "I fear she is not all right here," and he touched his forehead.

"I should like much to see her," said Philip, not noticing the latter remark.

"And you shall; you shall come with me to-morrow. Heighho! I should not like to die for her sake!"

"Does her wretched relation attempt to regain her?"

"Her relation! No; *she* is no more—she died about two years since! Poor Mary! I—well, this is folly. But Fanny is at present in a convent; they are all kind to her, but then I pay well; if I were dead and the pay stopped, again I ask, what would become of her, unless, as I before said, my father—"

"But you are making a fortune now?"

"If this lasts—yes; but I live in fear: the police of this cursed city are lynx-eyed: however, that is the bright side of the question."

"Why not have the child with you, since you love her so much? She would be a great comfort to you."

"Is this a place for a child—a girl?" said Gawtrey, stamping his foot impatiently. "I should go mad if I saw that villanous dead man's eye bent upon her!"

"You speak of Birnie. How can you endure him?"

"When you are my age you will know why we endure what we dread—why we make friends of those who else would be most horrible foes: no, no, nothing can deliver me of this man but Death. And—and—" added Gawtrey, turning pale, "I can not murder a man who eats my bread. There are stronger ties, my lad, than affection, that bind men like galley-slaves together. He who can hang you puts the halter round your neck, and leads you by it like a dog."

A shudder came over the young listener. And what dark secrets, known only to those two, had bound, to a man seemingly his subordinate and tool, the strong will and resolute temper of William Gawtrey?

"But begone, dull care!" exclaimed Gawtrey, rousing himself. "And, after all, Birnie is a useful fellow, and dare no more turn against

me than I against him! Why don't you drink more?

'Oh! have you e'er heard of the famed Captain Wattle?'"

and Gawtrey broke out into a loud Bacchanalian hymn, in which Philip could find no mirth, and from which the songster suddenly paused to exclaim,

"Mind you say nothing about Fanny to Birnie; my secrets with him are not of *that* nature. He could not hurt her, poor lamb! it is true—at least, as far as I can foresee. But one can never feel too sure of one's lamb if one once introduces it to the butcher!"

The next day being Sunday, the *bureau* was closed, and Philip and Gawtrey repaired to the convent. It was a dismal-looking place as to the exterior; but within there was a large garden, well kept, and, notwithstanding the winter, it seemed fair and refreshing compared with the polluted streets. The window of the room into which they were shown looked upon the green-sward, with walls covered with ivy at the farther end. And Philip's own childhood came back to him as he gazed on the quiet of the lonely place.

The door opened: an infant voice was heard; a voice of glee—of rapture; and a child, light and beautiful as a fairy, bounded to Gawtrey's breast.

Nestling there, she kissed his face, his hands, his clothes, with a passion that did not seem to belong to her age, laughing and sobbing almost at a breath.

On his part, Gawtrey appeared equally affected; he stroked down her hair with his huge hand, calling her all manner of pet names, in a tremulous voice that vainly struggled to be gay.

At length he took the toys he had brought with him from his capacious pockets and, strewing them on the floor, fairly stretched his vast bulk along; while the child tumbled over him, sometimes grasping at the toys, and then again returning to his bosom and laying her head there, looked up quietly into his eyes, as if the joy were too much for her.

Morton, unheeded by both, stood by with folded arms. He thought of his lost and ungrateful brother, and muttered to himself,

"Fool! when she is older she will forsake him!"

Fanny betrayed in her face the Italian origin of her father. She had that exceeding richness of complexion which, though not common even in Italy, is only to be found in the daughters of that land, and which harmonized well with the purple luster of her hair, and the full, clear iris of the dark eyes. Never were parted cherries brighter than her dewy lips; and the color of the open neck and the rounded arms was of a whiteness still more dazzling, from the darkness of the hair and the carnation of the glowing cheek.

Suddenly Fanny started from Gawtrey's arms, and, running up to Morton, gazed at him wistfully, and said in French,

"Who are you? Do you come from the moon? I think you do." Then, stopping abruptly, she broke into a verse of a nursery-song, which she chanted with a low, listless tone, as if she were not conscious of the sense. As she thus sung, Morton, looking at her, felt a strange and painful doubt seize him. The child's eyes, though soft, were so vacant in their gaze.

"And why do I come from the moon?" said he.

"Because you look sad and cross. I don't like you—I don't like the moon, it gives me a pain here!" and she put her hand to her temples. "Have you got any thing for Fanny—poor, poor Fanny?" and, dwelling on the epithet, she shook her head mournfully.

"You are rich Fanny, with all those toys."

"Am I? Every body calls me poor Fanny—every body but papa; and she ran again to Gawtrey, and laid her head on his shoulder.

"She calls me papa!" said Gawtrey, kissing her; "you hear it? Bless her!"

"And you never kiss any one but Fanny—you have no other little girl?" said the child, earnestly, and with a look less vacant than that which had saddened Morton.

"No other—no—nothing under Heaven, and perhaps above it, but you!" and he clasped her in his arms. "But," he added, after a pause, "but mind me, Fanny, you must like this gentleman. He will be always good to you; and he had a little brother whom he was as fond of as I am of you."

"No, I won't like him—I won't like any body but you and my sister!"

"Sister! Who is your sister?"

The child's face relapsed into an expression almost of idiotcy. "I don't know; I never saw her. I hear her sometimes, but I don't understand what she says. Hush! come here!" and she stole to the window on tiptoe. Gawtrey followed, and looked out.

"Do you hear her now?" said Fanny. "What does she say?"

As the girl spoke, some bird among the evergreens uttered a shrill, plaintive cry rather than song: a sound that the thrush occasionally makes in the winter, and which seems to express something of fear, and pain, and impatience.

"What does she say? Can you tell me?" asked the child.

"Pooh! that is a bird: why do you call it your sister?"

"I don't know! because it is—because it—because—I don't know—is it not in pain? Do something for it, papa!"

Gawtrey glanced at Morton, whose face betokened his deep pity, and, creeping up to him, whispered,

"Do you think she is really touched here? No, no, she will outgrow it—I am sure she will!"

Morton sighed.

Fanny by this time had again seated herself in the middle of the floor, and arranged her toys, but without seeming to take pleasure in them.

At last Gawtrey was obliged to depart. The lay sister who had charge of Fanny was summoned into the parlor, and then the child's manner entirely changed: her face grew purple; she sobbed with as much anger as grief; "She would not leave papa; she would not go—that she would not!"

"It is always so," whispered Gawtrey to Morton, in an abashed and apologetic voice. "It is so difficult to get away from her. Just go and talk with her while I steal out."

Morton went to her as she struggled with the patient, good-natured sister, and began to soothe

and caress her, till she turned on him her large humid eyes, and said mournfully,

"*Tu es méchant, tu.* Poor Fanny!"

"But this pretty doll—" began the sister.

The child looked at it joylessly.

"And papa is going to die!"

"Whenever monsieur goes," whispered the nun, "she always says that he is dead, and cries herself quietly to sleep; when monsieur returns, she says he is come to life again. Some one, I suppose, once talked to her about death; and she thinks, when she loses sight of any one, that *that* is death."

"Poor child!" said Morton, with a trembling voice.

The child looked up, smiled, stroked his cheek with her little hand, and said,

"Thank you! Yes! *poor* Fanny! Ah, he is going—see!—let me go too—*tu es méchant.*"

"But," said Morton, detaining her gently, "do you know that you give him pain? You make him cry by showing pain yourself. Don't make him so sad!"

The child seemed struck; hung down her head for a moment, as if in thought; and then, jumping from Morton's lap, ran to Gawtrey, put up her pouting lips, and said,

"One kiss more!"

Gawtrey kissed her and turned away his head.

"Fanny is a good girl;" and Fanny, as she spoke, went back to Morton, and put her little fingers into her eyes, as if either to shut out Gawtrey's retreat from her sight, or to press back her tears.

"Give me the doll now, Sister Marie."

Morton smiled and sighed; placed the child, who struggled no more, in the nun's arms, and left the room; but, as he closed the door, he looked back, and saw that Fanny had escaped from the sister, thrown herself on the floor, and was crying, but not aloud.

"Is she not a little darling?" said Gawtrey, as they gained the street.

"She is, indeed, a most beautiful child!"

"And you will love her if I leave her penniless," said Gawtrey, abruptly. "It was your love for your mother and your brother that made me like *you* from the first. Ay," continued Gawtrey, in a tone of great earnestness, "ay; and, whatever may happen to me, I will strive and keep you, my poor lad, harmless, and, what is better, innocent even of such matters as sit light enough on my own well-seasoned conscience. In turn, if ever you have the power, be good to her—yes, be good to her! I won't say a harsh word to you if ever you like to turn king's evidence against myself."

"Gawtrey!" said Morton, reproachfully, and almost fiercely.

"Bah! such things are! But, tell me honestly, do you think she is *very* strange—very deficient?"

"I have not seen enough of her to judge," answered Morton, evasively.

"She is so changeful!" persisted Gawtrey; "sometimes you would say that she was above her age, she comes out with such thoughtful, clever things; then, the next moment, she throws me into despair. These nuns are very skillful in education—at least they are said to be so. The doctors give me hope, too; you see her poor mother was very unhappy at the time of her birth—delirious, indeed—that may account for it. I often fancy that it is the constant excitement which her state occasions me that makes me love her so much; you see she is one who can never shift for herself. I *must* get money for her; I have left a little already with the superior, and I would not touch it to save myself from famine! If she has money, people will be kind enough to her. And then," continued Gawtrey, "you must perceive that she loves nothing in the world but me—me, whom nobody else loves! Well, well, now to the shop again!"

On returning home, the *bonne* informed them that a lady had called, and asked both for Monsieur Love and the young gentleman, and seemed much chagrined at missing both. By the description, Morton guessed she was the fair incognita, and felt disappointed at having lost the interview

CHAPTER V.

"The cursed carle was at his wonted trade,
Still tempting heedless men into his snare,
In witching wise, as I before have said;
But when he saw, in goodly gear arrayed,
The grave, majestic knight approaching nigh,
His countenance fell."

THOMSON: *Castle of Indolence.*

THE morning rose that was to unite Monsieur Goupille with Mademoiselle Adèle de Courval. The ceremony was performed, and bride and bridegroom went through that trying ordeal with becoming gravity. Only the elegant Adèle seemed more unaffectedly agitated than Mr. Love could well account for; she was very nervous in church, and more often turned her eyes to the door than to the altar. Perhaps she wanted to run away; but it was either too late or too early for that proceeding. The rite performed, the happy pair and their friends adjourned to the *Cadran Bleu*, that *restaurant* so celebrated in the festivities of the good citizens of Paris. Here Mr. Love had ordered, at the *épicier's* expense, a most tasteful entertainment.

"*Sacré!* but you have not played the economist, Monsieur Lofe," said Monsieur Goupille, rather querulously, as he glanced at the long room adorned with artificial flowers, and the table *à cinquante couverts.*

"Bah!" replied Mr. Love, "you can retrench afterward. Think of the fortune she brought you."

"It is a pretty sum, certainly," said Monsieur Goupille, "and the notary is perfectly satisfied."

"There is not a marriage in Paris that does me more credit," said Mr. Love; and he marched off to receive the compliments and congratulations that awaited him among such of the guests as were aware of his good offices. The Vicomte de Vaudemont was, of course, not present. He had not been near Mr. Love since Adèle had accepted the *épicier*. But Madame Beavor, in a white bonnet lined with lilac, was hanging sentimentally on the arm of the Pole, who looked very grand with his white favor; and Mr. Higgins had been introduced by Mr. Love to a little dark Creole, who wore paste diamonds, and had very languishing eyes; so that Mr. Love's heart might well swell with satisfaction at the

prospect of the various blisses to come, which might owe their origin to his benevolence. In fact, that arch-priest of the Temple of Hymen was never more great than he was that day; never did his establishmeut seem more solid, his reputation more popular, or his fortune more sure. He was the life of the party.

The banquet over, the revelers prepared for a dance. Monsieur Goupille, in tights, still tighter than he usually wore, and of a rich nankeen, quite new, with striped silk stockings, opened the ball with the lady of a rich *pâtissier* in the same faubourg; Mr. Love took out the bride. The evening advanced; and, after several other dances of ceremony, Monsieur Goupille conceived himself entitled to dedicate one to connubial affection. A country dance was called, and the *épicier* claimed the fair hand of the gentle Adèle. About this time, two persons, not hitherto perceived, had quietly entered the room, and, standing near the doorway, seemed examining the dancers, as if in search for some one. They bobbed their heads up and down, to and fro—now stooped, now stood on tiptoe. The one was a tall, large-whiskered, fair-haired man; the other a little, thin, neatly dressed person, who kept his hand on the arm of his companion, and whispered to him from time to time. The whiskered gentleman replied in a guttural tone, which proclaimed his origin to be German. The busy dancers did not perceive the strangers. The by-standers did, and a hum of curiosity circled round: who could they be? who had invited them? they were new faces in the faubourg—perhaps relations to Adèle?

In high delight, the fair bride was skipping down the middle, while Monsieur Goupille, wiping his forehead with care, admired her agility; when, lo and behold! the whiskered gentleman I have described abruptly advanced from his companion, and cried,

"*La voilà! sacré tonnerre!*"

At that voice—at that apparition, the bride halted; so suddenly, indeed, that she had not time to put down both feet, but remained with one high in air, while the other sustained itself on the light fantastic toe. The company naturally imagined this to be an operatic flourish which called for approbation. Monsieur Love, who was thundering down behind her, cried "Bravo!" and as the well-grown gentleman had to make a sweep to avoid disturbing her equilibrium, he came full against the whiskered stranger, and sent him off as a bat sends a ball.

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried Monsieur Goupille. "*Ma douce amie*—she has fainted away!" And, indeed, Adèle had no sooner recovered her balance, than she resigned it once more into the arms of the startled Pole, who was happily at hand.

In the mean time, the German stranger, who had saved himself from falling by coming with his full force upon the toes of Mr. Higgins, again advanced to the spot, and, rudely seizing the fair bride by the arm, exclaimed,

"No sham, if you please, madame. Speak! What the devil have you done with the money?"

"Really, sir," said Monsieur Goupille, drawing up his cravat, "this is very extraordinary conduct! What have you got to say to this lady's money? It is *my* money now, sir!"

"Oho! it is, is it? We'll soon see that. *Approchez donc, Monsieur Favart, faites votre devoir.*"

At these words, the small companion of the stranger slowly sauntered to the spot, while, at the sound of his name and the tread of his step, the throng gave way to the right and left: for Monsieur Favart was one of the most renowned chiefs of the great Parisian police—a man worthy to be the contemporary of the illustrious Vidocq.

"*Calmez vous, messieurs;* do not be alarmed, ladies," said this gentleman, in the mildest of all human voices; and, certainly, no oil dropped on the waters ever produced so tranquilizing an effect as that small, feeble, gentle tenor. The Pole, in especial, who was holding the fair bride with both his arms, shook all over, and seemed about to let his burden gradually slide to the floor, when Monsieur Favart, looking at him with a benevolent smile, said,

"*Aha, mon brave! c'est toi. Restez donc. Restez, tendant toujours la dame!*"

The Pole, thus condemned, in the French idiom, "*always* to hold the *dame*," mechanically raised the arms he had previously dejected, and the police-officer, with an approving nod of the head, said,

"*Bon! ne bougez point, c'est ça!*"

Monsieur Goupille, in equal surprise and indignation to see his better half thus consigned, without any care to his own marital feelings, to the arms of another, was about to snatch her from the Pole, when Monsieur Favart, touching him on the breast with his little finger, said, in the suavest manner,

"*Mon bourgeois*, meddle not with what does not concern you!"

"With what does not concern *me!*" replied Monsieur Goupille, drawing himself up to so great a stretch, that he seemed pulling off his tights the wrong way. "Explain yourself, if you please! This lady is my wife!"

"Say that again, that's all!" cried the whiskered stranger, in most horrible French, and with a furious grimace, as he shook both his fists under the nose of the *épicier*.

"Say it again, sir," said Monsieur Goupille, by no means daunted; "and why should not I say it again? That lady is my wife!"

"You lie! *she is mine!*" cried the German; and, bending down, he caught the fair Adèle from the Pole, with as little ceremony as if she had never had a great grandfather a marquis, and giving her a shake that might have roused the dead, thundered out,

"Speak, Madame Bihl! Are you my wife or not?"

"*Monstre!*" murmured Adèle, opening her eyes.

"There; you hear—she owns me!" said the German, appealing to the company with a triumphant air.

"*C'est vrai!*" said the soft voice of the policeman. "And now, pray don't let us disturb your amusements any longer. We have a *fiacre* at the door. Remove your lady, Monsieur Bihl."

"Monsieur Lofe! Monsieur Lofe!" cried, or rather sneered the *épicier*, darting across the room, and seizing the *chef* by the tail of his coat just as he was half way through the door, "come back! *Quelle mauvais plaisanterie me faites vous ici!* Did you not tell me that lady

was single? Am I married or not? Do I stand on my head or my heels?"

"Hush, hush! *mon bon bourgeois!*" whispered Mr. Love; "all shall be explained to-morrow."

"Who is this gentleman?" asked Monsieur Favart, approaching Mr. Love, who, seeing himself in for it, suddenly jerked off the *épicier*, thrust his hands down into his breeches pockets, buried his chin in his cravat, elevated his eyebrows, screwed in his eyes, and puffed out his cheeks, so that the astonished Monsieur Goupille really thought himself bewitched, and literally did not recognize the face of the match-maker.

"Who is this gentleman?" repeated the little officer, standing beside, or rather, below, Mr. Love, and looking so diminutive by the contrast, that you might have fancied that the priest of Hymen had only to breathe to blow him away.

"Who should he be, monsieur?" cried, with great pertness, Madame Rosalie Caumartin, coming to the relief with the generosity of her sex: "this is Monsieur Lofe—*Anglais célèbre*. What have you to say against him?"

"He has got 500 francs of mine!" cried the *épicier*.

The policeman scanned Mr. Love with great attention.

"So you are in Paris again. *Hein! vous jouez toujours votre rôle!*"

"*Ma foi!*" said Mr. Love, boldly, "I don't understand what monsieur means; my character is well known; go and inquire it in London—ask the secretary of foreign affairs what is said of me—inquire of my ambassador—demand of my—"

"*Votre passeport, monsieur?*"

"It is at home. A gentleman does not carry his passport in his pocket when he goes to a ball!"

"I will call and see it: *au revoir!* Take my advice, and leave Paris; I think I have seen you somewhere!"

"Yet I have never had the honor to marry monsieur!" said Mr. Love, with a polite bow.

In return for his joke, the policeman gave Mr. Love one look—it was a quiet look, very quiet; but Mr. Love seemed uncommonly affected by it; he did not say another word, but found himself outside the house in a twinkling. Monsieur Favart turned round, and saw the Pole making himself as small as possible behind the goodly proportions of Madame Beavor.

"What name does that gentleman go by?"

"So—vo—lofski, the heroic Pole," cried Madame Beavor, with sundry misgivings at the unexpected cowardice of so great a patriot.

"*Hein!* take care of yourselves, ladies. I have nothing against that person this time. But Monsieur Latour has served his apprenticeship at the galleys, and is no more a Pole than I am a Jew."

"And this lady's fortune!" cried Monsieur Goupille, pathetically; "the settlements are all made, the notaries all paid. I am sure there must be some mistake."

Monsieur Bihl, who had by this time restored his lost Helen to her senses, stalked up to the *épicier*, dragging the lady along with him.

"Sir, there is no mistake! But, when I have got the money, if you like to have the lady, you are welcome to her."

"*Monstre!*" again muttered the fair Adèle.

"The long and the short of it," said Monsieur Favart, "is, that Monsieur Bihl, is a *brave garçon*, and has been half over the world as a courier."

"A courier!" exclaimed several voices.

"Madame was nursery-governess to an English *milord*. They married, and quarreled; no harm in that, *mes amis*—nothing more common. Monsieur Bihl is a very faithful fellow; nursed his last master in an illness that ended fatally, because he traveled with his doctor. *Milord* left him a handsome legacy; he retired from service, and fell ill, perhaps from idleness or beer. Is not that the story, Monsiuer Bihl?"

"He was always drunk, the wretch," sobbed Adèle.

"That was to drown my domestic sorrows," said the German; "and, when I was sick in my bed, madame ran off with my money. Thanks to monsieur, I have found both, and I wish you a very good night."

"*Dansez vous toujours, mes amis*," said the officer, bowing. And, following Adèle and her spouse, the little man left the room, where he had caused, in chests so broad and limbs so doughty, much the same consternation as that which some diminutive ferret occasions in a burrow of rabbits twice his size.

Morton had outstaid Mr. Love. But he thought it unnecessary to linger long after that gentleman's departure; and, in the general hubbub that ensued, he crept out unperceived, and soon arrived at the *bureau*. He found Mr. Love and Mr. Birnie already engaged in packing up their effects.

"Why, when did *you* leave?" said Morton to Mr. Birnie.

"I saw the policeman enter."

"And why the deuce did not you tell us?" said Gawtrey.

"Every man for himself. Besides, Mr. Love was dancing," replied Mr. Birnie, with a dull glance of disdain.

"Philosophy!" muttered Gawtrey, thrusting his dress-coat into his trunk; then, suddenly changing his voice, "Ha, ha! it was a very good joke, after all—own I did it well. Ecod! if he had not given me that look, I think I should have turned the tables on him. But those d—d fellows learn of the mad doctors how to tame us. Faith, my heart went down to my shoes; yet I'm no coward!"

"But, after all, he evidently did not know you," said Morton; "and what has he to say against you? Your trade is a strange one, but not dishonest. Why give up as if—"

"My young friend," interrupted Gawtrey, "whether the officer comes after us or not, our trade is ruined: that infernal Adèle, with her fabulous *grandmaman*, has done for us. Goupille will blow the temple about our ears. No help for it—eh, Birnie?"

"None."

"Go to bed, Philip: we'll call thee at daybreak, for we must make clear work before our neighbors open their shutters."

Reclined, but half undressed, on his bed in the little cabinet, Morton revolved the events of the evening. The thought that he should see no more of that white hand and that lovely mouth, which still haunted his recollection as appertaining to the incognita, greatly indisposed him

toward the abrupt flight intended by Gawtrey, while (so much had his faith in that person depended upon respect for his confident daring, and so thoroughly fearless was Morton's own nature) he felt himself greatly shaken in his allegiance to the chief by recollecting the effect produced on his valor by a single glance from the instrument of law. He had not yet lived long enough to be aware that men are sometimes the representatives of things; that what the scytale was to the Spartan hero, a sheriff's writ often is to a Waterloo medalist; that a Bow-street runner will enter the foulest den, where murder sits with his fellows, and pick out his prey with the beck of his fore-finger. That, in short, the thing called LAW, once made tangible and present, rarely fails to palsy the fierce heart of the thing called CRIME. For law is the symbol of all mankind reared against one foe—the man of crime. Not yet aware of this truth, nor indeed, in the least suspecting Gawtrey of worse offenses than those of a charlatanic and equivocal profession, the young man mused over his protector's cowardice in disdain and wonder; till, wearied with conjectures, distrust, and shame at his own strange position of obligation to one whom he could not respect, he fell asleep.

When he woke he saw the gray light of dawn, that streamed cheerlessly through his shutterless window, struggling with the faint ray of a candle that Gawtrey, shading with his hand, held over the sleeper. He started up, and, in the confusion of waking and the imperfect light by which he beheld the strong features of Gawtrey, half imagined it was a foe who stood before him.

"Take care, man!" said Gawtrey, as Morton, in this belief, grasped his arm. "You have a precious rough gripe of your own. Be quiet, will you? I have a word to say to you." Here Gawtrey, placing the candle on a chair, returned to the door and closed it.

"Look you," he said, in a whisper, "I have nearly ran through my circle of invention, and my wit, fertile as it is, can present to me little encouragement in the future. The eyes of this Favart, once on me, every disguise and every double will not long avail. I dare not return to London; I am too well known in Brussels, Berlin, and Vienna—"

"But," interrupted Morton, raising himself on his arm, and fixing his dark eyes upon his host, "but you have told me again and again that you have committed no crime—why, then, be so fearful of discovery?"

"Why!" repeated Gawtrey, with a slight hesitation, which he instantly overcame, "why! Have not you yourself learned that appearances have the effect of crimes? Were you not chased as a thief when I rescued you from your foe, the Law? Are you not, though a boy in years, under an alias, and an exile from your own land? And how can you put these austere questions to me, who am growing gray in the endeavor to to extract sunbeams from cucumbers—subsistence from poverty? I repeat that there are reasons why I must avoid, for the present, the great capitals. I must sink in life, and take to the provinces. Birnie is sanguine as ever; but he is a terrible sort of comforter. Enough of that. Now to yourself. Our savings are less than you might expect; to be sure Birnie has been treasurer, and I have laid by a little for Fanny, which I will rather starve than touch. There remain, however, 150 Napoleons, and our effects, sold at a fourth their value, will fetch 150 more. Here is your share. I have compassion on you. I told you I would bear you harmless and innocent. Leave us while yet time."

It seemed, then, to Morton that Gawtrey had divined his thoughts of shame and escape of the previous night; perhaps Gawtrey had: and such is the human heart, that, instead of welcoming the very release he had half contemplated, now that it was offered him, Philip shrunk from it as a base desertion.

"Poor Gawtrey!" said he, pushing back the canvas bag of gold held out to him, "you shall not go over the world, and feel that the orphan you fed and fostered left you to starve with your money in his pocket. When you again assure me that you have committed no crime, you again remind me that gratitude has no right to be severe upon the shifts and errors of its benefactor. If you do not conform to society, what has society done for me? No! I will not forsake you in a reverse. Fortune has given you a fall. What, then, courage, and at her again!"

These last words were said so heartily and cheerfully, as Morton sprung from the bed, that it inspirited Gawtrey, who had really desponded of his lot.

"Well," said he, "I can not reject the only friend left me; and while I live—but I will make no professions. Quick, then; our luggage is already gone, and I hear Birnie grunting the rogue's march of retreat."

Morton's toilet was soon completed, and the three associates bade adieu to the *bureau*.

Birnie, who was taciturn and impenetrable as ever, walked a little before as guide. They arrived, at length, at a *serrurier's* shop, placed in an alley near the Porte St. Denis. The *serrurier* himself, a tall, begrimed, black-bearded man, was taking the shutters from his shop as they approached. He and Birnie exchanged silent nods; and the former, leaving his work, conducted them up a very filthy flight of stairs to an attic, where a bed, two stools, one table, and an old walnut-tree bureau formed the sole articles of furniture. Gawtrey looked rather ruefully round the black, low, damp walls, and said, in a crest-fallen tone.

"We were better off at the Temple of Hymen. But get us a bottle of wine, some eggs, and a frying-pan—by Jove, I am a capital hand at an omelet!"

The *serrurier* nodded again, grinned, and withdrew.

"Rest here," said Birnie, in his calm, passionless voice, that seemed to Morton, however, to assume an unwonted tone of command. "I will go and make the best bargain I can for our furniture, buy fresh clothes, and engage our places for Tours."

"For Tours?" repeated Morton.

"Yes—there are some English there; one can live wherever there are English," said Gawtrey.

"Hum!" grunted Birnie, dryly; and buttoning up his coat, he walked slowly away.

About noon he returned with a bundle of clothes, which Gawtrey, who always regained his elasticity of spirit, wherever there was fair

play to his talents, examined with great attention, and many exclamations of "*Bon, c'est ça.*"

"I have done well with the Jew," said Birnie, drawing from his coat pocket two heavy bags; "one hundred and eighty Napoleons. We shall commence with a good capital.

"You are right, my friend," said Gawtrey.

The *serrurier* was then dispatched to the best *restaurant* in the neighborhood, and the three adventurers made a less Socratic dinner than might have been expected.

CHAPTER VI.

"Then out again he flies to wing his mazy round."
THOMSON: *Castle of Indolence.*

"Again he gazed: 'It is,' said he, 'the same;
There sits he upright in his seat secure,
As one whose conscience is correct and pure.'"
CRABBE.

THE adventurers arrived at Tours, and established themselves there in a lodging, without any incident worth narrating by the way.

At Tours Morton had nothing to do but to take his pleasure and enjoy himself. He passed for a young heir; Gawtrey for his tutor—a doctor in divinity; Birnie for his valet. The task of maintenance fell on Gawtrey, who hit off his character to a hair; larded his grave jokes with University scraps of Latin; looked big and well-fed; wore knee-breeches and a shovel-hat; and played whist with the skill of a veteran vicar. By his art in that game, he made, at first, enough, at least, to defray their weekly expenses. But, by degrees, the good people at Tours, who, under pretence of health, were there for economy, grew shy of so excellent a player; and, though Gawtrey always swore solemnly that he played with the most scrupulous honor (an asseveration which Morton, at least, implicitly believed), and no proof to the contrary was ever detected, yet a first-rate card-player is always a suspicious character, unless the losing parties know exactly who he is. The market fell off, and Gawtrey at length thought it prudent to extend their travels.

"Ah," said Mr. Gawtrey, "the world nowadays has grown so ostentatious, that one can not travel advantageously without a post character and four horses." At length they found themselves at Milan, which, at that time, was one of the El Dorados for gamesters. Here, however, for want of introductions, Mr. Gawtrey found it difficult to get into society. The nobles, proud and rich, played high, but were circumspect in their company; the *bourgeoise*, industrious and energetic, preserved much of the old Lombard shrewdness: there were no *table d'hôtes* and public reunions. Gawtrey saw his little capital daily diminishing, with the Alps at the rear, and Poverty in the van. At length, always on the *qui vive*, he contrived to make acquaintance with a Scotch family of great respectability. He effected this by picking up a snuff-box which the Scotchman had dropped in taking out his handkerchief. This politeness paved the way to a conversation, in which Gawtrey made himself so agreeable, and talked with such zest of the modern Athens, and the tricks practiced upon travelers, that he was presented to Mrs. Macgregor; cards were interchanged; and, as Mr. Gawtrey lived in tolerable style, the Macgregors pronounced him "a vara genteel mon." Once in the house of a respectable person, Gawtrey contrived to turn himself round and round, till he burrowed a hole into the English circle then settled at Milan. His whist-playing came into requisition, and once more Fortune smiled upon Skill.

To this house the pupil one evening accompanied the tutor. When the whist-party, consisting of two tables, was formed, the young man found himself left out with an old gentleman, who seemed loquacious and good-natured, and who put many questions to Morton which he found it difficult to answer. One of the whist-tables was now in a state of revolution, viz., a lady had cut out, and a gentlemen cut in, when the door opened, and Lord Lilburne was announced.

Mr. Macgregor, rising, advanced with great respect to this personage.

"I scarcely ventured to hope you would coom, Lord Lilburne, the night is so cold."

"You did not allow sufficiently, then, for the dullness of my solitary inn, and the attractions of your circle. Aha! whist, I see."

"You play sometimes?"

"Very seldom now; I have sown all my wild oats, and even the ace of spades can scarcely dig them out again."

"Ha! ha! vara gude."

"I will look on;" and Lord Lilburne drew his chair to the table, exactly opposite to Mr. Gawtrey.

The old gentleman turned to Philip.

"An extraordinary man, Lord Lilburne; you have heard of him, of course?"

"No, indeed; what of him?" asked the young man, rousing himself.

"What of him?" said the old gentleman, with a smile; "why, the newspapers, if you ever read them, will tell you enough of the elegant, the witty Lord Lilburne; a man of eminent talent, though indolent. He was wild in his youth, as clever men often are; but, on attaining his title and fortune, and marrying into the family of the then premier, he became more sedate. They say he might make a great figure in politics if he would. He has a very high reputation—very. People do say he is still fond of pleasure; but that is a common failing among the aristocracy. Morality is only found in the middling classes, young gentleman. It is a lucky family, that of Lilburne; his sister, Mrs. Beaufort—"

"Beaufort!" exclaimed Morton; and then muttered to himself. "Ah, true—true, I have heard the name of Lilburne before."

"Do you know the Beauforts? Well, you remember how luckily Robert, Lilburne's brother-in-law, came into that fine property just as his predecessor was about to marry a—"

Morton scowled at his garrulous acquaintance, and stalked abruptly to the card-table.

Ever since Lord Lilburne had seated himself opposite to Mr. Gawtrey, that gentleman had evinced a perturbation of manner that became obvious to the company. He grew deadly pale; his hands trembled; he moved uneasily in his seat; he missed deal; he trumped his partner's best diamond; finally he revoked, threw down his money, and said, with a forced smile, "That

the heat of the room overcame him." As he rose, Lord Lilburne rose also, and the eyes of both met. Those of Lilburne were calm, but penetrating and inquisitive in their gaze; those of Gawtrey were like balls of fire. He seemed gradually to dilate in his height, his broad chest expanded, he breathed hard.

"Ah, doctor," said Mr. Macgregor, "let me introduce you to Lord Lilburne."

The peer bowed haughtily; Mr. Gawtrey did not return the salutation, but with a sort of gulp, as if he were swallowing some burst of passion, strode to the fire; and then, turning round, again fixed his gaze upon the new guest. Lilburne, however, who had never lost his self-composure at this strange rudeness, was now quietly talking with their host.

"Your doctor seems an eccentric man—a little absent—learned, I suppose. Have you been to Como yet?"

Mr. Gawtrey remained by the fire, beating the devil's tattoo upon the chimney-piece, and ever and anon turning his glance toward Lilburne, who seemed to have forgotten his existence.

Both these guests staid till the party broke up, Mr. Gawtrey apparently wishing to outstay Lord Lilburne; for, when the last went down stairs, Mr. Gawtrey, nodding to his comrade, and giving a hurried bow to the host, descended also. As they passed the porter's lodge, they found Lilburne on the step of his carriage; he turned his head abruptly, and again met Mr. Gawtrey's eyes; paused a moment, and whispered over his shoulder,

"So we remember each other, sir? Let us not meet again; and, on that condition, bygones are bygones."

"Scoundrel!" muttered Gawtrey, clenching his fists; but the peer had sprung into his carriage with a lightness scarcely to be expected from his lameness, and the wheels whirled within an inch of the *soi disant* doctor's right pump.

Gawtrey walked on for some moments in great excitement; at length he turned to his companion:

"Do you guess who Lord Lilburne is? I will tell you: my first foe, and Fanny's grandfather! Now note the justice of Fate. Here is this man—mark well—this man, who commenced life by putting his faults on my own shoulders!—from that little boss has fungused out a terrible hump—this man, who seduced my affianced bride, and then left her whole soul, once fair and blooming—I swear it—with its leaves fresh from the dews of heaven, one rank leprosy—this man, who, rolling in riches, learned to cheat and pilfer as a boy learns to dance and play the fiddle, and (to damn me, whose happiness he had blasted) accused me to the world of his own crime!—here is this man, who has not left off one vice, but added to those of his youth the bloodless craft of the veteran knave—here is this man, flattered, courted, great, marching through lanes of bowing parasites to an illustrious epitaph and a marble tomb; and I, a rogue too, if you will, but rogue for my bread, dating from him my errors and my ruin! I—vagabond—outcast—skulking through tricks to avoid crime—why the difference? Because one is born rich and the other poor; because *he* has no excuse for crime, and, therefore, no one suspects him!"

The wretched man (for at that moment he was wretched) paused breathless from this passionate and rapid burst; and before him rose in its marble majesty, with the moon full upon its shining spires, the wonder of Gothic Italy—the Cathedral Church of Milan.

"Chafe not yourself at the universal fate," said the young man, with a bitter smile on his lips, and pointing to the Cathedral; "I have not lived long, but I have learned already enough to know this: he who could raise a pile like that, dedicated to Heaven, would be honored as a saint; he who knelt to God by the roadside under a hedge, would be sent to the house of correction as a vagabond! The difference between man and man is money, and will be, when you, the despised charlatan, and Lilburne, the honored cheat, have not left as much dust behind you as will fill a snuff-box. Comfort yourself; you are in the majority."

CHAPTER VII.

> "A desert wild
> Before them stretch'd bare, comfortless, and vast,
> With gibbets, bones, and carcasses defiled."
> THOMSON: *Castle of Indolence.*

MR. GAWTREY did not wish to give his foe the triumph of thinking he had driven him from Milan; he resolved to stay and brave it out; but when he appeared in public, he found the acquaintances he had formed bow politely, but cross to the other side of the way. No more invitations to tea and cards showered in upon the jolly parson. He was puzzled; for people, while they shunned him, did not appear uncivil. He found out, at last, that a report was circulated that he was deranged; though he could not trace this rumor to Lord Lilburne, he was at no loss to guess from whom it had emanated. His own eccentricities, especially his recent manner at Mr. Macgregor's, gave confirmation to the charge. Again the funds began to sink low in the canvas bags, and at length, in despair, Mr. Gawtrey was obliged to quit the field. They returned to France through Switzerland—a country too poor for gamesters; and, ever since the interview with Lilburne, a great change had come over Gawtrey's gay spirit: he grew moody and thoughtful; he took no pains to replenish the common stock; he talked much and seriously to his young friend of poor Fanny, and owned that he yearned to see her again. The desire to return to Paris haunted him like a fatality; he saw the danger that awaited him there, but it only allured him the more, as the candle that has singed its wings does the moth. Birnie, who, in all their vicissitudes and wanderings, their ups and downs, retained the same tacit, immovable demeanor, received with a sneer the orders at last to march back upon the French capital. "You would never have left it if you had taken my advice," he said, and quitted the room.

Mr. Gawtrey gazed after him and muttered, "Is the die then cast?"

"What does he mean?" said Morton.

"You will know soon," replied Gawtrey, and he followed Birnie; and from that time, the whispered conferences with that person, which had

seemed suspended during their travels, were renewed.

* * * * *

One morning, three men were seen entering Paris on foot through the Porte St. Denis. It was a fine day in spring, and the old city looked gay with its loitering passengers and gaudy shops, and under that clear, blue, exhilarating sky so peculiar to France.

Two of these men walked abreast, the other preceded them a few steps. The one who went first—thin, pale, and threadbare—yet seemed to suffer the least from fatigue: he walked with a long, swinging, noiseless stride, looking to the right and left from the corners of his eyes. Of the two who followed, one was handsome and finely formed, but of a swarthy complexion; young, yet with a look of care; the other, of a sturdy frame, leaned on a thick stick, and his eyes were gloomily cast down.

"Philip," said the last, "in coming back to Paris, I feel that I am coming back to my grave!"

"Pooh! you were equally despondent in our excursions elsewhere."

"Because I was always thinking of poor Fanny, and because—because—Birnie was ever at me with his horrible temptations!"

"Birnie! I loathe the man! Will you never get rid of him?"

"I can not! Hush! he will hear us! How unlucky we have been! and now, without a sous in our pockets—here the dunghill, there the jail. *We are in his power at last!*"

"His power! What mean you?"

"What, ho! Birnie!" cried Gawtrey, unheeding Morton's question, "let us halt and breakfast: I am tired."

"You forget! we have no money till we make it!" returned Birnie, coldly. "Come to the *serrurier's*—he will trust us!"

CHAPTER VIII.

"Gaunt Beggary and Scorn, with many hell-hounds more."
THOMSON: *Castle of Indolence.*

"The other was a fell, despiteful fiend."—*Ibid.*

"Your happiness behold! then straight a wand
He waved, an anti-magic power that hath
Truth from illusive falsehood to command."—*Ibid.*

"But what for us, the children of despair,
Brought to the brink of hell—what hope remains!
RESOLVE, RESOLVE!"—*Ibid.*

IT may be observed that there are certain years in which, in a civilized country, some particular crime comes into vogue. It flares its season, and then burns out. Thus at one time we have burking—at another, swingism—now suicide is in vogue—now poisoning tradespeople in apple-dumplings—now little boys stab each other with penknives—now common soldiers shoot at their sergeants. Almost every year there is one crime peculiar to it; a sort of annual which overruns the country, but does not bloom again. Unquestionably, the Press has a great deal to do with these epidemics. Let a newspaper once give an account of some out-of-the-way atrocity that has the charm of being novel, and certain depraved minds fasten to it like leeches. They brood over and revolve it; the idea grows up, a horrid phantasmalian monomania;* and all of a sudden, in a hundred different places, the one seed sown by the leaden types springs up into foul flowering. But if the first reported aboriginal crime has been attended with impunity, how much more does the imitative faculty cling to it. Ill-judged mercy falls, not like dew, but like a great heap of manure on the rank deed.

Now it happened that, at the time I write of, or, rather, a little before, there had been detected and tried in Paris a most redoubted coiner. He had carried on the business with a dexterity that won admiration even for the offense; and, moreover, he had served previously with some distinction at Austerlitz and Marengo. The consequence was, that the public went with instead of against him, and his sentence was transmuted to three years' imprisonment by the government: for all governments in free countries aspire rather to be popular than just.

No sooner was this case reported in the journals—and even the gravest took notice of it, which is not common with the scholastic journals of France—no sooner did it make a stir and a sensation, and cover the criminal with celebrity, than the result became noticeable in a very large issue of false money.

Coining in the year I now write of was *the* fashionable crime. The police were roused into full vigor: it became known to them that there was one gang in especial who cultivated this art with singular success. Their coinage was indeed so good, so superior to all their rivals, that it was often unconsciously preferred by the public to the real mintage. At the same time, they carried on their calling with such secrecy that they utterly baffled discovery.

An immense reward was offered by the *bureau* to any one who would betray his accomplices, and Monsieur Favart was placed at the head of a commission of inquiry. This person had himself been a *faux monnoyer*, and was an adept in the art, and it was he who had discovered the redoubted coiner who had brought the crime into such great notoriety; Monsieur Favart was a man of the most vigilant acuteness, the most indefatigable research, and of a courage which, perhaps, is more common than we suppose. It is a popular error to suppose that courage means courage in every thing. Put a hero on board ship at a five-barred gate, and, if he is not used to hunting, he will turn pale. Put a fox-hunter on one of the Swiss chasms, over which the mountaineer springs like a roe, and his knees will knock under him. People are brave in the dangers to which they accustom themselves, either in imagination or practice.

Monsieur Favart, then, was a man of the most daring bravery in facing rogues and cut-throats. He awed them with his very eye; yet he had been known to have been kicked down stairs by his wife, and, when he was drawn into the grand army, he deserted the eve of his first battle. Such, as moralists say, is the inconsistency of man!

* An old Spanish writer, treating of the Inquisition, has some very striking remarks on the kind of madness which, whenever some terrible notoriety is given to a particular offense, leads persons of distempered fancy to accuse themselves of it. He observes, that when the cruelties of the Inquisition against the imaginary crime of sorcery were the most barbarous, this singular frenzy led numbers to accuse themselves of sorcery. The publication and celebrity of the crime begat the desire of the crime.

But Monsieur Favart was sworn to trace the coiners, and he had never failed yet in any enterprise he undertook. One day he presented himself to his chief with a countenance so elated, that that penetrating functionary said to him at once,

"You have heard of our messieurs?"

"I have: I am to visit them to-night!"

"Bravo! How many men will you take?"

"From twelve to twenty, to leave without on guard. But I must enter alone. Such is the condition: an accomplice, who fears his own throat too much to be openly a betrayer, will introduce me to the house—nay, to the very room. By his description, it is necessary I should know the exact locale in order to cut off retreat; so to-morrow night I shall surround the bee-hive and take the honey."

"They are desperate fellows, these coiners, always; better be cautious."

"You forget I was one of them, and know the masonry."

About the same time this conversation was going on at the *bureau* of the police, in another part of the town Morton and Gawtrey were seated alone. It is some weeks since they entered Paris, and spring has mellowed into summer. The house in which they lodged was in the lordly *quartier* of the Faubourg St. Germain; the neighboring streets were venerable with the ancient edifices of a fallen *noblesse;* but their tenement was in a narrow, dingy lane, and the building itself seemed beggarly and ruinous. The apartment was in an attic on the sixth story, and the window, placed at the back of the lane, looked upon another row of houses of a better description, that communicated with one of the great streets of the *quartier*. The space between their abode and their opposite neighbors was so narrow that the sun could scarcely pierce between. In the height of summer might be found there a perpetual shade.

The pair were seated by the window. Gawtrey, well-dressed, smooth-shaven, as in his palmy-time; Morton, in the same garments with which he had entered Paris, weather-stained and ragged. Looking at the parallel basement in the opposite house, Gawtrey said, mutteringly, "I wonder where Birnie has been, and why he is not returned: I grow suspicious of that man."

"Suspicious of what?" asked Morton. "Of his honesty? Would he rob you?"

"Rob me! Humph—perhaps! But you see I am in Paris, in spite of the hints of the police; he may denounce me."

"Why then suffer him to lodge away from you?"

"Why? Because, by having separate houses, there are two channels of escape. A dark night, and a ladder thrown across from window to window, he is with us, or we with him."

"But wherefore such precautions? You blind—you deceive me. What have you done? What is your employment now? You are mute? Hark you, Gawtrey! I have pinned my fate to you—I am fallen from hope itself. At times, it almost makes me mad to look back; and yet you do not trust me. Since your return to Paris you are absent whole nights—often days; you are moody and thoughtful; yet, whatever your business, it seems to bring you ample returns."

"You think *that*," said Gawtrey, mildly, and with a sort of pity in his voice, "yet you refuse to take even the money to change those rags."

Because I know not how the money was gained. Ah! Gawtrey, I am not too proud for charity, but I am for—"

He checked the word uppermost in his thoughts, and resumed,

"Yes; your occupations seem lucrative. It was but yesterday Birnie gave me fifty Napoleons, for which he said you wished change in silver."

"Did he? The ras— Well! and you got change for them?"

"I know not why, but I refused."

"That was right, Philip. Do nothing that man tells you."

"Will you then trust me? You are engaged in some horrible traffic: it may be blood. I am no longer a boy; I have a will of my own; I will not be silently and blindly entrapped to perdition. If I march thither, it shall be with my own consent. Trust me, and this day, or we part to-morrow?"

"Be ruled. Some secrets it is better not to know."

"It matters not! I have come to my decision: I ask yours."

Gawtrey paused for some moments in deep thought. At last he lifted his eyes to Philip, and replied,

"Well, then, if it must be. Sooner or later it must have been so, and I want a confidant. You are bold, and will not shrink. You desire to know my occupation—will you witness it to-night?"

"I am prepared: to-night!"

Here a step was heard on the stairs—a knock at the door—and Birnie entered.

He drew aside Gawtrey, and whispered him, as usual, for some moments.

Gawtrey nodded his head, and then said aloud,

"To-morrow we shall talk without reserve before my young friend. To-night he joins us."

"To-night! Very well!" said Birnie, with his cold sneer. "He must take the oath; and you, with your life, will be responsible for his honesty?"

"Ay! it is the rule."

"Good-by, then, till we meet," said Birnie, and withdrew.

"I wonder," said Gawtrey, musingly, and between his grinded teeth, "whether I shall ever have a good, fair shot at that fellow? Ho! ho!" and his laugh shook the walls.

Morton looked hard at Gawtrey as the latter now sunk down in his chair, and gazed with a vacant stare, that seemed almost to partake of imbecility, upon the opposite wall. The careless, reckless, jovial expression which usually characterized the features of the man had for some weeks given place to a restless, anxious, and, at times, ferocious aspect, like the beast that first finds a sport, while the hounds are yet afar and his limbs are yet strong, in the chase which marks him for his victim, but grows desperate with rage and fear as the day nears its close and the death-dogs pant hard upon his track; but at that moment the strong features, with their gnarled muscle and iron sinews, seemed to have lost sign both of passion and the will, and to be locked in a stolid and dull

repose. At last he looked up at Morton, and said, with a smile like that of an old man in his dotage,

"I'm thinking that my life has been one mistake! I had talents; you would not fancy it, but once I was neither a fool nor a villain! Odd, isn't it? Just reach me the brandy."

But Morton, with a slight shudder, turned and left the room.

He walked on mechanically, and gained, at last, the superb *Quai* that borders the Seine: there the passengers became more frequent; gay equipages rolled along; the white and lofty mansions looked fair and stately in the clear blue sky of early summer; beside him flowed the sparkling river, animated with the painted baths that floated on its surface; earth was merry, and heaven serene: his heart was dark through all: Night within—Morning beautiful without! At last he paused by that bridge, stately with the statues of those whom the caprice of time honors with a name; for, though Zeus and his gods be overthrown, while earth exists will live the worship of dead men—the bridge by which you pass from the royal Tuileries, or the luxurious streets beyond the Rue de Rivoli, to the Senate of the emancipated people, and the gloomy and desolate grandeur of the Faubourg St. Germain, in whose venerable haunts the impoverished descendants of the old feudal tyrants, whom the birth of the Senate overthrew, yet congregate—the ghosts of departed powers, proud of the shadows of great names. As the English outcast paused midway on the bridge, and, for the first time, lifting his head from his bosom, gazed around, there broke at once on his remembrance that terrible and fatal evening, when, hopeless, friendless, desperate, he had begged for charity of his uncle's hireling, with all the feelings that then (so imperfectly and lightly touched on in his brief narrative to Gawtrey) had raged and blackened in his breast, urging to the resolution he had adopted, casting him on the ominous friendship of the man whose guidance he even then had suspected and distrusted. The spot in either city had a certain similitude and correspondence each with each: at the first he had consummated his despair of human destinies—he had dared to forget the Providence of God—he had arrogated his fate to himself: by the first bridge he had taken his resolve, by the last he stood in awe at the result!—stood no less poor—no less abject—equally in rags and squalor; but was his crest as haughty and his eye as fearless, for was his conscience as free and his honor as unstained? Those arches of stone—those rivers that rolled between, seemed to him then to take a more mystic and typical sense than belongs to the outer world: they were the bridges to the rivers of his life. Plunged in thoughts so confused and dim that he could scarcely distinguish, through the chaos, the one streak of light which, perhaps, heralded the reconstruction or regeneration of the elements of his soul, two passengers halted also by his side.

"You will be late for the debate," said one of them to the other. "Why do you stop?"

"My friend," said the other, "I never pass this spot without recalling the time when I stood here without a *sous*, or, as I thought, a chance of one, and impiously meditated self-destruction."

"*You!* now so rich—so fortunate in repute and station! Is it possible? How was it? A lucky chance—a sudden legacy?"

"No: Time, Faith, and Energy—the three friends God has given to the poor!"

The men moved on; but Morton, who had turned his face toward them, fancied that the last speaker fixed on him his bright, cheerful eye with a meaning look; and when the man was gone, he repeated those words, and hailed them in his heart of hearts as an augury from above.

Quickly, then, and as if by magic, the former confusion of his mind seemed to settle into distinct shapes of courage and resolve. "Yes," he muttered, "I will keep this night's appointment; I will learn the secret of these men's life. In my inexperience and destitution I have suffered myself to be led hitherto into a partnership, if not with vice and crime, at least with subterfuge and trick. I awake from my reckless boyhood—my unworthy palterings with my better self. If Gawtrey be as I dread to find him—if he be linked in some guilty and hateful traffic with that loathsome accomplice—I will—" He paused, for his heart whispered, "Well, and even so—the guilty man clothed and fed *thee!*" "I will," resumed his thought, in answer to his heart, "I will go on my knees to him to fly while there is yet time—to work, beg, starve, perish, even—rather than lose the right to look man in the face without a blush, and kneel to his God without remorse!"

And, as he thus ended, he felt suddenly as if he himself were restored to the perception and the joy of the Nature and the World around him: the NIGHT had vanished from his soul; he inhaled the balm and freshness of the air; he comprehended the delight which the liberal June was scattering over the earth; he looked above, and his eyes were suffused with pleasure at the smile of the soft blue skies. The MORNING became, as it were, a part of his own being; and he felt that as the world, in spite of the storms, is fair, so, in spite of evil, God is good. He walked on—he passed the bridge, but his step was no more the same—he forgot his rags. Why should he be ashamed? And thus, in the very flush of this new and strange elation and elasticity of spirit, he came unawares upon a group of young men, lounging before the porch of one of the chief hotels in that splendid Rue de Rivoli, wherein Wealth and the English have made their homes. A groom, mounted, was leading another horse up and down the road, and the young men were making their comments of approbation upon both the horses, especially the latter, which was, indeed, of uncommon beauty and great value. Even Morton, in whom the boyish passion of his earlier life yet existed, paused to turn his experienced and admiring eye upon the stately shape and pace of the noble animal, and, as he did so, a name too well remembered came upon his ear.

"Certainly, Arthur Beaufort is the most enviable fellow in Europe!"

"Why, yes," said another of the young men; "he has plenty of money; is good-looking, devilish good-natured, clever, and spends like a prince."

"Has the best horses!"

"The best luck at *roulette!*"

"The prettiest girls in love with him!"

"And no one enjoys life more. Ah! here he is!"

The group parted as a light, graceful figure came out of a jeweler's shop that adjoined the hotel, and halted gayly amid the loungers. Morton's first impulse was to hurry from the spot; his second impulse arrested his step, and, a little apart, and half hid beneath one of the arches of the colonnade which adorns the street, the Outcast gazed upon the Heir. There was no comparison in the natural personal advantages of the two young men; for Philip Morton, despite all the hardships of his rough career, had now grown up and ripened into a rare perfection of form and feature. His broad chest, his erect air, his lithe and symmetrical length of limb, united, happily, the attributes of activity and strength; and, though there was no delicacy of youthful bloom upon his dark cheek, and though lines which should have come later marred its smoothness with the signs of care and thought, yet an expression of intelligence and daring, equally beyond his years, and the evidence of hardy, abstemious, vigorous health, served to show to the full advantage the outline of features which, noble and regular, though stern and masculine, the artist might have borrowed for his ideal of a young Spartan arming for his first battle. Arthur, slight to feebleness, and with the paleness, partly of constitution, partly of gay excess, on his fair and clear complexion, had features far less symmetrical and impressive than his cousin: but what then? All that are bestowed by elegance of dress, the refinements of luxurious habit, the nameless grace that comes from a mind and a manner polished—the one by literary culture, the other by social intercourse—invested the person of the heir with a fascination that rude Nature alone ever fails to give. And about him there was a gayety, an airiness of spirit, an atmosphere of enjoyment, which bespoke one who is in love with life.

"Why, this is lucky! I'm so glad to see you all!" said Arthur Beaufort, with that silver-ringing tone and charming smile which are to the happy spring of man what its music and its sunshine are to the spring of earth. "You must dine with me at Verey's. I want something to rouse me to-day; for I did not get home from the *salon* till four this morning."*

"But you won?"

"Yes, Marsden. Hang it! I always win—I, who could so well afford to lose—I'm quite ashamed of my luck!"

"It is easy to spend what one wins," observed Mr. Marsden, sententiously; "and I see you have been at the jeweler's! A present for Cecile? Well, don't blush, my dear fellow. What is life without women?"

"And wine?" said a second.

"And play?" said a third.

"And wealth?" said a fourth.

"And *you* enjoy them all! Happy fellow!" said a fifth.

The Outcast pulled his hat over his brows, and walked away.

"This dear Paris!" said Beaufort, as his eye carelessly and unconsciously followed the dark form retreating through the arches; "this dear Paris! I must make the most of it while I stay! I have only been here a few weeks, and next week I must go."

"Pooh! your health is better: you don't look like the same man."

"You think so, really? Still I don't know: the doctors say that I must either go to the German waters—the season is begun—or—"

"Or what?"

"Live less with such pleasant companions, my dear fellow! But, as you say, what is life without—"

"Women!"

"Wine!"

"Play!"

"Wealth!"

"Ha! ha! 'Throw physic to the dogs: I'll none of it!'"

And Arthur leaped lightly on his saddle, and, as he rode gayly on, humming the favorite air of the last opera, the hoofs of his horse splashed the mud over a foot-passenger halting at the crossing. Morton checked the fiery exclamation rising to his lips; and, gazing after the brilliant form that hurried on toward the Champs Elysées, his eye caught the statues on the bridge, and a voice, as of a cheering angel, whispered again to his heart, "Time, Faith, Energy!"

The expression of his countenance grew calm at once; and, as he continued his rambles, it was with a mind that, casting off the burdens of the past, looked serenely and steadily on the obstacles and hardships of the future. We have seen that a scruple of conscience or of pride, not without its nobleness, had made him refuse the importunities of Gawtrey for less sordid raiment; the same feeling made it his custom to avoid sharing the luxurious and dainty food with which Gawtrey was wont to regale himself. For that strange man, whose wonderful felicity of temperament and constitution made him, in all circumstances, keenly alive to the hearty and animal enjoyments of life, would still emerge, as the day declined, from their wretched apartment, and, trusting to his disguises, in which, indeed, he possessed a masterly art, repair to one of the better description of *restaurants*, and feast away his cares for the moment. William Gawtrey would not have cared three straws for the curse of Damocles. The sword over *his* head would never have spoiled his appetite. He had lately, too, taken to drinking much more deeply than he had been used to do—the fine intellect of the man was growing thickened and dulled—and this was a spectacle that Morton could not bear to contemplate. Yet so great was Gawtrey's vigor of health, that, after draining wine and spirits enough to have dispatched a company of fox-hunters, and after betraying, sometimes in uproarious glee, sometimes in maudlin self-bewailings, that he himself was not quite invulnerable to the thyrsus of the god, he would—on any call on his energies, or especially before departing on those mysterious expeditions which kept him from home half, and sometimes all the night—plunge his head into cold water, drink as much of the lymph as a groom would have shuddered to bestow on a horse, close his eyes in a doze for half an hour, and wake cool, sober, and collected, as if he had lived according to the precepts of Socrates or Cornaro!

* The most celebrated gaming-house in Paris, in the day before gaming-houses were suppressed by the well-directed energy of the government.

But to return to Morton. It was his habit to avoid as much as possible sharing the good cheer of his companion; and now, as he entered the Champs Elysées, he saw a little family, consisting of a young mechanic, his wife and two children, who, with that love of harmless recreation which yet characterizes the French, had taken advantage of a holiday in the craft, and were enjoying their simple meal under the shadow of the trees. Whether in hunger or in envy, Morton paused and contemplated the happy group. Along the road rolled the equipages and trampled the steeds of those to whom all life is a holiday. *There* was Pleasure—under those trees was Happiness. One of the children, a little boy of about six years old, observing the attitude and gaze of the pausing wayfarer, ran to him, and, holding up a fragment of a coarse kind of *gâteau*, said to him, winningly, "Take it—I have had enough!" The child reminded Morton of his brother; his heart melted within him; he lifted the young Samaritan in his arms, and, as he kissed it, wept.

The mother observed and rose also. She laid her hand on his own: "Poor boy! why do you weep? Can we relieve you?"

Now that bright gleam of human nature, suddenly darting across the somber recollections and associations of his past life, seemed to Morton as if it came from Heaven, in approval and in blessing of this attempt at reconciliation to his fate.

"I thank you," said he, placing the child on the ground and passing his hand over his eyes, "I thank you—yes! Let me sit down among you." And he sat down, the child by his side, and partook of their fare, and was merry with them—the proud Philip! Had he not begun to discover the "precious jewel" in the "ugly and venomous" Adversity?

The mechanic, though a gay fellow on the whole, was not without some of that discontent of his station which is common with his class; he vented it, however, not in murmurs, but in jests. He was satirical on the carriages and the horsemen that passed; and, lolling on the grass, ridiculed his betters at his ease.

"Hush!" said his wife, suddenly; "here comes Madame de Merville;" and, rising as she spoke, she made a respectful inclination of the head toward an open carriage that was passing very slowly toward the town.

"Madame de Merville!" repeated the husband, rising also, and lifting his cap from his head. "Ah! I have nothing to say against *her!*"

Morton looked instinctively toward the carriage, and saw a fair countenance turned graciously to answer the silent salutations of the mechanic and his wife—a countenance that had long haunted his dreams, though of late it had faded away beneath harsher thoughts—the countenance of the stranger whom he had seen at the *bureau* of Gawtrey, when that worthy personage had borne a more mellifluous name. He started and changed color: the lady herself now seemed suddenly to recognize him; for their eyes met, and she bent forward eagerly. She pulled the check-string—the carriage halted—she beckoned to the mechanic's wife, who went up to the road-side.

"I worked once for that lady," said the man, with a tone of feeling; and when my wife fell ill last winter, she paid the doctors. Ah, she is an angel of charity and kindness!"

Morton scarcely heard this eulogium; for he observed, by something eager and inquisitive in the face of Madame de Merville, and the sudden manner in which the mechanic's helpmate turned her head to the spot on which he stood, that he was the object of their conversation. Once more he became suddenly aware of his ragged dress; and with a natural shame—a fear that charity might be extended to him from *her*—he muttered an abrupt farewell to the operative, and, without another glance at the carriage, walked away.

Before he had got many paces, the wife, however, came up to him, breathless. "Madame de Merville would speak to you, sir!" she said, with more respect than she had hitherto thrown into her manner. Philip paused an instant, and again strode on.

"It must be some mistake," he said, hurriedly: "I have no right to expect such an honor."

He struck across the road, gained the opposite side, and had vanished from Madame de Merville's eyes before the woman regained the carriage. But still that calm, pale, and somewhat melancholy face presented itself before him; and as he walked again through the town, sweet and gentle fancies crowded confusedly on his heart. On that soft summer day—memorable for so many silent but mighty events in that inner life which prepares the catastrophes of the outer one, as in the region of which Virgil has sung, the images of men to be born hereafter repose or glide—on that soft summer day, he felt he had reached the age when Youth begins to clothe in some human shape its first vague ideal of desire and love.

In such thoughts, and still wandering, the day wore away, till he found himself in one of the lanes that surround that glittering microcosm of the vices, the frivolities, the hollow show, and the real beggary of the gay city—the gardens and the galleries of the Palais Royal. Surprised at the lateness of the hour—it was then on the stroke of seven—he was about to return homeward, when the loud voice of Gawtrey sounded behind, and that personage, tapping him on the back, said,

"Hollo, my young friend, well met! This will be a night of trial to you. Empty stomachs produce weak nerves. Come along! you must dine with me. A good dinner and a bottle of old wine—come! nonsense! I say you shall come! *Vive la joie!*"

While speaking, he had linked his arm in Morton's, and hurried him on several paces in spite of his struggles; but, just as the words *Vive la joie* left his lips, he stood still and mute as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet, and Morton felt that heavy arm shiver and tremble like a leaf. He looked up, and just at the entrance of that part of the Palais Royal in which are situated the *restaurants* of Verey and Vefour, he saw two men standing but a few paces before them, and gazing full on Gawtrey and himself.

"It is my evil genius," muttered Gawtrey, grinding his teeth.

"And mine," said Morton.

The younger of the two men thus apostrophized made a step toward Philip, when his companion

drew him back and whispered, "What are you about? Do you know that young man?"

"He is my cousin—Philip Beaufort's natural son!"

"Is he? Then discard him forever. He is with the most dangerous knave in Europe!"

As Lord Lilburne—for it was he—thus whispered his nephew, Gawtrey strode up to him; and, glaring full in his face, said, in a deep and hollow tone, "There *is* a hell, my lord; I go to drink to our meeting!" Thus saying, he took off his hat with a ceremonious mockery, and disappeared within the adjoining *restaurant*, kept by Vefour.

"A *hell!*" said Lilburne, with his frigid smile; "the rogue's head runs upon *gambling-houses!*"

"And I have suffered Philip again to escape me," said Arthur, in self-reproach; for, while Gawtrey had addressed Lord Lilburne, Morton had plunged back amid the labyrinth of alleys. "How have I kept my oath?"

"Come! your guests must have arrived by this time. As for that wretched young man, depend upon it that he is corrupted, body and soul."

"But he is my own cousin."

"Pooh! there is no relationship in natural children: besides he will find you out fast enough. Ragged claimants are not long too proud to beg."

"You speak in earnest?" said Arthur, irresolutely.

"Ay! trust my experience of the world. *Allons!*"

And in the very *restaurant* adjoining that in which the solitary Gawtrey gorged his conscience, Lilburne, Arthur, and their gay friends, soon forgetful of all but the roses of the moment, bathed their airy spirits in the dews of the mirthful wine. Oh, extremes of life! Oh, Night! oh, Morning!

CHAPTER IX.

"Meantime a moving scene was open laid,
That lazar-house."

THOMSON: *Castle of Indolence.*

It was near midnight. In the mouth of the lane in which Gawtrey resided there stood four men. Not far distant, in the broad street at angles with the lane, were heard the wheels of carriages and the sound of music. A lady, fair in form, tender of heart, stainless in repute, was receiving her friends!

"Monsieur Favart," said one of the men to the smallest of the four, "you understand the conditions: 20,000 francs and a free pardon?"

"Nothing more reasonable—it is understood. Still I confess that I should like to have my men close at hand. I am not given to fear; but this is a dangerous experiment."

"You knew the danger beforehand and subscribed to it; you must enter alone with me, or not at all. Mark you, the men are sworn to murder him who betrays them. Not for twenty times 20,000 francs would I have them know me as the informer. My life were not worth a day's purchase. Now, if you feel secure in your disguise, all is safe. You will have seen them at their work—you will recognize their persons—you can depose against them at their trial—I shall have time to quit France."

"Well, well! as you please."

"Mind, you must wait in the vault with them till they separate. We have so planted your men, that, whatever street each of the gang takes in going home, he can be seized quietly and at once. The bravest and craftiest of all, who, though he has but just joined, is already their captain—*him*, the man I told you of, who lives in the house, you must take after his return, in his bed. It is the sixth story to the right, remember: here is the key to his door. He is a giant in strength, and will never be taken alive, if up and armed."

"Ah, I comprehend! Gilbert!" (and Favart turned to one of his companions who had not yet spoken), "take three men besides yourself according to the directions I gave you; the porter will admit you—that's arranged. Make no noise. If I don't return by four o'clock, don't wait for me, but proceed at once. Look well to your primings. Take him alive, if possible—at the worst, dead. And now, *mon ami*, lead on!"

The traitor nodded, and walked slowly down the street. Favart, pausing, whispered hastily to the man whom he had called Gilbert,

"Follow me close—get to the door of the cellar—place the eight men within hearing of my whistle—recollect the picklocks, the axes. If you hear the whistle, break in; if not, I'm safe, and the first orders to seize the captain in his room stand good."

So saying, Favart strode after his guide. The door of a large but ill-favored looking house stood ajar; they entered—passed unmolested through a court-yard—descended some stairs; the guide unlocked the door of a cellar, and took a dark lantern from under his cloak. As he drew up the slide, the dim light gleamed on barrels and wine-casks, which appeared to fill up the space. Rolling aside one of these, the guide lifted a trapdoor and lowered his lantern. "Enter," said he; and the two men disappeared.

* * * * *

The coiners were at their work. A man, seated on a stool, before a desk, was entering accounts in a large book. That man was William Gawtrey. While, with the rapid precision of honest mechanics, the machinery of the dark trade went on in its several departments, apart—alone—at the foot of a long table sat Philip Morton. The truth had exceeded his darkest suspicions. He had consented to take the oath not to divulge what was to be given to his survey; and, when led into that vault the bandage was taken from his eyes, it was some minutes before he could fully comprehend the desperate and criminal occupations of the wild forms amid which towered the burly stature of his benefactor. As the truth slowly grew upon him, he shrunk from the side of Gawtrey; but, deep compassion for his friend's degradation swallowing up the horror of the trade, he flung himself on one of the rude seats, and felt that the bond between them was indeed broken, and that the next morning he should be again alone in the world. Still, as the obscene jests, the fearful oaths that from time to time rang through the vault, came on his ear, he cast his haughty eye in such disdain over the groups, that Gawtrey, catching it, trembled for his safety; and nothing

but the sense of his own impotence, and the brave, not timorous, desire not to perish by such hands, kept silent the fiery denunciations of a nature, still proud and honest, that quivered on his lips. All present were armed with pistols and cutlasses except Morton, who suffered the weapons presented to him to lie unheeded on the table.

"*Courage, mes amis!*" said Gawtrey, closing his book; "*courage!* A few months more, and we shall have made enough to retire upon, and enjoy ourselves for the rest of our days. Where is Birnie?"

"Did he not tell you?" said one of the artisans, looking up. "He has found out the cleverest hand in France—the very fellow who helped Bouchard in all his five-franc pieces. He has promised to bring him to-night."

"Ay, I remember," returned Gawtrey; "he told me this morning; he is a famous decoy!"

"I think so, indeed!" quoth a coiner; "for he caught you, the best head to our hands that ever *les industriels* were blessed with—*sacré fichtre!*"

"Flatterer!" said Gawtrey, coming from the desk to the table, and pouring out wine from one of the bottles into a huge flagon: "To your healths!"

Here the door slided back, and Birnie glided in.

"Where is your booty, *mon brave?*" said Gawtrey. "We only coin money; you coin men, stamp with your own seal, and send them current to the devil!"

The coiners, who liked Birnie's ability (for the *ci-devant* engraver was of admirable skill in their craft), but who hated his joyless manners, laughed at the taunt, which Birnie did not seem to heed except by a malignant gleam of his dead eye.

"If you mean the celebrated coiner, Jacques Giraumont, he waits without. You know our rules—I can not admit him without leave."

"*Bon!* we give it, eh, messieurs?" said Gawtrey.

"Ay—ay," cried several voices. "He knows the oath, and will hear the penalty."

"Yes, he knows the oath," replied Birnie, and glided back.

In a moment more he returned with a small man in a mechanic's *blouse*. The new-comer wore the republican beard and mustache, of a sandy gray; his hair was the same color; and a black patch over one eye increased the ill-favored appearance of his features.

"*Diable!* Monsieur Giraumont! but you are more like Vulcan than Adonis!" said Gawtrey.

"I don't know any thing about Vulcan, but I know how to make five-franc pieces," said Monsieur Giraumont, doggedly.

"Are you poor?"

"As a church mouse! The only thing belonging to a church, since the Bourbons came back, that *is* poor!"

At this sally the coiners, who had gathered round the table, uttered the shout with which, in all circumstances, Frenchmen receive a *bon mot*.

"Humph!" said Mr. Gawtrey. "Who responds, with his own life, for your fidelity?"

"I," said Birnie.

"Administer the oath to him."

Suddenly four men advanced, seized the visitor, and bore him from the vault to another one within. After a few moments they returned.

"He has taken the oath and heard the penalty."

"Death to yourself, your wife, your son, and your grandson, if you betray us?"

"I have neither son nor grandson; as for my wife, Monsieur le Capitaine, you offer a bribe instead of a threat when you talk of *her* death!"

"*Sacré!* but you will be an addition to our circle, *mon brave!*" said Gawtrey, laughing, while again the grim circle shouted applause.

"But I suppose you care for your own life?"

"Otherwise I should have preferred starving to coming here," answered the laconic neophyte.

"I have done with you. Your health!"

On this the coiners gathered round Monsieur Giraumont, shook him by the hand, and commenced many questions with a view to ascertain his skill.

"Show me your coinage first; I see you use both the die and the furnace. Hem! this piece is not bad; you have struck it from an iron die? right—it makes the impression sharper than plaster of Paris. But you take the poorest and the most dangerous part of the trade in taking the Home Market. I can put you in a way to make ten times as much, and with safety! Look at this!" and Monsieur Giraumont took a forged Spanish dollar from his pocket, so skillfully manufactured that the *connoisseurs* were lost in admiration; "you may pass thousands of these all over Europe except France, and who is ever to detect you? But it will require better machinery than you have here."

Thus conversing, Monsieur Giraumont did not perceive that Mr. Gawtrey had been examining him very curiously and minutely. But Birnie had noted their chief's attention, and once attempted to join his new ally, when Gawtrey laid his hand on his shoulder, and stopped him.

"Do not speak to your friend till I bid you, or—" he stopped short, and touched his pistols.

Birnie grew a shade more pale, but replied with his usual sneer.

"Suspicious! Well, so much the better!" and, seating himself carelessly at the table, lighted his pipe.

"And now, Monsieur Giraumont," said Gawtrey, as he took the head of the table, "come to my right hand. A half holyday in your honor. Clear these infernal instruments; and more wine, *mes amis!*"

The party arranged themselves at the table. Among the desperate there is almost invariably a tendency to mirth. A solitary ruffian is moody, but a gang of ruffians are jolly. The coiners talked and laughed loud. Mr. Birnie, from his dogged silence, seemed apart from the rest, though in the center; and, in a noisy circle, a silent tongue builds a wall round its owner. But that respectable personage kept his furtive watch upon Giraumont and Gawtrey, who appeared talking together very amicably toward the bottom of the table. The younger novice of that night, equally silent, was not less watchful than Birnie. An uneasy, undefinable foreboding had come over him since the entrance of Monsieur Giraumont; this had been increased

by the manner of Mr. Gawtrey. His faculty of observation, which was very acute, had detected something false in the chief's blandness to their guest—something dangerous in the glittering eye that Gawtrey ever, as he spoke to Giraumont, bent on that person's lips as he listened to his reply. For, whenever William Gawtrey suspected a man, he watched, not his eyes, but his lips.

Waked from his scornful revery, a strange spell fascinated Morton's attention to the chief and the guest, and he bent forward, with parted mouth and straining ear, to catch their conversation.

"It seems to me a little strange," said Mr. Gawtrey, raising his voice so as to be heard by the party, "that a coiner so dextrous as Monsieur Giraumont should not be known to any of us except our friend Birnie."

"Not at all," replied Giraumont; "I worked only with Bouchard and two others, since sent to the galleys. We were but a small fraternity: every thing has its commencement."

"*C'est juste: buvez donc, cher ami!*"

The wine circulated: Gawtrey began again.

"You have had a bad accident, seemingly, Monsieur Giraumont: how did you lose your eye?"

"In a scuffle with the *gens d'armes* the night Bouchard was taken and I escaped: such misfortunes are on the cards."

"*C'est juste: buvez donc, Monsieur Giraumont!*"

Again there was a pause, and again Gawtrey's deep voice was heard.

"You wear a wig, I think, Monsieur Giraumont? To judge by your eyelashes, your own hair has been a handsomer color."

"We seek disguise, not beauty, my host! and the police have sharp eyes."

"*C'est juste, buvez donc—vieux Rénard!*—when did we two meet last?"

"Never, that I know of!"

"*Ce n'est pas vrai! buvez donc*, MONSIEUR FAVART!"

At the sound of that name the company started in dismay and confusion, and the police officer, forgetting himself for the moment, sprung from his seat, and put his right hand into his *blouse*.

"Ho, there! treason!" cried Gawtrey, in a voice of thunder; and he caught the unhappy man by the throat.

It was the work of a moment. Morton, where he sat, beheld a struggle—he heard a death-cry. He saw the huge form of the master-coiner rising above all the rest, as cutlasses gleamed and eyes sparkled round. He saw the quivering and powerless frame of the unhappy guest raised aloft in those mighty arms, and presently it was hurled along the tables—bottles crashing—the board shaking beneath its weight—and lay before the very eyes of Morton, a distorted and lifeless mass. At the same instant Gawtrey sprang upon the table, his black frown singling out from the group the ashen, cadaverous face of the shrinking traitor. Birnie had darted from the table—he was half way toward the sliding door—his face, turned over his shoulder, met the eyes of the chief.

"Devil!" shouted Gawtrey, in his terrible voice, which the echoes of the vault gave back from side to side, "did I not give thee up my soul that thou mightest not compass my death? Hark ye! thus dies my slavery and all our secrets!" The explosion of his pistol half swallowed up the last word, and, with a single groan, the traitor fell on the floor, pierced through the brain; then there was a dead and grim hush, as the smoke rolled slowly along the roof of the dreary vault.

Morton sank back on his seat, and covered his face with his hands. The last seal on the fate of THE MAN OF CRIME was set; the last wave in the terrible and mysterious tide of his destiny had dashed on his soul to the shore whence there is no return. Vain, now and henceforth, the humor, the sentiment, the kindly impulse, the social instincts which had invested that stalwart shape with dangerous fascination, which had implied the hope of ultimate repentance, of redemption even in this world. The HOUR and the CIRCUMSTANCE had seized their prey; and the self-defense, which a lawless career rendered a necessity, left the eternal die of blood upon his doom!

"Friends, I have saved you," said Gawtrey, slowly gazing on the corpse of his second victim, while he returned the pistol to his belt; "I have not quailed before this man's eye (and he spurned the clay of the officer, as he spoke, with a revengeful scorn) without treasuring up its aspect in my heart of hearts. I knew him when he entered—knew him through his disguise—yet, faith, it was a clever one! Turn up his face and gaze on him now; he will never terrify us again, unless there be truth in ghosts!"

Murmuring and tremulous, the coiners scrambled on the table and examined the dead man. From this task Gawtrey interrupted them, for his quick eye detected, with the pistols under the policeman's *blouse*, a whistle of metal of curious construction, and he conjectured at once that danger was yet at hand.

"I have saved you, I say, but only for the hour. This deed can not sleep; see, he had help within call. The police know where to look for their comrade—we are dispersed. Each for himself. Quick, divide the spoils! *Suave qui peut!*"

Then Morton heard where he sat, his hands still clasped before his face, a confused hubbub of voices, the jingle of money, the scramble of feet, the creaking of doors—all was silent!

A strong grasp drew his hands from his eyes.

"Your first scene of life against life," said Gawtrey's voice, which seemed fearfully changed to the ear that heard it. Bah! what would you think of a battle? Come, to our eyrie; the carcasses are gone."

Morton looked fearfully round the vault. He and Gawtrey were alone. His eyes sought the places where the dead had lain—they were removed—no vestige of the deeds, not even a drop of blood.

"Come, take up your cutlass, come!" repeated the voice of the chief, as, with a dim lantern, now the sole light of the vault, he stood in the shadow of the doorway.

Morton rose, took up the weapon mechanically, and followed that terrible guide, mute and unconscious, as a soul follows a dream through the house of Sleep!

CHAPTER X.

"Sleep no more!"—*Macbeth.*

After winding through gloomy and labyrinthine passages, which conducted to a different range of cellars from those entered by the unfortunate Favart, Gawtrey emerged at the foot of a flight of stairs, which, dark, narrow, and in many places broken, had been probably appropriated to the servants of the house in its days of palmier glory. By these steps the pair regained their attic. Gawtrey placed the lantern on the table, and seated himself in silence. Morton, who had recovered his self-possession and formed his resolution, gazed on him for some moments, equally taciturn; at length he spoke:

"Gawtrey!"

"I bade you not call me by that name," said the coiner; for we need scarcely say that in his new trade he had assumed a new appellation.

"It is the least guilty one by which I have known you," returned Morton, firmly. "It is for the last time I call it you! I demanded to see by what means one to whom I had intrusted my fate supported himself. I *have seen*," continued the young man, still firmly, but with a livid cheek and lip, "and the tie between us is rent forever. Interrupt me not! It is not for me to blame you. I have eaten of your bread and drank of your cup. Confiding in you too blindly, and believing that you were at least free from those dark and terrible crimes for which there is no expiation, at least in this life—my conscience seared by distress, my very soul made dormant by despair—I surrendered myself to one leading a career equivocal, suspicious, dishonorable perhaps, but still not, as I believed, of atrocity and bloodshed. I wake at the brink of the abyss; my mother's hand beckons to me from the grave; I think I hear her voice while I address you; I recede while it is yet time—we part, and forever!"

Gawtrey, whose stormy passion was still deep upon his soul, had listened hitherto in sullen and dogged silence, with a gloomy frown on his knitted brow; he now rose with an oath:

"Part! that I may let loose on the world a new traitor! Part! when you have seen me fresh from an act that, once whispered, gives me to the guillotine! Part! never—at least alive!"

"I have said it," said Morton, folding his arms calmly; "I say it to your face, though I might part from you in secret. Frown not on me, man of blood! I am fearless as yourself! In another minute I am gone."

"Ah! is it so!" said Gawtrey; and, glancing round the room, which contained two doors—the one, concealed by the draperies of a bed, communicating with the stairs by which they had entered, the other with the landing of the principal and common flight—he turned to the former, within his reach, which he locked, and put the key into his pocket; and then, throwing across the latter a heavy swing bar, which fell into its socket with a harsh noise, before the threshold he placed his vast bulk, and burst into a loud, fierce laugh:

"Ho! ho! slave and fool, once mine, you were mine, body and soul, forever!"

"Tempter, I defy you! stand back!" And, firm and dauntless, Morton laid his hand on the giant's vest.

Gawtrey seemed more astonished than enraged. He looked hard at his daring associate, on whose lip the down was yet scarcely dark.

"Boy," said he, "Off! Do not rouse the devil in me again! I could crush you with a hug."

"My soul supports my body, and I am armed," said Morton, laying hand on his cutlass. "But you dare not harm me, nor I you; blood-stained as you are, I yet love you! You gave me shelter and bread, but accuse me not that I will save my soul while it is yet time! Shall my mother have blessed me in vain upon her deathbed?"

Gawtrey drew back, and Morton, by a sudden impulse, grasped his hand.

"Oh! hear me—hear me!" he cried, with great emotion. "Abandon this horrible career; you have been decoyed and betrayed to it by one who can deceive or terrify you no more! Abandon it, and I will never desert you. For her sake—for your Fanny's sake—pause, like me, before the gulf swallow us. Let us fly! far to the New World—to any land where our thews and sinews, our stout hands and hearts, can find an honest mart. Men, desperate as we are, have yet risen by honest means. Take her, your orphan, with us. We will work for her, both of us. Gawtrey! hear me. It is not my voice that speaks to you—it is your good angel's!"

Gawtrey fell back against the wall, and his chest heaved.

"Morton," he said, with choked and tremulous accents, "go, now; leave me to my fate! I have sinned against you—shamefully sinned. It seemed to me so sweet to have a friend; in your youth and character of mind there was so much about which the tough strings of my heart wound themselves, that I could not bear to lose you—to suffer you to know me for what I was. I blinded—I deceived you as to my past deeds; *that* was base in me: but I swore to my own heart to keep you unexposed to every danger, and free from every vice that darkened my own path. I kept that oath till this night, when, seeing that you began to recoil from me, and dreading that you should desert me, I thought to bind you to me forever by implicating you in this fellowship of crime. I am punished, and justly. Go, I repeat; leave me to the fate that strides nearer and nearer to me day by day. You are a boy still—I am no longer young. Habit is a second nature. Still—still I could repent—I could begin life again! But repose! to look back—to remember—to be haunted night and day with deeds that shall meet me bodily and face to face on the last day—"

"Add not to the specters! Come—fly this night—this hour!"

Gawtrey paused, irresolute and wavering, when at that moment he heard steps on the stairs below. He started—as starts the boar caught in his lair—and listened, pale and breathless.

"Hush! they are on us! they come!" as he whispered, the key from without turned in the wards—the door shook. "Soft! the bar preserves us both—this way." And the coiner crept to the door of the private stairs. He un-

locked and opened it cautiously. A man sprang through the aperture.

"Yield! you are my prisoner!"

"Never!" cried Gawtrey, hurling back the intruder, and clapping to the door, though other and stout men were pressing against it with all their power.

"Ho! ho! Who shall open the tiger's cage?"

At both doors now were heard the sound of voices. "Open in the king's name, or expect no mercy!"

"Hist!" said Gawtrey. "One way yet—the window—the rope."

Morton opened the casement, Gawtrey uncoiled the rope. The dawn was breaking; it was light in the streets, but all seemed quiet without. The door reeled and shook beneath the pressure of the pursuers. Gawtrey flung the rope across the street to the opposite parapet; after two or three efforts, the grappling-hook caught firm hold—the perilous path was made.

"On! quick! loiter not!" whispered Gawtrey; "you are active—it seems more dangerous than it is—cling with both hands—shut your eyes. When on the other side—you see the window of Birnie's room—enter it—descend the stairs—let yourself out, and you are safe."

"Go first," said Morton, in the same tone: "I will not leave you now; you will be longer getting cross than I shall. I will keep guard till you are over."

"Hark! hark! are you mad? *You* keep guard! What is your strength to mine? Twenty men shall not move that door while my weight is against it. Quick, or you destroy us both! Besides, you will hold the rope for me; it may not be strong enough for my bulk of itself. Stay! stay one moment. If you escape, and I fall—Fanny—my father, he will take care of her—you remember—thanks! Forgive me all! Go—that's right."

With a firm pulse, Morton threw himself on that dreadful bridge; it swung and crackled at his weight. Shifting his grasp rapidly—holding his breath—with set teeth—with closed eyes—he moved on—he gained the parapet—he stood safe on the opposite side. And now, straining his eyes across, he saw through the open casement into the chamber he had just quitted. Gawtrey was still standing against the door to the principal staircase, for that, of the two, was the weaker and the more assailed. Presently the explosion of a fire-arm was heard; they had shot through the panel. Gawtrey seemed wounded, for he staggered forward, and uttered a fierce cry; a moment more, and he gained the window—he seized the rope—he hung over the tremendous depth! Morton knelt by the parapet, holding the grappling-hook in its place with convulsive grasp, and fixing his eyes, bloodshot with fear and suspense, on the huge bulk that clung for life to that slender cord!

"*Le voilà! le voilà!*" cried a voice from the opposite side. Morton raised his gaze from Gawtrey—the casement was darkened by the forms of the pursuers—they had burst into the room—an officer sprung upon the parapet; and Gawtrey, now aware of his danger, opened his eyes, and, as he moved on, glared upon the foe. The policeman deliberately raised his pistol—Gawtrey arrested himself—from a wound in his side the blood trickled slowly and darkly down, drop by drop, upon the stones below; even the officers of law shuddered as they eyed him: his hair bristling, his cheek white, his lips drawn convulsively from his teeth, and his eyes glaring from beneath the frown of agony and menace in which yet spoke the indomitable power and fierceness of the man. His look, so fixed, so intense, so stern, awed the policeman; his hand trembled as he fired, and the ball struck the parapet an inch below the spot where Morton knelt. An indistinct, wild, gurgling sound—half laugh, half yell—of scorn and glee, broke from Gawtrey's lips. He swung himself on—near—near—nearer—a yard from the parapet.

"You are saved!" cried Morton; when at that moment a volley burst from the fatal casement—the smoke rolled over both the fugitives—a groan, or, rather, howl of rage, and despair, and agony, appalled even the hardiest on whose ear it came. Morton sprung to his feet, and looked below. He saw on the rugged stones, far down, a dark, formless, motionless mass—the strong man of passion and levity—the giant who had played with life and soul, as an infant with the baubles that it prizes and breaks—was what the Cæsar and the leper alike are when all clay is without God's breath—what glory, genius, power, and beauty would be for ever and ever if there were no God!

"There is another!" cried the voice of one of the pursuers. "Fire!"

"Poor Gawtrey!" muttered Philip, "I will fulfill your last wish;" and, scarcely conscious of the bullet that whistled past him, he disappeared behind the parapet.

CHAPTER XI.

"Gently moved
By the soft wind of whispering silks."
DECKER.

THE reader may remember, that while Monsieur Favart and Mr. Birnie were holding commune in the lane, the sounds of festivity were heard from a house in the adjoining street. To that house we are now summoned.

At Paris, the gayeties of balls or *soirées* are, I believe, very rare in that period of the year in which they are most frequent in London. The entertainment now given was in honor of a christening: the lady who gave it, a relation of the newborn.

Madame de Merville was a young widow; even before her marriage she had been distinguished in literature; she had written poems of more than common excellence; and, being handsome, of good family, and large fortune, her talents made her an object of more interest than they might otherwise have done. Her poetry showed great sensibility and tenderness. If poetry be any index to the heart, you would have thought her one to love truly and deeply. Nevertheless, since she married—as girls in France do—not to please herself, but her parents, she made a *mariage de convenance*. Monsieur de Merville was a sober, sensible man, past middle age. Not being fond of poetry, and by no means coveting a professional author for his wife, he had, during their union, which lasted four years,

discouraged his wife's *liaison* with Apollo. But her mind, active and ardent, did not the less prey upon itself. At the age of four-and-twenty she became a widow, with an income large even in England for a single woman, and at Paris constituting no ordinary fortune. Madame de Merville, however, though a person of elegant taste, was neither ostentatious nor selfish. She had no children, and she lived quietly in apartments, handsome indeed, but not more than adequate to the small establishment which—where, as on the Continent, the costly convenience of an entire house is not incurred—sufficed for her retinue. She devoted at least half her income, which was entirely at her own disposal, partly to the aid of her own relations, who were not rich, and partly to the encouragement of the literature she cultivated. Although she shrunk from the ordeal of publication, her poems and sketches of romance were read to her own friends, and possessed an eloquence seldom accompanied with so much modesty. Thus, her reputation, though not blown about by the winds, was high in her own circle, and her position in fashion and in fortune made her looked up to by her relations as the head of her family; they regarded her as *femme supérieure*, and her advice with them was equivalent to a command. Eugénie de Merville was a strange mixture of qualities at once feminine and masculine. On the one hand, she had a strong will, independent views, some contempt for the world, and followed her own inclinations without servility to the opinion of others; on the other hand, she was susceptible, romantic, of a sweet, affectionate, kind disposition. Her visit to Mr. Love, however, indiscreet, was not less in accordance with her character than her charity to the mechanic's wife: masculine and careless where an eccentric thing was to be done —curiosity satisfied, or some object in female diplomacy achieved—womanly, delicate and gentle the instant her benevolence was appealed to or her heart touched. She had now been three years a widow, and was, consequently, at the age of twenty-seven. Despite the tenderness of her poetry and her character, her reputation was unblemished. She had never been in love. People who are much occupied do not fall in love easily; besides, Madame de Merville was refining, exacting, and wished to find heroes where she only met handsome dandies or ugly authors. Moreover, Eugénie was both a vain and a proud person: vain of her celebrity, and proud of her birth. She was one whose goodness of heart made her always active in promoting the happiness of others. She was not only generous and charitable, but willing to serve people by good offices as well as money. Every body loved her. The newborn infant, to whose addition to the Christian community the fête of this night was dedicated, was the pledge of a union which Madame de Merville had managed to effect between two young persons, first cousins to each other, and related to herself. There had been scruples of parents to remove—money matters to adjust: Eugénie had smoothed all. The husband and wife, still lovers, looked up to her as the author, under Heaven, of their happiness.

The gala of that night had been, therefore, of a nature more than usually pleasurable, and the mirth did not sound hollow, but rung from the heart. Yet, as Eugénie from time to time contemplated the young couple, whose eyes ever sought each other—so fair, so tender, and so joyous as they seemed—a melancholy shadow darkened her brow, and she sighed involuntarily. Once the young wife, Madame d'Anville, approaching her timidly, said,

"Ah! my sweet cousin, when shall we see you as happy as ourselves? There is such happiness," she added, innocently and with a blush, "in being a mother!—that little life all one's own—it is something to think of every hour!"

"Perhaps," said Eugénie, smiling, and seeking to turn the conversation from a subject that touched too nearly upon feelings and thoughts her pride did not wish to reveal; "perhaps it is you, then, who have made our cousin, poor Monsieur de Vaudemont, so determined to marry? Pray, be more cautious with him. How difficult I have found it to prevent his bringing into our family some one to make us all ridiculous!"

"True," said Madame d'Anville laughing. "But then the chevalier is so poor and in debt. He would fall in love, not with the demoiselle, but the dower. *A propos* of that, how cleverly you took advantage of his boastful confession to break off his *liaisons* with that *bureau de mariage*."

"Yes; I congratulate myself on that maneuver. Unpleasant as it was to go to such a place (for, of course, I could not send for Monsieur Love here), it would have been still more unpleasant to have received such a Madame de Vaudemont as our cousin would have presented to us. Only think—he was the rival of an *épicier!* I heard that there was some curious *dénoûment* to the farce of that establishment; but I could never get from Vaudemont the particulars. He was ashamed of them, I fancy."

"What droll professions there are in Paris!" said Madame d'Anville: "as if people could not marry without going to an office for a spouse, as we go for a servant! And so the establishment is broken up? And you never saw again that dark, wild-looking boy who so struck your fancy, that you have taken him as the original for the Murillo sketch of the youth in that charming tale you read to us the other evening. Ah! cousin, I think you were a little taken with him; the *bureau de mariage* had its allurements for you as well as for our poor cousin!" The young mother said this laughingly and carelessly.

"Pooh!" returned Madame de Merville, laughing also; but a slight blush broke over her natural paleness. "But *à propos* of the vicomte. You know how cruelly he has behaved to that poor boy of his by his English wife—never seen him since he was an infant—kept him at some school in England—and all because his vanity does not like the world to know that he has a son of nineteen! Well, I have induced him to recall this poor youth."

"Indeed! and how?"

"Why," said Eugénie, with a smile, "he wanted a loan, poor man, and I could therefore impose conditions by way of interest. But I also managed to conciliate him to the proposition by representing that, if the young man were good-looking, he might himself, with our connections, &c., form an advantageous marriage; and that, in such a case, if the father treated him now justly and kindly, he would naturally

partake with the father whatever benefits the marriage might confer."

"Ah! you are an excellent diplomatist, Eugénie; and you turn people's heads by always acting from your heart. Hush, here comes the vicomte!"

"A delightful ball!" said Monsieur de Vaudemont, approaching the ladies. "Pray, has that young lady yonder, in the pink dress, any fortune? She is pretty, eh? you observe she is looking at me—I mean, at us!"

"My dear cousin, what a compliment you pay to marriage. You have had two wives, and you are ever on the *qui vive* for a third!"

"What would you have me do? we can not resist the overtures of your bewitching sex Hum—what fortune has she?"

"Not a *sou*; besides, she is engaged."

"Oh! now I look at her, she is not pretty—not at all. I made a mistake. I did not mean her. I meant the young lady in blue."

"Worse and worse! she is married already. Shall I present you?"

"Ah, Monsieur de Vaudemont," said Madame d'Anville, "have you found out a new *bureau de mariage?*"

The vicomte pretended not to hear that question. But turning to Eugénie, took her aside, and said, with an air in which he endeavored to throw a great deal of sorrow, "You know, my dear cousin, that, to oblige you, I consented to send for my son, though, as I always said, it is very unpleasant for a man like me, in the prime of life, to hawk about a great boy of nineteen or twenty. People soon say, '*Old* Vaudemont and *young* Vaudemont.' However a father's feelings are never appealed to in vain." (Here the vicomte put his handkerchief to his eyes, and, after a pause, continued), "I sent for him—I even went to your old *bonne*, Madame Dufour, to make a bargain for her lodgings, and this day, guess my grief, I received a letter sealed with black. My son is dead!—a sudden fever—it is shocking!"

"Horrible! dead! your own son, whom you hardly ever saw—never since he was an infant!"

"Yes, that softens the blow very much. And now you see *I must* marry. If the boy had been good-looking, and like me, and so forth, why, as you observed, he might have made a good match, and allowed me a certain sum, or we could all have lived together."

"And your son is dead, and you come to a ball!"

"*Je suis philosophe*," said the vicomte, shrugging his shoulders. "And, as you say, I never saw him. It saves me 700 francs a year. Don't say a word to any one; I sha'n't give out that he is dead, poor fellow! Pray be discreet: you see there are some ill-natured people who might think it odd I do not shut myself up. I can wait till Paris is quite empty. It would be a pity to lose any opportunity at present, for now, you see, I *must* marry." And the *philosophe* sauntered away.

CHAPTER XII.

"*Guiomar.* Those devotions I am to pay
Are written in my heart, not in this book.

Enter RUTILIO.

I am pursued—all the ports are stopp'd, too:
Not any hope to escape: behind, before me,
On either side, I am beset."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER:
The Custom of the Country.

THE party were just gone—it was already the peep of day—the wheels of the last carriage had died in the distance.

Madame de Merville had dismissed her woman, and was seated in her own room leaning her head musingly on her hand.

Beside her was the table that held her MSS. and a few books, amid which were scattered vases of flowers. On a pedestal beneath the window was placed a marble bust of Dante. Through the open door were seen in perspective the rooms just deserted by her guests; the lights still burned in the chandeliers and *girandoles*, contending with the daylight that came through the half-closed curtains. The person of the inmate was in harmony with the apartment. It was characterized by a certain grace, which, for want of a better epithet, writers are prone to call classical or antique. Her complexion, seeming paler than usual by that light, was yet soft and delicate; the features well cut, but small and womanly. About the face there was that rarest of all charms, the combination of intellect with sweetness; the eyes, of a dark blue, were thoughtful, perhaps melancholy in their expression; but the long dark lashes, and the shape of the eyes themselves, more long than full, gave to their intelligence a softness approaching to languor, increased, perhaps, by that slight shadow round and below the orbs which is common with those who have tasked too much either the mind or the heart. The contour of the face, without being sharp or angular, had yet lost a little of the roundness of earlier youth; and the hand on which she leaned was, perhaps, even too white, too delicate, for the beauty which belongs to health; but the throat and bust were of exquisite symmetry.

"I am not happy," murmured Eugénie to herself, "yet I scarce know why. Is it really as we women of romance have said, till the saying is worn threadbare, that the destiny of women is not fame, but love? Strange, then, that while I have so often pictured what love should be, I have never felt it. And now—and now," she continued, half rising, and with a natural pang, "now I am no longer in my first youth. If I loved, should I be loved again? How happy that young pair seemed—*they* are never alone!"

At this moment, at a distance, was heard the report of fire-arms—again! Eugénie started, and called to her servant, who, with a waiter hired for the night, was engaged in removing, and nibbling as he removed, the remains of the feast. "What is that, at this hour? Open the window and look out!"

"I can see nothing, madame."

"Again! that is the third time. Go into the street and look; some one must be in danger."

The servant and the waiter, both curious, and not willing to part company, ran down the stairs, and thence into the street.

Meanwhile Morton, after vainly attempting Birnie's window, which the traitor had previously locked and barred against the escape of his intended victim, creeped rapidly along the roof, screened by the parapet not only from the shot,

but the sight of the foe. But just as he gained the point at which the lane made an angle with the broad street it adjoined, he cast his eyes over the parapet, and perceived that one of the officers had ventured himself to the fearful bridge: he was pursued; detection and capture seemed inevitable. He paused and breathed hard. *He*, once the heir to such fortunes, the darling of such affections! he, the hunted accomplice of a gang of miscreants! That was the thought that paralyzed: the disgrace, not the danger. But he was in advance of the pursuer; he hastened on—he turned the angle—he heard a shout behind from the opposite side—the officer had passed the bridge: "It is but one man as yet," thought he, and his nostrils dilated and his hands clenched as he glided on, glancing at each casement as he passed.

Now, as youth and vigor thus struggled against law for life, near at hand death was busy with toil and disease.

In a miserable *grabat* or garret, a mechanic, yet young, and stricken by a lingering malady, contracted by the labor of his occupation, was slowly passing from that world in which, for the mass of inhabitants, the curse of Cain is everlastingly at work. Now this man had married for love, and his wife had loved him; and it was the cares of that early marriage that had consumed him to the bone. But extreme want, if long continued, eats up love when it has nothing else to eat. And when people are very long dying, the people they fret and trouble begin to think of that too often hypocritical prettiness of phrase called "a happy release." So the worn-out and half-famished wife did not care three straws for the dying husband whom, a year or two ago, she had vowed to love and cherish in sickness and in health. But still she *seemed* to care, for she moaned, and pined, and wept as the man's breath grew fainter and fainter.

"Ah, Jean!" said she, sobbing, "what *will* become of *me*, a poor, lone widow, with nobody to work for my bread?" And with that thought she took on worse than before.

"I am stifling," said the dying man, rolling round his ghastly eyes. "How hot it is! Open the window; I should like to see the light—daylight once again."

"*Mon Dieu!* what whims he has, poor man!" muttered the woman, without stirring.

The poor wretch put his skeleton hand out, and clutched his wife's arm.

"I sha'n't trouble you long, Marie! Air! air!"

"Jean, you will make yourself worse; besides, I shall catch my death of cold. I have scarce a rag on, but I will just open the door."

"Pardon me," groaned the sufferer; "leave me, then."

Poor fellow! perhaps at that moment the thought of unkindness was sharper than the sharp cough which brought blood at every paroxysm. He did not like her so near him, but he did not blame her. Again I say, poor fellow!

The woman opened the door, went to the other side of the room, and sat down on an old box, and began darning an old neck-handkerchief. The silence was soon broken by the moans of the fast dying man, and again he muttered, as he tossed to and fro, with baked, white lips,

"*Je m'etouffe!* Air!"

There was no resisting that prayer, it seemed so like the last. The wife laid down the needle, put the handkerchief round her throat, and opened the window.

"Do you feel easier now?"

"Bless you, Marie! yes, that's good, good. It puts me in mind of old days, that breath of air, before we came to Paris. I wish I could work for you *now*, Marie."

"Jean! my poor Jean!" said the woman; and the words and the voice took back her hardening heart to the fresh fields and tender thoughts of the past time. And she walked up to the bed, and he leaned his temples, damp with livid dews, upon her breast.

"I have been a sad burden to you, Marie: we should not have married so soon; but I thought I was stronger. Don't cry; we have no little ones, thank God. It will be much better for you when I'm gone."

And so word after word gasped out: he stopped suddenly, and seemed to fall asleep.

The wife then attempted gently to lay him once more on his pillow; the head fell back heavily; the jaw had dropped; the teeth were set; the eyes were open, and like stone: the truth broke on her!

"Jean, Jean! My God, he is dead! and I was unkind to him at the last!" With these words, she fell upon the corpse, happily herself insensible.

Just at that moment a human face peered in at the window. Through that aperture, after a moment's pause, a young man leaped lightly into the room. He looked round with a hurried glance, but scarcely noticed the forms stretched on the pallet. It was enough for him that they seemed to sleep, and saw him not. He stole across the room, the door of which Marie had, it will be recollected, left open, and descended the stairs. He had almost gained the court-yard into which the stairs conducted, when he heard voices below by the porter's lodge.

"The police have discovered a gang of coiners!"

"Coiners!"

"Yes; one has been shot dead. I have seen his body in the kennel; another has fled along the roofs, a desperate fellow! We are to watch for him. Let us go up stairs, and get on the roof, and look out."

By the hum of approval that followed this proposition, Morton judged rightly that it had been addressed to several persons whom curiosity and the explosion of the pistols had drawn from their beds, and who were grouped round the porter's lodge. What was to be done? To advance was impossible: was there yet time to retreat? It was, at least, the only course left him; he sprang back up the stairs; he had just gained the first flight when he heard steps descending; then, suddenly, it flashed across him that he had left open the window above; that, doubtless, by that imprudent oversight the officer in pursuit had detected a clew to the path he had taken. What was to be done? die as Gawtrey had done! death rather than the galleys. As he thus resolved, he saw to the right the open door of an apartment in which lights still glimmered in their sockets. It seemed deserted; he entered boldly and at once, closing the door after him.

Wines and viands still left on the table—gilded mirrors, reflecting the stern face of the solitary intruder—here and there an artificial flower—a knot of ribbon on the floor—all betokening the gayeties of luxurious life—the dance, the revel, the feast—all this in one apartment! Above, in the same house, the pallet, the corpse, the widow—famine and woe! Such is a great city! such, above all, is Paris! where, under the same roof, are gathered such antagonist features of the social state! Nothing strange in this; but what was strange and sad was, that so little do people thus neighbors know of each other, that the owner of those rooms had a heart soft to every distress, but she did not know the distress so close at hand. The music that had charmed her guests had mounted gayly to the vexed ears of agony and hunger. Morton passed the first room—a second—he came to a third; and Eugénie de Merville, looking up at that instant, saw before her an apparition that might well have alarmed the boldest. His head was uncovered; his dark hair shadowed in wild and disorderly profusion, the pale face and features, beautiful, indeed, but at that moment of the beauty which an artist would impart to a young gladiator—stamped with defiance, menace, and despair. The disordered garb—the fierce aspect—the dark eyes, that literally shone through the shadows of the room, all conspired to increase the terror of so abrupt a presence.

"What are you? What do you seek here?" said she, falteringly, placing her hand on the bell as she spoke.

Upon that soft hand Morton laid his own.

"I seek my life! I am pursued! I am at your mercy! I am innocent! Can you save me?"

As he spoke, the door of the outer room beyond was heard to open, and steps and voices were at hand.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, recoiling as he recognized her face. "And is it to *you* that I have fled?"

Eugénie also recognized the stranger; and there was something in their relative positions—the suppliant, the protectress—that excited both her imagination and her pity. A slight color mantled to her cheeks—her look was gentle and compassionate.

"Poor boy! so young!" she said. "Hush!"

She withdrew her hand from his, retired a few steps, lifted a curtain drawn across a recess, and, pointing to an alcove that contained one of those sofa-beds common in French houses, added, in a whisper,

"Enter—you are saved."

Morton obeyed, and Eugénie replaced the curtain.

CHAPTER XIII.

"*Guiomar.* Speak! What are you?
Rutilio. Gracious woman, hear me. I am a stranger; And in that I answer all demands."
Custom of the Country.

Eugenie replaced the curtain. And scarcely had she done so, ere the steps in the outer room entered the chamber where she stood. Her servant was accompanied by two officers of the police.

"Pardon, madame," said one of the latter; "but we are in pursuit of a criminal. We think he must have entered this house through a window above while your servant was in the street. Permit us to search?"

"Without doubt," answered Eugénie, seating herself. "If he has entered, look in the other apartments. I have not quitted this room."

"You are right. Accept our apologies."

And the officers turned back to examine every corner where the fugitive was *not*. For, in that, the scouts of justice resembled their mistress: when does man's justice look to the right place?

The servant lingered to repeat the tale he had heard—the sight he had seen. When, at that instant, he saw the curtain of the alcove slightly stirred. He uttered an exclamation—sprung to the bed—his hand touched the curtain Eugénie seized his arm. She did not speak; but, as he turned his eyes to her, astonished, he saw that she trembled, and that her cheek was as white as marble.

"Madame," he said, hesitating, "there is some one hid in the recess."

"There is! Be silent!"

A suspicion flashed across the servant's mind. The pure, the proud, the immaculate Eugénie!

"There is! and in madame's chamber!" he faltered, unconsciously.

Eugénie's quick apprehension seized the foul thought. Her eyes flashed—her cheeks crimsoned. But her lofty and generous nature conquered even the indignant and scornful burst that rushed to her lips. The truth!—could she trust the man? A doubt—and the charge of the human life rendered to her might be betrayed. Her color fell—tears gushed to her eyes.

"I have been kind to you, François. Not a word!"

"Madame confides in me: it is enough," said the Frenchman, bowing, and with a slight smile on his lips; and he drew back respectfully.

One of the police-officers re-entered.

"We have done, madame: he is not here. Aha! that curtain!"

"It is madame's bed," said François. "But I have looked behind."

"I am most sorry to have disarranged you," said the policeman, satisfied with the answer; "but we shall have him yet." And he retired.

The last footsteps died away, the last door of the apartments closed behind the officers, and Eugénie and her servant stood alone, gazing on each other.

"You may retire," said she, at last, and, taking her purse from the table, she placed it in his hands.

The man took it, with a significant look.

"Madame may depend on my discretion."

Eugénie was alone again. Those words rang in her ear—Eugénie de Merville dependent on the discretion of her lackey! She sunk into her chair, and, her excitement succeeded by exhaustion, leaned her face on her hands and burst into tears. She was aroused by a low voice; she looked up, and the young man was kneeling at her feet.

"Go—go!" she said; "I have done for you all I can. You heard—you heard—my own hireling, too! At the hazard of my own good name you are saved. Go!"

"Of your good name!" for Eugénie forgot that it was looks, not words, that had so wrung

her pride. "Your good name!" he repeated; and glancing round the room—the toilet, the curtain, the recess he had quitted—all that bespoke that chastest sanctuary of a chaste woman, which for a stranger to enter is, as it were, to profane—her meaning broke on him. "Your good name! your hireling! No, madame, no!" And, as he spoke, he rose to his feet. "Not for me that sacrifice! Your humanity shall not cost you so dear. Ho, there! I am the man you seek." And he strode to the door.

Eugénie was penetrated with the answer. She sprang to him—she grasped his garments.

"Hush! hush! for mercy's sake! What would you do? Think you I could ever be happy again if the confidence you placed in me were betrayed? Be calm—be still. I knew not what I said. It will be easy to undeceive the man—later—when you are saved. And you are innocent—are you not?"

"Oh, madame," said Morton, "from my soul I say it, I am innocent—not of poverty—wretchedness—error—shame—I am innocent of crime. May Heaven bless you!" And, as he reverently kissed the hand laid on his arm, there was something in his voice so touching, in his manner something so above his fortunes, that Eugénie was lost in her feelings of compassion, surprise, and something, it might be, of admiration in her wonder.

"And oh!" he said, passionately, gazing on her with his dark, brilliant eyes, liquid with emotion, "you have made my life sweet in saving it. You—you—of whom, ever since the first time—almost the sole time—I beheld you, I have so often mused and dreamed. Henceforth, whatever befall me, there will be some recollections that will—that—"

He stopped short, for his heart was too full for words; and the silence said more to Eugénie than if all the eloquence of Rousseau had glowed upon his tongue.

"And who and what are you?" she asked, after a pause.

"An exile—an orphan—an outcast! I have no name! Farewell!"

"No—stay yet—the danger is not past. Wait till my servant is gone to rest; I hear him yet. Sit down—sit down; and whither would you go?"

"I know not."

"Have you no friends?"

"None."

"No home?"

"None."

"And the police of Paris so vigilant!" cried Eugénie, wringing her hands. "What is to be done? I shall have saved you in vain—you will be discovered! Of what do they charge you? Not robbery—not—"

And she, too, stopped short, for she did not dare to breathe the black word "Murder."

"I know not," said Morton, putting his hand to his forehead, "except of being friends with the only man who befriended me—and they have killed him!"

"Another time you shall tell me all."

"Another time!" he exclaimed, eagerly; "*shall* I see you again?"

Eugénie blushed beneath the gaze and the voice of joy.

"Yes," she said, "yes. But I must reflect. Be calm—be silent. Ah! a happy thought!"

She sat down, wrote a hasty line, sealed, and gave it to Morton.

"Take this note, as addressed, to Madame Dufour; it will provide you with a safe lodging. She is a person I can depend on: an old servant who lived with my mother, and to whom I have given a small pension. She has a lodging—it is lately vacant—I promised to procure her a tenant. Go: say nothing of what has passed. I will see her, and arrange all. Wait! hark! all is still! I will go first, and see that no one watches you. Stop" (and she threw open the window and looked into the court). "The porter's door is open—that is fortunate! Hurry on, and God be with you!"

In a few minutes Morton was in the streets. It was still early—the thoroughfares deserted—none of the shops yet open. The address on the note was to a street at some distance, on the other side of the Seine. He passed along the same Quai which he had trodden but a few hours since; he passed the same splendid bridge on which he had stood despairing to quit it, revived; he gained the Rue Faubourg St. Honore. A young man in a cabriolet, on whose fair cheek burned the hectic of late vigils and lavish dissipation, was rolling leisurely home from the gaming-house, at which he had been more than usually fortunate—his pockets were laden with notes and gold. He bent forward as Morton passed him. Philip, absorbed in his revery, perceived him not, and continued his way. The gentleman turned down one of the streets to the left, stopped, and called to the servant dozing behind his cabriolet.

"Follow that passenger! quietly—see where he lodges—be sure to find out and let me know. I shall go home without you." With that he drove on.

Philip, unconscious of the *espionage*, arrived at a small house in a quiet but respectable street, and rang the bell several times before, at last, he was admitted by Madame Dufour herself, in her night-cap. The old woman looked askant and alarmed at the unexpected apparition. But the note seemed at once to satisfy her. She conducted him to an apartment on the first floor—small, but neatly and even elegantly furnished—consisting of a sitting-room and a bed-chamber, and said, quietly,

"Will they suit monsieur?"

To monsieur they seemed a palace. Morton nodded assent.

"And will monsieur sleep for a short time?"

"Yes."

"The bed is well aired. The rooms have only been vacant three days since. Can I get you any thing till your luggage arrives?"

"No."

The woman left him. He threw off his clothes, flung himself on the bed, and did not wake till noon.

When his eyes unclosed—when they rested on that calm chamber, with its air of health, and cleanliness, and comfort, it was long before he could convince himself that he was yet awake. He missed the loud, deep voice of Gawtrey—the smoke of the dead man's meerschaum—the gloomy garret—the distained walls—the stealthy whisper of the loathed Birnie; slowly the life led and the life gone within the last twelve hours grew upon his struggling memory. He groan-

ed, and turned uneasily around, when the door slightly opened, and he sprang up fiercely,

"Who is there?"

"It is only I, sir," answered Madame Dufour. "I have been in three times to see if you were stirring. There is a letter I believe for you, sir, though there is no name to it;" and she laid the letter on the chair beside him. Did it come from her—the saving angel? He seized it. The cover was blank; it was sealed with a small device, as of a ring seal. He tore it open, and found four *billets de banque* for 1000 francs each; a sum equivalent in our money to about £160.

"Who sent this: the—the lady from whom I brought the note?"

"Madame de Merville? Certainly not, sir," said Madame Dufour, who, with the privilege of age, was now unscrupulously filling the water-jugs and settling the toilet table. "A young man called about two hours after you had gone to bed; and, describing you, inquired if you lodged here, and what your name was. I said you had just arrived, and that I did not yet know your name. So he went away, and came again half an hour afterward with this letter, which he charged me to deliver to you safely."

"A young man—a gentleman?"

"No sir; he seemed a smart but common sort of lad." For the unsophisticated Madame Dufour did not discover, in the plain black frock and drab gaiters of the bearer of that letter, the simple livery of an English gentleman's groom.

Whom could it come from, if not from Madame de Merville? Perhaps one of Gawtrey's late friends. A suspicion of Arthur Beaufort crossed him, but he indignantly dismissed it. Men are seldom credulous of what they are unwilling to believe! What kindness had the Beauforts hitherto shown him? Left his mother to perish broken-hearted—stolen from him his brother, and steeled in that brother the only heart wherein he had a right to look for gratitude and love! No, it *must* be Madame de Merville. He dismissed Madame Dufour for pen and paper—rose—wrote a letter to Eugénie, grateful, but proud, and inclosed the notes. He then summoned Madame Dufour, and sent her with his dispatch.

"Ah, madame!" said the *ci-devant bonne* when she found herself in Eugénie's presence. "The poor lad! how handsome he is, and how shameful in the vicomte to let him wear such clothes!"

"The vicomte!"

"Oh, my dear mistress, you must not deny it. You told me, in your note, to ask him no questions, but I guessed at once. The vicomte told me himself that he should have the young gentleman over in a few days. You need not be ashamed of him. You will see what a difference clothes will make in his appearance; and I have taken it on myself to order a tailor to go to him. The vicomte *must* pay me."

"Not a word to the vicomte as yet. We will surprise him," said Eugénie, laughing.

Madame de Merville had been all that morning trying to invent some story to account for her interest in the lodger, and now how Fortune favored her!

"But is that a letter for me?"

"And I had almost forgotten it," said Madame Dufour, as she extended the letter.

Whatever there had hitherto been in the circumstances connected with Morton that had roused the interest and excited the romance of Eugénie de Merville, her fancy was yet more attracted by the tone of the letter she now read. For, though Morton more accustomed to speak than to write French, expressed himself with less precision, and a less euphuistic selection of phrase than the authors and *élégans* who formed her usual correspondents, there was an innate and rough nobleness—a strong and profound feeling in every line of his letter, which increased her surprise and admiration.

"All that surrounds him—all that belongs to him is strangeness and mystery!" murmured she; and she sat down to reply.

When Madame Dufour departed with that letter, Eugénie remained silent and thoughtful for more than an hour. Morton's letter before her—and sweet, in their indistinctness, were the recollections and the images that crowded on her mind.

Morton, satisfied by the earnest and solemn assurances of Eugénie that she was not the unknown donor of the sum she re-inclosed, after puzzling himself in vain to form any new conjectures as to the quarter whence it came, felt that, under his present circumstances, it would be an absurd Quixotism to refuse to apply what the very Providence to whom he had anew consigned himself seemed to have sent to his aid. And it placed him, too, beyond the offer of all pecuniary assistance from one from whom he could least have brooked to receive it. He consented, therefore, to all that the loquacious tailor proposed to him. And it would have been difficult to have recognized the wild and frenzied fugitive in the stately and graceful form, with its young beauty and air of well-born pride, which the next day sat by the side of Eugénie. And that day he told his sad and troubled story, and Eugénie wept: and from that day he came daily; and two weeks—happy, dream-like, intoxicating to both—passed by; and as their last sun set, he was kneeling at her feet, and breathing to one to whom the homage of wit, and genius, and complacent wealth had hitherto been vainly proffered, the impetuous, agitated, delicious secrets of the first love. He spoke, and rose to depart forever, when the look and the sigh detained him.

The next day, after a sleepless night, Eugénie de Merville sent for the Vicomte de Vaudemont.

CHAPTER XIV.

"A silver river small
In sweet accents
Its music vents—
The warbling virginal
To which the merry birds do sing,
Timed with stops of gold the silver string."
SIR RICHARD FANSHAW.

ONE evening, several weeks after the events just commemorated, a stranger, leading in his hand a young child, entered the church-yard of H——. The sun had not long set, and the short twilight of deepening summer reigned in the tranquil skies; you might still hear from the trees above the graves the chirp of some joyous bird; what cared he, the denizen of the skies, for the dead that slept below? what did he value save the greenness and repose of the spot—to him alike, the garden or the grave! As the

man and the child passed, the robin, scarcely scared by their tread from the long grass beside one of the mounds, looked at them with its bright, blithe eye. It was a famous spot for the robin—the old church-yard! That domestic bird —"the friend of man," as it had been called by the poets—found a jolly supper among the worms!

The stranger, on reaching the middle of the sacred ground, paused and looked round him wistfully. He then approached, slowly and hesitatingly, an oblong tablet, on which were graven, in letters yet fresh and new, these words:

TO THE
MEMORY OF ONE CALUMNIATED AND WRONGED,
THIS BURIAL-STONE IS DEDICATED
BY HER SON.

Such, with the addition of the dates of birth and death, was the tablet which Philip Morton had directed to be placed over his mother's bones; and around it was set a simple palisade, which defended it from the tread of the children, who sometimes, in defiance of the beadle, played over the dust of the former race.

"Thy son!" muttered the stranger, while the child stood quietly by his side, pleased by the trees, the grass, the song of the birds, and recking not of grief or death, "thy son!—but not thy favored son—thy darling—thy youngest born—on what spot of earth do thine eyes look down on *him?* Surely in heaven thy love has preserved the one whom on earth thou didst most cherish, from the sufferings and the trials that have visited the less-favored outcast. Oh, mother, mother! it was not his crime—not Philip's—that he did not fulfill to the last the trust bequeathed to him! Happier, perhaps, as it is! And oh! if thy memory be graven as deeply in my brother's heart as my own, how often will it warn and save him! That memory! it has been to me the angel of my life! To thee—to thee, even in death, I owe it, if, though erring, I am not criminal—if I have lived with the lepers, and am still undefiled!" His lips then were silent—not his heart!

After a few minutes thus consumed, he turned to the child, and said, gently and in a tremulous voice, "Fanny, you have been taught to pray—you will live near this spot—will you come sometimes here and pray that you may grow up good and innocent, and become a blessing to those who love you!"

"Will papa ever come to hear me pray?"

That sad and unconscious question went to the heart of Morton. The child could not comprehend death. He had sought to explain it, but she had been accustomed to consider her protector dead when he was absent from her, and she still insisted that he must come again to life. And that man of turbulence and crime, who had passed unrepentant, unabsolved, from sin to judgment: it was an awful question, "If *he* should hear her pray?"

"Yes!" said he, after a pause, "yes, Fanny, there *is* a Father who will hear you pray; and pray to Him to be merciful to those who have been kind to you. Fanny, you and I may never meet again!"

"Are you going to die too? *Méchant*, every one dies to Fanny!" and, clinging to him endearingly, she put up her lips to kiss him. He took her in his arms; and, as a tear fell upon her rosy cheek, she said, "Don't cry, brother, for I love you."

"Do you, dear Fanny? Then, for my sake, when you come to this place, if any will give you a few flowers, scatter them on that stone. And now we will go to one whom you must love also, and to whom, as I have told you, *he* sends you; he who— Come!"

As he thus spoke, and placed Fanny again on the ground, he was startled to see, precisely on the spot where he had seen before the like apparition—on the same spot where the father had cursed the son—the motionless form of an old man. Morton recognized, as if by an instinct rather than by any effort of the memory, the person to whom he was bound.

He walked slowly toward him; but Fanny abruptly left his side, lured by a moth that flitted duskily over the graves.

"Your name, sir, I think, is Simon Gawtrey?" said Morton. "I have come to England in quest of you."

"Of me?" said the old man, half rising; and his eyes, now completely blind, rolled vacantly over Morton's person. "Of me? For what? Who are you? I don't know your voice!"

"I come to you from your son!"

"My son!" exclaimed the old man, with great vehemence; "the reprobate! the dishonored! the infamous! the accursed—"

"Hush! you revile the dead!"

"Dead!" muttered the wretched father, tottering back to the seat he had quitted, "dead!" and the sound of his voice was so full of anguish, that the dog at his feet, which Morton had not hitherto perceived, echoed it with a dismal cry, that recalled to Philip the awful day in which he had seen the son quit the father for the last time on earth.

The sound brought Fanny to the spot; and, with a laugh of delight, which made to it a strange contrast, she threw herself on the grass beside the dog, and sought to entice it to play. So there, in that place of death, were knit together the four links in the Great Chain: lusty and blooming life—desolate and doting age—infancy, yet scarce conscious of a soul—and the dumb brute, that has no warrant of a hereafter!

"Dead!—dead!" repeated the old man, covering his sightless balls with his withered hands. "Poor William!"

"He remembered you to the last. He bade me seek you out; he bade me replace the guilty son with a thing pure and innocent as he had been had he died in his cradle: a child to comfort your old age! Kneel, Fanny; I have found you a father who will cherish you (oh! you will, sir, will you not?) as he whom you may see no more!"

There was something in Morton's voice so solemn that it awed and touched both the old man and the infant; and Fanny, creeping to the protector thus assigned to her, and putting her little hands confidingly on his knees, said—

"Fanny will love you, if papa wished it. Kiss Fanny."

"Is it his child—his?" said the blind man, sobbing. "Come to my heart; here—here! Oh, God, forgive me!"

Morton did not think it right at that moment to undeceive him with regard to the poor child's

true connection with the deceased; and he waited in silence till Simon, after a burst of passionate grief and tenderness, rose, and, still clasping the child to his breast, said—

"Sir, forgive me! I am a very weak old man—I have many thanks to give—I have much, too, to learn. My poor son! he did not die in want—did he?"

The particulars of Gawtrey's fate, with his real name, and the various *aliases* he had assumed, had appeared in the French journals, and been partially copied into the English; and Morton had expected to have been saved the painful narrative of that fearful death; but the utter seclusion of the old man, his infirmity, and his estranged habits, had shut him out from the intelligence that it now devolved on Philip to communicate. Morton hesitated a little before he answered:

"It is late now; you are not yet prepared to receive this poor infant at your home, nor to hear the details I have to state. I arrived in England but to-day. I shall lodge in the neighborhood, for it is dear to me. If I may feel sure, then, that you will receive and treasure this sacred and last deposit bequeathed to you by your unhappy son, I will bring my charge to you to-morrow; and we will then, more calmly than we can now, talk over the past."

"You do not answer my question," said Simon, passionately; "answer me that, and I will wait for the rest. They call me a miser! Did I send out my only child to starve? Answer that!"

"Be comforted. He did not die in want; and he has even left some little fortune for Fanny, which I was to place in your hands."

"And he thought to bribe the old miser to be human! Well—well—well! I will go home."

"Lean on me."

The dog leaped playfully on his master as the latter rose, and Fanny slid from Simon's arms to caress and talk to the animal in her own way. As they slowly passed through the church-yard, Simon muttered incoherently to himself for some paces, and Morton would not disturb, since he could not comfort him.

At last he said, abruptly, "Did my son repent?"

"I hope," answered Morton, evasively, "that had his life been spared, he would have amended!"

"Tush, sir! I am past seventy—we repent! we never amend!" And Simon again sunk into his own dim and disconnected reveries.

At length they arrived at the blind man's house. The door was opened to them by an old woman of disagreeable and sinister aspect, dressed out much too gayly for the station of a servant, though such was her reputed capacity; but the miser's affliction saved her from the chance of comment on her extravagance. As she stood in the doorway, with a candle in her hand, she scanned curiously, and with no welcoming eye, her master's companions.

"Mrs. Boxer, my son is dead!" said Simon, in a hollow voice.

"And a good thing it is, then, sir!"

"For shame, woman!" said Morton, indignantly.

"Hey-day, sir! whom have we got here?"

"One," said Simon, sternly, "whom you will treat with respect. He brings me a blessing to lighten my loss. One harsh word to this child, and you quit my house!"

The woman looked perfectly thunderstruck; but, recovering herself, she said whiningly,

"I! a harsh word to any thing that my dear, kind master cares for! And, Lord, what a sweet, pretty creature it is! Come here, my dear!"

But Fanny shrunk back, and would not let go Philip's hand.

"To-morrow, then," said Morton; and he was turning away, when a sudden thought seemed to cross the old man.

"Stay, sir, stay! I—I—did my son say I was rich? I am very, very poor; nothing in the house, or I should have been robbed long ago!"

"Your son told me to bring money not to ask for it?"

"Ask for it! No; but—" added the old man, and a gleam of cunning intellect shot over his face; "but he had got into a bad set. Ask!—no! Put up the door-chain, Mrs. Boxer!"

It was with doubt and misgivings, that Morton the next day consigned the child, who had already nestled herself into the warmest corner of his heart, to the care of Simon. Nothing short of that superstitious respect which all men owe to the wishes of the dead, would have made him select for her that asylum; for fate had now, in brightening his own prospects, given him an alternative in the benevolence of Madame de Merville. But Gawtrey had been so earnest on the subject, that he felt as if he had no right to hesitate. And was it not a sort of atonement to any faults the son might have committed against the parent, to place by the old man's hearth so sweet a charge?

The strange and peculiar mind and character of Fanny made him, however, yet more anxious than otherwise he might have been. She certainly deserved not the harsh name of imbecile or idiot, but she was different from all other children; she *felt* more acutely than most of her age, but she could not be taught to *reason*. There was something either oblique or deficient in her intellect, which justified the most melancholy apprehensions; yet often, when some disordered, incoherent, inexplicable train of ideas most saddened the listener, it would be followed by fancies so exquisite in their tenderness, that suddenly she seemed as much above, as before she had seemed below the ordinary measure of infant comprehension. She was like a creature to which Nature, in some cruel but bright caprice, has given all that belongs to poetry, but denied all that belongs to the common understanding necessary to mankind; or as a fairy changeling, not indeed according to the vulgar superstition, malignant and deformed, but lovelier than the children of men, and haunted by dim and struggling associations of a gentler and fairer being, yet wholly incapable to learn the dry and hard elements which make up the knowledge of actual life.

Morton, as well as he could, sought to explain to Simon the peculiarities in Fanny's mental constitution. He urged on him the necessity of providing for her careful instruction, and Simon promised to send her to the best school the neighborhood could afford; but, as the old man spoke, he dwelt so much on the supposed fact

that Fanny was William's daughter, and with his remorse or affection there ran so interwoven a thread of selfishness and avarice, that Morton thought it would be dangerous to his interest in the child to undeceive his error. He therefore —perhaps excusably enough—remained silent on that subject.

Gawtrey had placed with the superior of the convent, together with an order to give up the child to any one who should demand her in his true name, which he confided to the superior, a sum of nearly £300, which he solemnly swore had been honestly obtained, and which, in all his shifts and adversities, he had never allowed himself to touch. This sum, with the trifling deduction made for arrears due to the convent, Morton now placed in Simon's hands. The old man clutched the money, which was for the most in French gold, with a convulsive gripe; and then, as if ashamed of the impulse, said,

"But you, sir—will any sum—that is, any reasonable sum—be of use to you?"

"No! and if it were, it is neither yours nor mine—it is hers. Save it for her, and add to it what you can."

While this conversation took place, Fanny had been consigned to the care of Mrs. Boxer, and Philip now rose to see and bid her farewell before he departed.

"I may come again to visit you, Mr. Gawtrey; and I pray Heaven to find that you and Fanny have been a mutual blessing to each other. Oh, remember how your son loved her!"

"He had a good heart in spite of all his sins. Poor William!" said Simon.

Philip Morton heard, and his lip curled with a sad and a just disdain.

If, when, at the age of nineteen, William Gawtrey had quitted his father's roof, the father had then remembered that the son's heart was good, the son had been alive still, an honest and a happy man. Do ye not laugh, oh ye all-listening fiends! when men praise those dead whose virtues they discovered not when alive? It takes much marble to build the sepulcher—how little of lath and plaster would have repaired the garret!

On turning into a small room adjoining the parlor in which Gawtrey sat, Morton found Fanny standing gloomily by a dull, soot-grimed window, which looked out on the dead walls of a small yard. Mrs. Boxer, seated by a table, was employed in trimming a cap, and putting questions to Fanny in that falsetto voice of endearment in which people not used to children are apt to address them.

"And so, my dear, they've never taught you to read or write! You've been sadly neglected, poor thing!"

"We must do our best to supply the deficiency," said Morton, as he entered.

"Bless me, sir, is that you?" And the *gouvernante* bustled up and dropped a low courtesy; for Morton, dressed then in the garb of a gentleman, was of a mien and person calculated to strike the gaze of the vulgar.

"Ah, brother!" cried Fanny, for by that name he had taught her to call him; and she flew to his side. "Come away—it's ugly here—it makes me cold."

"My child, I told you you must stay; but I shall hope to see you again some day. Will you not be kind to this poor creature, ma'am? Forgive me if I offended you last night, and favor me by accepting this to show that we are friends." As he spoke he slid his purse into the woman's hand. "I shall feel ever grateful for whatever you can do for Fanny."

"Fanny wants nothing from any one else—Fanny wants her brother."

"Sweet child! I fear she don't take to me. Will you like me, Miss Fanny?"

"No! get along!"

"Fie, Fanny: you remember you did not take to me at first. But she is so affectionate, ma'am—she never forgets a kindness."

"I will do all I can to please her, sir. And so she is really master's grandchild?" The woman fixed her eyes, as she spoke, so intently on Morton, that he felt embarrassed; and busied himself, without answering, in caressing and soothing Fanny, who now seemed to awake to the affliction about to visit her: for, though she did not weep—she very rarely wept—her slight frame trembled, her eyes closed, her cheeks, even her lips, were white, and her delicate hands were clasped tightly round the neck of the one about to abandon her to strange breasts.

Morton was greatly moved. "One kiss, Fanny! and do not forget me when we meet again."

The child pressed her lips to his cheek, but the lips were cold. He put her down gently: she stood mute and passive.

"Remember that *he* wished me to leave you here," whispered Morton, using an argument that never failed. "We must obey him: and so—God bless you, Fanny!"

He rose and retreated to the door; the child unclosed her eyes, and gazed at him with a strained, painful, imploring gaze: her lips moved, but she did not speak. Morton could not bear that silent woe. He sought to smile on her consolingly, but the smile would not come. He closed the door, and hurried from the house.

From that day Fanny settled into a kind of dreary, inanimate stupor, which resembled that of the somnambulist whom the magnetizer forgets to waken. Hitherto, with all the eccentricities or deficiencies of her mind, had mingled a wild and airy gayety. That was vanished. She spoke little—she never played—no toys could lure her—even the poor dog failed to win her notice. If she was told to do any thing, she stared vacantly, and stirred not. She evinced, however, a kind of dumb regard to the old, blind man; she would creep to his knees, and sit there for hours, seldom answering when he addressed her, but uneasy, anxious, and restless if he left her.

"Will you die too?" she asked once; the old man understood her not, and she did not try to explain. Early one morning, some days after Morton was gone, they missed her; she was not in the house, nor the dull yard where she was sometimes dismissed and told to play—told in vain. In great alarm, the old man accused Mrs. Boxer of having spirited her away; and threatened and stormed so loudly, that the woman, against her will, went forth to the search. At last she found the child in the church-yard, standing wistfully beside a tomb.

"What do you here, you little plague?" said Mrs. Boxer, rudely seizing her by the arm.

"This is the way they will both come back some day! I dreamed so!"

"If ever I catch you here again!" said the housekeeper; and, wiping her brow with one hand, she struck the child with the other. Fanny had never been struck before. She recoiled in terror and amazement; and, for the first time since her arrival, burst into tears.

"Come, come, no crying! and, if you tell master, I'll beat you within an inch of your life!" So saying, she caught Fanny in her arms; and, walking about, scolding and menacing till she had frightened back the tears, she returned triumphantly to the house, and, bursting into the parlor, exclaimed, "Here's the little darling, sir!"

When old Simon learned where the child had been found, he was glad; for it was his constant habit, whenever the evening was fine, to glide out to that church-yard—his dog his guide—and sit on his one favorite spot opposite the setting sun: this not so much for the sanctity of the place, or the meditations it might inspire, as because it was the nearest, the safest, and the loneliest spot in the neighborhood of his home where the blind man could inhale the air and bask in the light of heaven. Hitherto, thinking it sad for the child, he had never taken her with him: indeed, at the hour of his monotonous excursion, she had generally been banished to bed. Now she was permitted to accompany him; and the old man and the infant would sit there, side by side, as Age and Infancy rested side by side in the graves below. The first symptom of child-like interest and curiosity that Fanny betrayed was awakened by the affliction of her protector. One evening, as they thus sat, she made him explain what the desolation of blindness is. She seemed to comprehend him, though he did not seek to adapt his complaints to her understanding.

"Fanny knows," said she, touchingly; "for she, too, is blind here;" and she pressed her hands to her temples.

Notwithstanding her silence and strange ways, and although he could not see the exquisite loveliness which Nature, as in remorseful pity, had lavished on her outward form, Simon soon learned to love her better than he had ever loved yet: for they most cold to the child are often dotards to the grandchild. For her even his avarice slept. Dainties, never before known at his sparing board, were ordered to tempt her appetite—toy-shops ransacked to amuse her indolence. He was long, however, before he could prevail on himself to fulfill his promise to Morton, and rob himself of her presence. At length, however, wearied with Mrs. Boxer's lamentations at her ignorance, and alarmed himself at some evidences of helplessness, which made him dread to think what her future might be when left alone in life, he placed her at a day-school in the suburb. Here Fanny, for a considerable time, justified the harshest assertions of her stupidity. She could not even keep her eyes two minutes together on the page from which she was to learn the mysteries of reading; months passed before she mastered the alphabet; and, a month after, she had again forgotten it, and the labor was renewed. The only thing in which she showed ability, if so it might be called, was in the use of the needle. The sisters of the convent had already taught her many pretty devices in this art; and when she found that at the school they were admired—that she was praised instead of blamed—her vanity was pleased, and she learned so readily all that they could teach in this not unprofitable accomplishment, that Mrs. Boxer slyly and secretly turned her tasks to account, and made a weekly perquisite of the poor pupil's industry. Another faculty she possessed in common with persons usually deficient and with the lower species, viz., a most accurate and faithful recollection of places. At first Mrs. Boxer had been duly sent, morning, noon, and evening, to take her to or bring her from the school; but this was so great a grievance to Simon's solitary superintendent, and Fanny coaxed the old man so endearingly to allow her to go and return alone, that the attendance, unwelcome to both, was waved. Fanny exulted in this liberty; and she never, in going or in returning, missed passing through the burial-ground, and gazing wistfully at the tomb from which she yet believed Morton would one day reappear. With his memory she cherished also that of her earlier and more guilty protector; but they were separate feelings, which she distinguished in her own way.

"Papa had given her up. She knew that he would not have sent her away, far—far over the great water, if he had meant to see Fanny again; but her brother was forced to leave her—he would come to life one day, and then they should live together!"

One day, toward the end of autumn, as her schoolmistress, a good woman on the whole, but who had not yet had the wit to discover by what chords to tune the instrument over which so wearily she drew her unskillful hand—one day, we say, the schoolmistress happened to be dressed for a christening party to which she was invited in the suburb; and, accordingly, after the morning lessons, the pupils were to be dismissed to a holiday. As Fanny now came last with the hopeless spelling-book, she stopped suddenly short, and her eyes rested with avidity upon a large bouquet of exotic flowers with which the good lady (she was thin) had enlivened the center of the parted kerchief, whose yellow gauze modestly vailed that tender section of female beauty which poets have likened to hills of snow—a chilling simile! It was then autumn, and field and even garden flowers were growing rare.

"Will you give me one of those flowers?" said Fanny, dropping her book.

"One of these flowers, child! Why?"

Fanny did not answer; but one of the elder and cleverer girls said,

"Oh! she comes from France, you know, ma'am, and the Roman Catholics put flowers, and ribbons, and things over the graves; you know, ma'am, we were reading yesterday about Père la Chaise?"

"Well! what then?"

"And Miss Fanny will do any kind of work for us if we will give her flowers."

"Brother told me where to put them; but these pretty flowers, I never had any like them; *they* may bring him back again! I'll be so good if you'll give me one—only one!"

"Will you learn your lesson if I do, Fanny?"

"Oh! yes! Wait a moment!"

And Fanny stole back to her desk, put the hateful book resolutely before her, pressed both hands tightly on her temples—*Eureka!* the

chord *was* touched—and Fanny marched in triumph through half a column of hostile double-syllables!

From that day the schoolmistress knew how to stimulate her, and Fanny learned to read, her path to knowledge thus literally strewn with flowers! Catharine, thy children were far off, and thy grave looked gay!

It naturally happened that those short and simple rhymes, often sacred, which are repeated in schools as helps to memory, made a part of her studies; and, no sooner had the sound of verse struck upon her fancy, than it seemed to confuse and agitate anew all her senses. It was like the music of some breeze, to which dance and tremble all the young leaves of a wild plant. Even when at the convent she had been fond of repeating the infant rhymes with which they had sought to lull or to amuse her, but now the taste was more strongly developed. She confounded, however, in meaningless and motley disorder, the various snatches of song that came to her ear, weaving them together in some form which she understood, but which was jargon to all others; and often, as she went alone through the green lanes or the bustling streets, the passenger would turn in pity and fear to hear her half chant, half murmur ditties that seemed to suit only a wandering and unsettled imagination. And as Mrs. Boxer, in her visits to the various shops in the suburb, took care to bemoan her hard fate in attending to a creature so evidently moon-stricken, it was no wonder that the manner and the habits of the child, coupled with that strange predilection to haunt the burial-ground, which is not uncommon with persons of weak and disordered intellect, confirmed the character thus given to her.

So, as she tripped gayly and lightly along the thoroughfares, the children would draw aside from her path, and whisper, with superstitious fear mingled with contempt, "It's the idiot girl!" Idiot! How much more of heaven's light was there in that cloud than in the rush-lights that, flickering in sordid chambers, shed on dull things the dull ray, esteeming themselves as stars!

Months—years passed: Fanny was thirteen, when there dawned a new era to her existence. Mrs. Boxer had never got over her first grudge to Fanny. Her treatment of the poor girl was always harsh, and sometimes cruel. But Fanny did not complain; and as Mrs. Boxer's manner to her before Simon was invariably cringing and caressing, the old man never guessed the hardships his supposed grandchild underwent. There had been scandal some years back in the suburb about the relative connection of the master and the housekeeper; and the flaunting dress of the latter, something bold in her regard, and certain whispers that her youth had not been vowed to Vesta, confirmed the suspicion. The only reason why we do not feel sure that the rumor was false, is this: Simon Gawtrey had been so hard on the early follies of his son! Certainly, at all events, the woman had exercised great influence over the miser before the arrival of Fanny, and she had done much to steel his selfishness against the ill-fated William. And, as certainly, she had fully calculated on succeeding to the savings, whatever they might be, of the miser, whenever Providence should be pleased to terminate his days. She knew that Simon had, many years back, made his will in her favor: she knew that he had not altered that will; she believed, therefore, that, in spite of all his love for Fanny, he loved his gold so much more, that he could not accustom himself to the thought of bequeathing it to hands too helpless to guard the treasure. This had, in some measure, reconciled the housekeeper to the intruder; whom, nevertheless, she hated as a dog hates another dog, not only for taking his bone, but for looking at it.

But, suddenly, Simon fell ill. His age made it probable he would die. He took to his bed—his breathing grew fainter and fainter—he seemed dead. Fanny, all unconscious, sat by his bedside as usual, holding her breath not to waken him. Mrs. Boxer flew to the bureau—she unlocked it—she could not find the will, but she found three bags of bright old guineas: the sight charmed her. She tumbled them forth on the distained green cloth of the bureau—she began to count them; and, at that moment, the old man, as if there were a secret magnetism between himself and the guineas, woke from his trance. His blindness saved him the pain, that might have been fatal, of seeing the unhallowed profanation; but he heard the clink of the metal. The very sound restored his strength. But the infirm are always cunning: he breathed not a suspicion. "Mrs. Boxer," said he, faintly, "I think I could take some broth." Mrs. Boxer rose in great dismay, gently reclosed the bureau, and ran down stairs for the broth. Simon took the occasion to question Fanny; and, no sooner had he learned the operation of the heir-expectant, than he bade the girl first lock the bureau and bring him the key, and next run to a lawyer (whose address he gave her), and fetch him instantly.

With a malignant smile the old man took the broth from his handmaid: "Poor Boxer, you are a disinterested creature," said he, feebly, "I think you will grieve when I go."

Mrs. Boxer sobbed; and before she had recovered, the lawyer entered. That day a new will was made; and the lawyer politely informed Mrs. Boxer that her services would be dispensed with the next morning, when he should bring a nurse to the house. Mrs. Boxer heard, and took her resolution. As soon as Simon again fell asleep, she crept into the room, led away Fanny, locked her up in her own chamber, returned, searched for the key to the bureau, which she found at last under Simon's pillow, possessed herself of all she could lay her hands on, and the next morning she had disappeared forever!

Simon's loss was greater than might have been supposed; for, except a trifling sum in the Savings' Bank, he, like many other misers, kept all he had, in notes or specie, under his own lock and key. His whole fortune, indeed, was far less than was supposed; for money does not make money unless it is put out to interest: and the miser cheated himself. Such portion as was in bank-notes Mrs. Boxer probably had the prudence to destroy; for those numbers which Simon could remember were never traced: the gold, who could swear to? Except the pittance in the Savings' Bank, and whatever might be the paltry worth of the house he rented, the father, who had enriched the menial to exile the

son, was a beggar in his dotage. This news, however, was carefully concealed from him, by the advice of the doctor, whom, on his own responsibility, the lawyer introduced, till he had recovered sufficiently to bear the shock without danger; and the delay naturally favored Mrs. Boxer's escape.

Simon remained for some moments perfectly stunned and speechless when the news was broken to him. Fanny, in alarm at his increasing paleness, sprang to his breast. He pushed her away: "Go—go—go, child," he said; "I can't feed you now. Leave me to starve."

"To starve!" said Fanny, wonderingly; and she stole away, and sat herself down as if in deep thought. She then crept up to the lawyer as he was about to leave the room, after exhausting his stock of commonplace consolation, and, putting her hand in his, whispered, "I want to talk to you—this way." She led him through the passage into the open air. "Tell me," she said, "when poor people try not to starve, don't they work?"

"My dear, yes."

"For rich people buy poor people's work?"

"Certainly, my dear—to be sure."

"Very well. Mrs. Boxer used to sell my work. Fanny will feed grandpapa! Go and tell him never to say 'starve' again."

The good-natured lawyer was moved. "Can you work, indeed, my poor girl? Well, put on your bonnet, and come and talk to my wife."

And *that* was a new era in Fanny's existence! Her schooling was stopped. But now life schooled her. Necessity ripened her intellect. And many a hard eye moistened as—seeing her glide with her little basket of fancy work along the streets, still murmuring her happy and bird-like snatches of unconnected song—men and children alike said, with respect, in which there was *now* no contempt, "It's the idiot girl who supports her blind grandfather!"

They called her idiot still!

BOOK IV.

„Hin zu einem großen Meere
Trieb mich seiner Wellen Spiel;
Vor mir liegt's in weiter Leere,
Näher bin ich nicht dem Ziel."
SCHILLER: *Der Pilgrim.*

CHAPTER I.

"Oh, that sweet gleam of sunshine on the lake!"
WILSON'S *City of the Plague.*

IF, reader, you have ever looked through a solar microscope at the monsters in a drop of water, perhaps you have wondered to yourself how things so terrible have been hitherto unknown to you; you have felt a loathing at the limpid element you hitherto deemed so pure; you have half fancied that you would cease to be a water-drinker; yet the next day you have forgotten the grim life that started before you, with its countless shapes, in that teeming globule; and, if so tempted by your thirst, you have not shrunk from the lying crystal, although myriads of the horrible unseen are mangling, devouring, gorging each other, in the liquid you so tranquilly imbibe: so is it with that ancestral and master element called Life. Lapped in your sleek comforts, and lolling on the sofa of your patent conscience—when, perhaps for the first time, you look through the glass of Science upon one ghastly globule in the waters that heave around—that fill up, with their succulence, the pores of earth—that moisten every atom subject to your eyes or handled by your touch—you are startled and dismayed; you say, mentally, "Can such things be? I never dreamed of this before! I thought what was invisible to me was non-existent in itself: I will remember this dread experiment." The next day the experiment is forgotten. The chemist may rarefy the globule: can Science make pure the world?

Turn we now to the pleasant surface, seen in the whole, broad and fair to the common eye. Who would judge well of God's designs, if he could look on no drop pendant from the rose-tree or sparkling in the sun without the help of his solar microscope?

It is ten years after the night on which William Gawtrey perished: I transport you, reader, to the fairest scenes in England; scenes consecrated, by the only true pastoral poetry we have known, to Contemplation and Repose.

Autumn had begun to tinge the foliage on the banks of Winandermere. It had been a summer of unusual warmth and beauty; and if that year you had visited the English lakes, you might, from time to time, amid the groups of happy idlers you encountered, have singled out two persons for interest, or, perhaps, for envy: two who might have seemed to you in peculiar harmony with those serene and soft retreats: both young—both beautiful. Lovers you would have guessed them to be; but such lovers as Fletcher might have placed under the care of his "Holy Shepherdess:" forms that might have reclined by

"The virtuous well, about whose flowery banks
The nimble-footed fairies dance ther rounds
By the pale moonshine."

For in the love of those persons there seemed a purity and innocence that suited well their youth and the character of their beauty. Perhaps, indeed, on the girl's side, love sprung rather from those affections which the spring of life throws upward to the surface, as the spring of earth does its flowers, than from that concentrated and deep absorption of self in self, which alone promises endurance and devotion, and of which first love, or rather, first fancy, is often less susceptible than that which grows out of the more thoughtful fondness of maturer years. Yet he, the lover, was of so rare and singular a beauty, that he might well seem calculated to awaken to the utmost the love which wins the heart through the eyes.

But to begin at the beginning. A lady of fashion had, in the autumn previous to the year on which our narrative reopens, taken, with her daughter, a girl then of about eighteen, the tour of the English lakes. Charmed by the beauty of Winandermere, and finding one of the most commodious villas on its banks to be let, they had remained there all the winter. In the early spring a severe illness had seized the elder lady; and, finding herself, as she slowly recovered, unfit for the gayeties of a London season, nor

unwilling, perhaps—for she had been a beauty in her day—to postpone for another year the *début* of her daughter, she had continued her sojourn, with short intervals of absence, for a whole year. Her husband, a busy man of the world, with occupation in London and fine estates in the country, joined them only occasionally, glad to escape the still beauty of landscapes which brought him no rental, and, therefore, afforded no charm to his eye.

In the first month of their arrival at Winandermere, the mother and daughter had made an eventful acquaintance in the following manner.

One evening, as they were walking on their lawn, which sloped to the lake, they heard the sound of a flute, played with a skill so exquisite as to draw them, surprised and spell-bound to the banks. The musician was a young man, in a boat, which he had moored beneath the trees of their demesne. He was alone, or, rather, he had one companion in a large Newfoundland dog that sat watchful at the helm of the boat, and appeared to enjoy the music as much as his master. As the ladies approached the spot, the dog growled, and the young man ceased, though without seeing the fair causes of his companion's displeasure. The sun, then setting, shone full on his countenance as he looked round; and that countenance was one that might have haunted the nymphs of Delos; the face of Apollo, not as the hero, but the shepherd—not of the bow, but of the lute—not of the Python-slayer, but the young dreamer by shady places—he whom the sculptor has portrayed leaning idly against the tree—the boy-god whose home is yet on earth, and to whom the Oracle and the Spheres are still unknown.

At that moment the dog leaped from the boat, and the elder lady uttered a faint cry of alarm, which, directing the attention of the musician, brought him also ashore. He called off his dog, and apologized, with a not ungraceful mixture of diffidence and ease, for his intrusion. He was not aware the place was inhabited—it was a favorite haunt of his—he lived near. The elder lady was pleased with his address, and struck with his appearance There was, indeed, in his manner that indefinable charm, which is more attractive than mere personal appearance, and which can never be imitated or acquired. They parted, however, without establishing any formal acquaintance. A few days after, they met at dinner at a neighboring house, and were introduced by name. That of the young man seemed strange to the ladies; not so theirs to him. He turned pale when he heard it, and remained silent and aloof the rest of the evening. They met again, and often; and for some weeks—nay, even for months—he appeared to avoid, as much as possible, the acquaintance so auspiciously begun; but, by little and little, the beauty of the younger lady seemed to gain ground on his diffidence or repugnance. Excursions among the neighboring mountains threw them together, and at last he fairly surrendered himself to the charm he had at first determined to resist.

This young man lived on the opposite side of the lake, in a quiet household, of which he was the idol. His life had been one of almost monastic purity and repose; his tastes were accomplished, his character seemed soft and gentle; but beneath that calm exterior, flashes of passion—the nature of the poet, ardent and sensitive—would break forth at times. He had scarcely ever, since his earliest childhood, quitted those retreats; he knew nothing of the world, except in books—books of poetry and romance. Those with whom he lived—his relations, an old bachelor, and the old bachelor's sisters, old maids—seemed equally innocent and inexperienced. It was a family whom the rich respected and the poor loved—inoffensive, charitable, and well off. To whatever their easy fortune might be, he appeared the heir. The name of this young man was Charles Spencer; the ladies were Mrs. Beaufort, and Camilla her daughter.

Mrs. Beaufort, though a shrewd woman, did not at first perceive any danger in the growing intimacy between Camilla and the younger Spencer. Her daughter was not her favorite—not the object of her one thought or ambition. Her whole heart and soul were wrapped in her son Arthur, who lived principally abroad. Clever enough to be considered capable, when he pleased, of achieving distinction; good-looking enough to be thought handsome by all who were on the *qui vive* for an advantageous match; good-natured enough to be popular with the society in which he lived, scattering to and fro money without limit, Arthur Beaufort, at the age of thirty, had established one of those brilliant and evanescent reputations, which, for a few years, reward the ambition of the fine gentleman. It was precisely the reputation that the mother could appreciate, and which even the more saving father secretly admired, while, ever respectable in phrase, Mr. Robert Beaufort seemed openly to regret it. This son was, I say, every thing to them; they cared little, in comparison, for their daughter. How could a daughter keep up the proud name of Beaufort? However well she might marry, it was another house, not theirs, which her graces and beauty would adorn. Moreover, the better she might marry, the greater her dowry would naturally be—the dowry to go out of the family! And Arthur, poor fellow! was so extravagant, that really he would want every sixpence. Such was the reasoning of the father. The mother reasoned less upon the matter. Mrs. Beaufort, faded and meager, in blonde and cachemere, was jealous of the charms of her daughter; and she herself, as silly women often do, growing sentimental and lachrymose as she advanced in life, had convinced herself that Camilla was a girl of no feeling.

Miss Beaufort was, indeed, of a character singularly calm and placid; it was the character that charms men in proportion, perhaps, to their own strength and passion. She had been rigidly brought up; her affections had been very early chilled and subdued; they moved, therefore, now, with ease, in the serene path of her duties. She held her parents, especially her father, in reverential fear, and never dreamed of the possibility of resisting one of their wishes, much less their commands. Pious, kind, gentle, of a fine and never-ruffled temper, Camilla, an admirable daughter, was likely to make no less admirable a wife; you might depend on her principles, if ever you could doubt her affection. Few girls were more calculated to inspire love. You would scarcely wonder at any folly, any madness, which even a wise man might commit for her sake. This did not depend on her beauty

alone, though she was extremely lovely rather than handsome, and of that style of loveliness which is universally fascinating: the figure, especially as to the arms, throat, and bust, was exquisite; the eyes of that *velvet* softness which to look on is to love. But her charm was in a certain prettiness of manner, an exceeding innocence mixed with the most captivating, because unconscious, coquetry. With all this there was a freshness, a joy, a virgin and bewitching candor in her voice, her laugh—you might almost say in her very movements. Such was Camilla Beaufort at that age. Such she seemed to others. To her parents she was only a great girl rather in the way. To Mrs. Beaufort a rival, to Mr. Beaufort an encumbrance on the property.

CHAPTER II.

"The moon
Saddening the solemn night, yet with that sadness
Mingling the breath of undisturbed peace."
WILSON: *City of the Plague.*

"Tell me his fate.
Say that he lives, or say that he is dead;
But tell me—tell me!
. . . . . .
I see him not: some cloud envelops him."—*Ibid.*

ONE day (nearly a year after their first introduction), as, with a party of friends, Camilla and Charles Spencer were riding through those wild and romantic scenes which lie between the sunny Winandermere and the dark and sullen Wastwater, their conversation fell on topics more personal than it had hitherto done; for, as yet, if they felt love, they had never spoken of it.

The narrowness of the path allowed only two to ride abreast, and the two to whom I confine my description were the last of the little band.

"How I wish Arthur were here!" said Camilla; "I am sure you would like him."

"Are you? He lives much in the world—the world of which I know nothing. Are we, then, characters to suit each other?"

"He is the kindest—the best of human beings!" said Camilla, rather evasively, but with more warmth than usually dwelt in her soft and low voice.

"Is he so kind?" returned Spencer, musingly. "Well, it may be so. And who would not be kind to you? Ah! it is a beautiful connection, that of brother and sister: I never had a sister!"

"Have you then a brother?" asked Camilla, in some surprise, and turning her ingenuous eyes full on her companion.

Spencer's color rose—rose to his temples: his voice trembled as he answered, "No—no brother!" then, speaking in a rapid and hurried tone, he continued, "My life has been a strange and lonely one. I am an orphan. I have mixed with few of my own age; my boyhood and youth have been spent in these scenes; my education such as Nature and books could bestow, with scarcely any guide or tutor save my guardian—the dear old man! Thus the world, the stir of cities, ambition, enterprise, all seem to me as things belonging to a distant land to which I shall never wander. Yet I have had my dreams, Miss Beaufort; dreams of which these solitudes still form a part; but solitudes not unshared. And lately I have thought that those dreams might be prophetic. And you—do *you* love the world?"

"I, like you, have scarcely tried it," said Camilla, with a sweet laugh. "But I love the country better—oh! far better than what little I have seen of towns. But for you," she continued, with a charming hesitation, "a man is so different from us—for you to shrink from the world—you, so young, and with talents too—nay, it is true!—it seems to me strange."

"It may be so, but I can not tell you what feelings of dread—what vague forebodings of terror seize me if I carry my thoughts beyond these retreats. Perhaps my good guardian—"

"Your uncle?" interrupted Camilla.

"Ay, my uncle—may have contributed to engender feelings, as you say, strange at my age; but still—"

"Still what?"

"My earlier childhood," continued Spencer, breathing hard and turning pale, "was not spent in the happy home I have now; it was passed in a premature ordeal of suffering and pain. Its recollections have left a dark shadow on my mind, and under that shadow lies every thought that points toward the troublous and laboring career of other men. But," he resumed, after a pause, and in a deep, earnest, almost solemn voice, "but, after all, is this cowardice or wisdom? I find no monotony, no tedium in this quiet life. Is there not a certain morality, a certain religion in the spirit of a secluded and country existence? In it we do not know the evil passions which ambition and strife are said to arouse. I never feel jealous or envious of other men; I never know what it is to hate; my boat, my horse, our garden, music, books, and, if I may dare to say so, the solemn gladness that comes from the hopes of another life—these fill up every hour with thoughts and pursuits, peaceful, happy, and without a cloud, till of late, when—when—"

"When what?" said Camilla, innocently.

"When I have longed, but did not dare, to ask another if to share such a lot would content her!"

He bent, as he spoke, his soft blue eyes full upon the blushing face of her whom he addressed, and Camilla half smiled and half sighed.

"Our companions are far before us," said she, turning away her face; "and, see, the road is now smooth." She quickened her horse's pace as she said this; and Spencer, too new to woman to interpret favorably her evasion of his words and looks, fell into a profound silence, which lasted during the rest of their excursion.

As, toward the decline of day, he bent his solitary way home, emotions and passions to which his life had hitherto been a stranger, and which, alas! he had vainly imagined a life so tranquil kept everlastingly restrained, swelled his heart.

"She does not love me," he muttered, half aloud; "she will leave me, and what then will all the beauty of the landscape seem in my eyes? And how dare I look up to her? Even if her cold, vain mother—her father, the man, they say, of forms and scruples, were to consent, would they not question closely of my true birth and origin? And if the one blot were over-

looked, is there no other? His early habits and vices—*his!*—a brother's—his unknown career terminating at any day, perhaps, in shame, in crime, in exposure, in the gibbet—will they overlook this?" As he spoke he groaned aloud; and, as if impatient to escape himself, spurred on his horse, and rested not till he reached the belt of trim and sober evergreens that surrounded his hitherto happy home.

Leaving his horse to find its way to the stables, the young man passed through rooms, which he found deserted, to the lawn on the other side, which sloped to the smooth waters of the lake.

Here, seated under the one large tree that formed the pride of the lawn, over which it cast its shadow broad and far, he perceived his guardian poring idly over an oft-read book—one of those books of which literary dreamers are apt to grow fantastically fond—books by the old English writers, full of phrases and conceits half quaint and half sublime, interspersed with praises of the country, imbued with a poetical rather than orthodox religion, and adorned with a strange mixture of monastic learning and aphorisms collected from the weary experience of actual life.

To the left, by a green-house, built between the house and the lake, might be seen the white dress and lean form of the eldest spinster sister, to whom the care of the flowers—for she had been early crossed in love—was consigned; at a little distance from her the other two were seated at work, and conversing in whispers, not to disturb their studious brother, no doubt upon the nephew, who was their all in all. It was the calmest hour of eve; and the quiet of the several forms—their simple and harmless occupations, if occupations they might be called—the breathless foliage rich in the depth of summer; behind, the old-fashioned house, unpretending, not mean, its open doors and windows giving glimpses of the comfortable repose within; before, the lake, without a ripple, and catching the gleam of the sunset clouds—all made a picture of that complete tranquillity and stillness which sometimes soothes and sometimes saddens us, according as we are in the temper to woo CONTENT.

The young man glided to his guardian and touched his shoulder; "Sir, may I speak to you? Hush! *they* need not see us now! It is only you I would speak with."

The elder Spencer rose; and, with his book still in his hand, moved side by side with his nephew under the shadow of the tree, and toward a walk to the right, which led for a short distance along the margin of the lake, backed by the interlaced boughs of a thick copse.

"Sir!" said the young man, speaking first, and with a visible effort, "your cautions have been in vain! I love this girl—this daughter of the haughty Beauforts! I love her—better than life I love her!"

"My poor boy," said the uncle, tenderly, and with a simple fondness passing his arm over the speaker's shoulder, "do not think I can chide you: I know what it is to love in vain!"

"In vain! but why in vain?" exclaimed the younger Spencer, with a vehemence that had in it something of both agony and fierceness. "She may love me—she shall love me!" and, almost for the first time in his life, the proud consciousness of his rare gifts of person spoke in his kindled eye and dilated stature. "Do they not say that Nature has been favorable to me? What rival have I here? Is she not young? And (sinking his voice till it almost breathed like music) is not love contagious?"

"I do not doubt that she may love you—who would not? But—but—the parents—will they ever consent?"

"Nay!" answered the lover, as, with that inconsistency common to passion, he now argued stubbornly against those fears in another to which he had just before yielded in himself, "nay! after all, am I not of their own blood? Do I not come from the elder branch? Was I not reared in equal luxury and with higher hopes? And my mother—my poor mother—did she not to the last maintain our birth-right—her own honor? Has not accident or law unjustly stripped us of our true station? Is it not for us to forgive spoliation? Am I not, in fact, the person who descends—who forgets the wrongs of the dead, the heritage of the living?"

The young man had never yet assumed this tone—had never yet shown that he looked back to the history connected with his birth with the feelings of resentment and the memory of wrong. It was a tone contrary to his habitual calm and contentment—it struck forcibly on his listener—and the elder Spencer was silent for some moments before he replied, "If you feel thus (and it is natural), you have yet stronger reason to struggle against this unhappy affection."

"I have been conscious of that, sir," replied Spencer, mournfully. "I *have* struggled! and I say again it is in vain! I turn, then, to face the obstacles! My birth—let us suppose that the Beauforts overlook it. Did you not tell me that Mr. Beaufort wrote to inform you of the abrupt and intemperate visit of my brother—of his determination never to forgive it? I think I remember something of this years ago."

"It is true!" said the guardian; "and the conduct of that brother is, in fact, the true cause why you never ought to reassume your proper name—never to divulge it, even to the family with whom you connect yourself by marriage; but, above all, to the Beauforts, who, for that cause, if that cause alone, would reject your suit."

The young man groaned—placed one hand before his eyes, and with the other grasped his guardian's arm convulsively, as if to check him from proceeding farther; but the good man, not divining his meaning and absorbed in his subject, went on, irritating the wound he had touched.

"Reflect! your brother, in boyhood—in the dying hours of his mother, scarcely saved from the crime of a thief; flying from a friendly pursuit with a notorious reprobate; afterward implicated in some discreditable transaction about a horse; rejecting all—every hand that could save him; clinging by choice to the lowest companions and the meanest habits; disappearing from the country, and last seen, ten years ago—the beard not yet on his chin—with that same reprobate of whom I have spoken, in Paris, a day or so only before his companion, a coiner—a murderer—fell by the hands of the police! You remember that when, in your seventeenth year, you evinced some desire to retake your

name—nay, even to refind that guilty brother, I placed before you, as a sad and terrible duty, the newspaper that contained the particulars of the death and the former adventures of that wretched accomplice, the notorious Gawtrey: and telling you that Mr. Beaufort had long since written to inform me that his own son and Lord Lilburne had seen your brother in company with the miscreant just before his fate—nay, was, in all probability, the very youth described in the account as found in his chamber and escaping the pursuit, I asked you if you would now venture to leave that disguise—that shelter under which you would forever be safe from the opprobrium of the world—from the shame that, sooner or later, your brother must bring upon your name!"

"It is true—it is true!" said the pretended nephew, in a tone of great anguish, and with trembling lips which the blood had forsaken. "Horrible to look either to his past or his future! But—but—we have heard of him no more; no one ever has learned his fate. Perhaps—perhaps (and he seemed to breathe more freely)—*my brother is no more!*"

And poor Catharine, and poor Philip, had it come to this? Did the one brother feel a sentiment of release, of joy, in conjecturing the death—perhaps the death of violence and shame—of his fellow-orphan? Mr. Spencer shook his head doubtingly, but made no reply. The young man sighed heavily, and strode on for several paces in advance of his protector; then, turning back, he laid his hand on his shoulder:

"Sir," he said, in a low voice, and with downcast eyes, "you are right: this disguise, this false name, must be forever borne! Why need the Beauforts, then, ever know who and what I am? Why not, as your nephew, nephew to one so respected and exemplary, proffer my claims and plead my cause?"

"They are proud, so it is said, and worldly; you know my family was in trade, still—but—" and here Mr. Spencer broke off from a tone of doubt into that of despondency; "but, recollect, though Mrs. Beaufort may not remember the circumstance, both her husband and her son have seen me, have known my name. Will they not suspect, when once introduced to you, the stratagem that has been adopted? Nay, has it not been from that very fear that you have wished me to shun the acquaintance of the family? Both Mr. Beaufort and Arthur saw you in childhood, and, their suspicion once aroused, they may recognize you at once; your features are developed, but not altogether changed. Come, come! my adopted, my dear son, shake off this fantasy betimes: let us change the scene: I will travel with you; read with you; go where—"

"Sir, sir!" exclaimed the lover, smiting his breast, "you are ever kind, compassionate, generous; but do not, do not rob me of hope. I have never—thanks to you—felt, save in a momentary dejection, the curse of my birth. Now, how heavily it falls! Where shall I look for comfort?"

As he spoke, the sound of a bell broke over the translucent air and the slumbering lake: it was the bell that every eve and morn summoned that innocent and pious family to prayer. The old man's face changed as he heard it, changed from its customary indolent, absent, listless aspect, into an expression of dignity, even of animation.

"Hark!" he said, pointing upward; "hark! it chides you. Who shall say '*where* shall I look for comfort,' while God is in the heavens?"

The young man, habituated to the faith and observance of religion till they had pervaded his whole nature, bowed his head in rebuke; a few tears stole from his eyes.

"You are right, *father*," he said, tenderly, giving emphasis to the deserved and endearing name. "I am comforted already!"

So, side by side, silently and noiselessly, the young and the old man glided back to the house. When they gained the quiet room in which the family usually assembled, the sisters and servants were already gathered round the table. They knelt as the loiterers entered. It was the wonted duty of the younger Spencer to read the prayers; and, as he now did so, his graceful countenance more hushed, his sweet voice more earnest than usual in its accents, who that heard could have deemed the heart within convulsed by such stormy passions? Or was it not in that hour, that solemn commune, soothed from its woe? Oh, beneficent Creator! thou who inspirest all the tribes of earth with the *desire to pray*, hast thou not, in that divinest instinct, bestowed on us the happiest of thy gifts?

CHAPTER III.

"*Bertram.* I mean the business is not ended, as fearing to hear of it hereafter.

* * * * *

"1*st Soldier.* Do you know this Captain Dumain?"
All's Well that Ends Well.

One evening, some weeks after the date of the last chapter, Mr. Robert Beaufort sat alone in his house in Grosvenor-square. He had arrived that morning from Beaufort Court, on his way to Winandermere, to which he was summoned by a letter from his wife.

That year was an agitated and eventful epoch in England; and Mr. Beaufort had recently gone through the bustle of an election, not, indeed, contested, for his popularity and his property defied all rivalry in his own county.

The rich man had just dined, and was seated in lazy enjoyment by the side of the fire, which he had had lighted less for the warmth—though it was then September—than for the companionship, engaged in finishing his Madeira, and, with half-closed eyes, munching his deviled biscuits.

"I am sure," he soliloquized, while thus employed, "I don't know exactly what to do; my wife ought to decide matters where the *girl* is concerned; a son is another affair: that's the use of a wife. Humph!"

"Sir," said a fat servant, opening the door, "a gentleman wishes to see you upon very particular business."

"Business at this hour! Tell him to go to Mr. Blackwell."

"Yes, sir."

"Stay! perhaps he is a constituent, Simmons. Ask him if he belongs to the county."

"Yes, sir."

"A great estate is a great plague," muttered Mr. Beaufort; "so is a great constituency. It is pleasanter, after all, to be in the house of

lords. I suppose I could if I wished, but then one must rat—that's a bore. I will consult Lilburne. Humph!" The servant reappeared.

"Sir, he says he does belong to the county."

"Show him in. What sort of a person?"

"A sort of gentleman, sir; that is," continued the butler, mindful of five shillings just slipped within his palm by the stranger, "quite *the* gentleman."

"More wine, then: stir up the fire."

In a few moments the visitor was ushered into the apartment. He was a man between fifty and sixty, but still aiming at the appearance of youth. His dress evinced military pretensions; consisting of a blue coat, buttoned up to the chin, a black stock, loose trowsers of the fashion called Cossacks, and brass spurs. He wore a wig, of great luxuriance in curl, and rich auburn in hue; with large whiskers of the same color, slightly tinged with gray at the roots. By the imperfect light of the room it was not perceptible that the clothes were somewhat threadbare, and that the boots, cracked at the side, admitted glimpses of no very white hosiery within. Mr. Beaufort, reluctantly rising from his repose, and gladly sinking back to it, motioned to a chair, and put on a doleful and doubtful semi-smile of welcome. The servant placed the wine and glasses before the stranger: the host and visitor were alone.

"So, sir," said Mr. Beaufort, languidly, "you are from ——shire; I suppose about the canal: may I offer you a glass of wine?"

"Most hauppy, sir—your health!" and the stranger, with evident satisfaction, tossed off a bumper to so complimentary a toast.

"About the canal?" repeated Mr. Beaufort.

"No, sir, no! You parliament gentlemen must hauve a vaust deal of trouble on your haunds—very foine property I understaund yours is, sir. Sir, allow me to drink the health of your good lady!"

"I thank you, Mr.— Mr.— what did you say your name was? I beg you a thousand pardons."

"No offaunce in the least, sir; no ceremony with me—this is perticler good Madeira!"

"May I ask you how I can serve you?" said Mr. Beaufort, struggling between the sense of annoyance and the fear to be uncivil. "And, pray, had I the honor of your vote in the last election?"

"No, sir, no! It's mauny years since I have been in your part of the world, though I was born there."

"Then I don't exactly see—" began Mr. Beaufort, and stopped with dignity.

"Why I call on you," put in the stranger, tapping his boots with his cane; and then, recognizing the rent, he thrust both feet under the table. I don't say that; but at this hour I am seldom at leisure—not but what I am always at the service of a constituent, that is, a *voter!* I make a distinction between the two—'tis the duty of a member; Mr.— I beg your pardon, I did not catch your name."

"Sir," said the stranger, helping himself to a third glass of wine, "here's a health to your young folk! And now to business." Here the visitor, drawing his chair nearer to his host, assuming a more grave aspect, and dropping something of his stilted pronunciation, continued, "You had a brother?"

"Well, sir," said Mr. Beaufort, with a very changed countenance.

"And that brother had a wife!"

Had a cannon gone off in the ear of Mr. Robert Beaufort, it could not have shocked or stunned him more than that simple word, with which his companion closed his sentence. He fell back in his chair, his lips apart, his eyes fixed on the stranger. He sought to speak, but his tongue clove to his mouth.

"That wife had two sons born in wedlock!"

"It is false!" cried Mr. Beaufort, finding voice at length and springing to his feet. "And who are you, sir? and what do you mean by—"

"Hush!" said the stranger, perfectly unconcerned, and regaining the dignity of his *haw-haw* enunciation: "better not let the servants hear auny thing. For my pawt, I think servants hauve the longest pair of ears of auny persons, not excepting jaukasses; their ears stretch from the pauntry to the parlor. Hush, sir!—perticler good Madeira, this!"

"Sir!" said Mr. Beaufort, struggling to preserve, or, rather, recover his temper, "your conduct is exceedingly strange: but allow me to say that you are wholly misinformed. My brother never did marry; and, if you have any thing to say on behalf of those young men—his natural sons—I refer you to my solicitor, Mr. Blackwell, of Lincoln's Inn. I wish you a good-evening."

"Sir! the same to you: I won't trouble you auny farther; it was only out of koindness I called; I am not used to be treated so; sir, I am in his maujesty's service; sir, you will foind that the witness of the marriage is forthcoming; you will think of me then, and, perhaps, be sorry. But I've done: 'Your most obedient humble, sir!'" And the stranger, with a flourish of his hand, turned to the door.

At the sight of this determination on the part of his strange guest, a cold, uneasy, vague presentiment seized Mr. Beaufort. There, not flashed, but rather froze, across him the recollection of his brother's emphatic but disbelieved assurances—of Catharine's obstinate assertion of her sons' alleged rights—of her then hopeless lawsuit: hopeless because the witness she invoked was not found. With this remembrance came a horrible train of shadowy fears—litigation, witnesses, verdict, surrender; spoliation—arrears—ruin!

The man, who had gained the door, turned back and looked at him with a complacent, half triumphant leer upon his impudent, reckless face.

"Sir," then said Mr. Beaufort, mildly, "I repeat that you had better see Mr. Blackwell."

The tempter saw his triumph. "I have a secret to communicate, which it is best for you to keep snug. How mauny people do you wish me to see about it? Come, sir, there is no need of a lawyer; or, if you think so, tell him yourself. Now or never, Mr. Beaufort."

"I can have no objection to hear any thing you have to say, sir," said the rich man, yet more mildly than before; and then added with a forced smile, "Though my rights are already too confirmed to admit of a doubt."

Without heeding the last assertion, the stranger coolly walked back, resumed his seat, and, placing both arms on the table, and looking Mr. Beaufort full in the face, thus proceeded:

"Sir, of the marriage between Philip Beaufort and Catharine Morton there were two witnesses—the one is dead, the other went abroad—the last is alive still!"

"If so," said Mr. Beaufort, who, not naturally deficient in cunning and sense, felt every faculty now prodigiously sharpened, and was resolved to know the precise grounds for alarm; if so, why did not the man—it was a servant, sir, a man-servant, whom Mrs. Morton pretended to rely on—appear at the trial?"

"Because, I say, he was abroad, and could not be found; or, the search after him miscarried, from clumsy management and a lack of the rhino."

"Hum!" said Mr. Beaufort; "one witness—*one* witness, observe, there *is* only one!—does not alarm me much. It is not what a man deposes, it is what a jury believe, sir! Moreover, what has become of the young men? They have never been heard of for years. They are probably dead; if so, I am heir-at-law!"

"I know where one of them is to be found, at all events."

"The elder? Philip?" asked Mr. Beaufort, anxiously, and with a fearful remembrance of the energetic and vehement character prematurely exhibited by his nephew.

"Pawdon me! I need not answer that question."

"Sir! a lawsuit of this nature, against one in possession, is very doubtful, and," added the rich man, drawing himself up, "and, perhaps, very expensive!"

"The young man I speak of does not want friends, who will not grudge the money."

"Sir!" said Mr. Beaufort, rising and placing his back to the fire; "sir! what is your object in this communication? Do you come, on the part of the young men, to propose a compromise? If so, be plain!"

"I come on my own pawt. It rests with you to say if the young men shall never know it!"

"And what do you want?"

"Five hundred a year as long as the secret is kept."

"And how can you prove that there is a secret, after all?"

"By producing the witness, if you wish."

"Will he go halves in the £500 a year?" asked Mr. Beaufort, artfully.

"That is moy affair, sir," replied the stranger.

"What you say," resumed Mr. Beaufort, "is so extraordinary, so unexpected, and still, to me, seems so improbable, that I must have time to consider. If you will call on me in a week, and produce your facts, I will give you my answer. I am not the man, sir, to wish to keep any one out of his true rights; but I will not yield, on the other hand, to imposture."

"If you don't want to keep them out of their rights, I'd best go and tell my young gentlemen," said the stranger, with cool impudence.

"I tell you I must have time," repeated Beaufort, disconcerted. "Besides, I have not myself alone to look to, sir," he added, with dignified emphasis; I am a father!"

"This day week I will call on you again. Good-evening, Mr. Beaufort!" And the man stretched out his hand with an air of amicable condescension.

The respectable Mr. Beaufort changed color, hesitated, and finally suffered two fingers to be enticed into the grasp of the visitor, whom he ardently wished at that bourn whence no visitor returns.

The stranger smiled, stalked to the door, laid his finger on his lip, winked knowingly, and vanished, leaving Mr. Beaufort a prey to such feelings of uneasiness, dread, and terror, as a man whom, on some inch or two of slippery rock, the tides have suddenly surrounded.

He remained perfectly still for some moments, and then, glancing round the dim and spacious room, his eyes took in all the evidences of luxury and wealth which it betrayed. Above the huge sideboard, that on festive days groaned beneath the hoarded weight of the silver heir-looms of the Beauforts, hung, in its gilded frame, a large picture of the family seat, with the stately porticoes the noble park, the groups of deer; and around the wall, interspersed here and there with ancestral portraits of knight and dame, long since gathered to their rest, were placed master-pieces of the Italian and Flemish art, which generation after generation had slowly accumulated, till the Beaufort Collection had become the theme of connoiseurs and the study of young genius

The still room, the dumb pictures, even the heavy sideboard, seemed to gain voice, and speak to him audibly. He thrust his hand into the folds of his waistcoat, and griped his own flesh convulsively; then, striding to and fro the apartment, he endeavored to re-collect his thoughts.

"I dare not consult Mrs. Beaufort," he muttered; "No—no—she is a fool! Besides, she's not in the way. No time to lose—I will go to Lilburne."

Scarce had that thought crossed him than he hastened to put it into execution. He rang for his hat and gloves, and sallied out on foot to Lord Lilburne's house in Park-lane; the distance was short, and impatience has long strides.

He knew Lord Lilburne was in town, for that personage loved London for its own sake; and, even in September, he would have said, with the old Duke of Queensbury, when some one observed that London was very empty, "Yes; but it is fuller than the country."

Mr. Beaufort found Lord Lilburne reclined on a sofa by the open window of his drawing-room, beyond which the early stars shone upon the glimmering trees and silvered turf of the deserted park. Unlike the simple dessert of his respectable brother-in-law, the costliest fruits, the richest wines of France graced the small table placed beside his sofa; and, as the starch man of forms and method entered the room at one door, a rustling of silk, that vanished through the aperture of another, seemed to betray tokens of a *tête-à-tête*, probably more agreeable to Lilburne than the one with which only our narrative is concerned.

It would have been a curious study for such men as love to gaze upon the dark and wily features of human character, to have watched the contrast between the reciter and the listener, as Beaufort, with much circumlocution, much affected disdain, and real anxiety, narrated the singular and ominous conversation between himself and his visitor.

The servant, in introducing Mr. Beaufort, had added to the light of the room; and the candles

shone full on the face and form of Mr. Beaufort. All about that gentleman was so completely in unison with the world's forms and seemings, that there was something moral in the very sight of him! Since his fortune, he had grown less pale and less thin; the angles in his figure were filled up. On his brow there was no trace of younger passion. No able vice had ever sharpened the expression, no exhausting vice ever deepened the lines. He was the *beau idéal* of a county member; so sleek, so staid, so business-like; yet so clean, so neat, so much the gentleman. And now there was a kind of pathos in his gray hairs, his nervous smile, his agitated hands, his quick and uneasy transition of posture, the tremble of his voice. He would have appeared to those who saw, but heard not, The Good Man in trouble. Cold, motionless, speechless, seemingly apathetic, but, in truth, observant, still reclined on the sofa, his head thrown back, but one eye fixed on his companion, his hands clasped before him, Lord Lilburne listened; and in that repose, about his face, even about his person, might be read the history of how different a life and character! What native acuteness in the stealthy eye! What hardened resolve in the full nostril and firm lips! What sardonic contempt for all things in the intricate lines about the mouth! What animal enjoyment of all things so despised in that delicate nervous system, which, combined with original vigor of constitution, yet betrayed itself in the veins on the hands and temples, the occasional quiver of the upper lip! His was the frame, above all others, the most alive to pleasure—deep-chested, compact, sinewy, but thin to leanness; delicate in its texture and extremities almost to effeminacy. The indifference of the posture, the very habit of the dress—not slovenly, indeed, but easy, loose, careless—seemed to speak of the man's manner of thought and life—his profound disdain of externals.

Not till Beaufort had concluded did Lord Lilburne change his position or open his lips; and then, turning to his brother-in-law his calm face, he said, drily,

"I always thought your brother had married that woman; he was the sort of man to do it. Besides, why should she have gone to law without a vestige of proof, unless she was convinced of her rights? Imposture never proceeds without some evidence. Innocence, like a fool, as it is, fancies it has only to speak to be believed. But there is no cause for alarm."

"No cause! And yet you think there was a marriage."

"It is quite clear," continued Lilburne, without heeding this interruption, "that the man, whatever his evidence, has not got sufficient proofs. If he had, he would go to the young men rather than you: it is evident that they would promise infinitely larger rewards than he could expect from yourself. Men are always more generous with what they expect than what they have. All rogues know this. 'Tis the way Jews and usurers thrive upon heirs rather than possessors; 'tis the philosophy of *post-obits*. I dare say the man has found out the real witness of the marriage; but ascertained, also, that the testimony of that witness would not suffice to dispossess you. He might be discredited: rich men have a way sometimes of discrediting poor witnesses. Mind, he says nothing of the lost copy of the register, whatever may be the value of that document, which I am not lawyer enough to say—of any letters of your brother avowing the marriage. Consider, the register itself is destroyed—the clergyman dead. Pooh! make yourself easy."

"True," said Mr. Beaufort, much comforted; "what a memory you have!"

"Naturally. Your wife is my sister—I hate poor relations—and I was therefore much interested in your accession and your lawsuit. No; you may feel at rest on this matter, so far as a *successful* lawsuit is concerned. The next question is, Will you have a lawsuit at all? and is it worth while buying this fellow? That I can't say, unless I see him myself."

"I wish to Heaven you would!"

"Very willingly: 'tis a sort of thing I like—I'm fond of dealing with rogues—it amuses me. This day week? I'll be at your house—your proxy; I shall do better than Blackwell. And, since you say you are wanted at the Lakes, go down and leave all to me."

"A thousand thanks. I can't say how grateful I am. You certainly are the kindest and cleverest person in the world."

"You can't think worse of the world's cleverness and kindness than I do," was Lilburne's rather ambiguous answer to the compliment. "But why does my sister want to see you?"

"Oh, I forgot! Here is her letter. I was going to ask your advice in this, too."

Lord Lilburne took the letter, and glanced over it with the rapid eye of a man accustomed to seize in every thing the main gist and pith.

"An offer to my pretty niece—Mr. Spencer—requires no fortune—his uncle will settle all his own—(poor silly old man!) All! Why that's only £1000 a year. You don't think much of this, eh? How my sister can even ask you about it puzzles me."

"Why, you see, Lilburne," said Mr. Beaufort, rather embarrassed, "there is no question of fortune—nothing to go out of the family; and, really, Arthur is so expensive; and, if she marry well, I could not give her less than £15,000 or £20,000."

"Aha! I see; every man to his taste: here a daughter, there a dowry. You are devilish fond of money, Beaufort. Any pleasure in avarice, eh?"

Mr. Beaufort colored very much at the remark and the question, and, forcing a smile, said,

"You are severe. But you don't know what it is to be father to a young man."

"Then a great many young women have told me sad fibs! But you are right, in *your* sense of the phrase. No, I never had an heir-apparent, thank Heaven! No children imposed on me by law: natural enemies, to count the years between the bells that ring for their majority and those that will toll for my decease. It is enough for me that I have a brother and a sister; that my brother's son will inherit my estates; and that, in the mean time, he grudges me every tick in that clock. What then? If he had been *my* uncle I had done the same. Meanwhile, I see as little of him as good-breeding will permit. On the face of a rich man's heir is written the rich man's *memento mori!* But, *revenons à nos moutons*. Yes, if you give your daughter no

fortune, your death will be so much the more profitable to Arthur!"

"Really, you take such a very odd view of the matter," said Mr. Beaufort, exceedingly shocked. "But I see you don't like the marriage; perhaps you are right."

"Indeed, I have no choice in the matter; I never interfere between father and children. If I had children myself, I will, however, tell you, for your comfort, that they might marry exactly as they pleased; I would never thwart them. I should be too happy to get them out of my way. If they married well, one would have all the credit; if ill, one would have an excuse to disown them. As I said before, I dislike poor relations. Though, if Camilla lives at the Lakes when she is married, it is but a letter now and then; and that's your wife's trouble, not yours. But, Spencer—what Spencer? what family? Was there not a Mr. Spencer who lived at Winandermere—who—"

"Who went with us in search of these boys, to be sure. Very likely the same; nay, he must be so. I thought so at the first."

"Go down to the lakes to-morrow. You may hear something about your *nephews*;" at that word Mr. Beaufort winced. "'Tis well to be forearmed."

"Many thanks for all your counsel," said Beaufort, rising and glad to escape; for though both he and his wife held the advice of Lord Lilburne in the highest reverence, they always smarted beneath the quiet and careless stings which accompanied the honey. Lord Lilburne was singular in this: he would give to any one who asked it, but especially a relation, the best advice in his power; and none gave better, that is, more *worldly* advice. Thus, without the least benevolence, he was often of the greatest service; but he could not help mixing up the draught with as much aloes and bitter-apple as possible. His intellect delighted in exhibiting itself even gratuitously. His heart was equally delighted in that only cruelty which polished life leaves to its tyrants toward their equals: thrusting pins into the feelings, and breaking self-love upon the wheel. But, just as Mr. Beaufort had drawn on his gloves and gained the doorway, a thought seemed to strike Lord Lilburne.

"By-the-by," he said, "you understand that when I promised I would try and settle the matter for you, I only meant that I would learn the exact causes you have for alarm on the one hand, or for a compromise with this fellow on the other. If the last be advisable, you are aware that I can not interfere. I might get into a scrape; and Beaufort Court is not *my* property."

"I don't quite understand you."

"I am plain enough, too. If there is money to be given, it is given in order to defeat what is called *justice*—to keep these nephews of yours out of their inheritance. Now, should this ever come to light, it would have an ugly appearance. They who risk the blame must be the persons who possess the estate."

"If you think it dishonorable or dishonest—" said Beaufort, irresolutely.

"I! I never can advise as to the feelings; I can only advise as to the policy. If you don't think there ever was a marriage, it may be honest in you to prevent the bore of a lawsuit."

"But if he can prove to me that they were married?"

"Pooh!" said Lilburne, raising his eyebrows with a slight expression of contemptuous impatience; it rests on yourself whether or not he *prove it to* YOUR *satisfaction!* For my part, as a third person, I am persuaded the marriage did take place. But if I had Beaufort Court, my convictions would be all the other way. You understand. I am too happy to serve you. But no man can be expected to jeopardize his character, or coquet with the law, unless it be for his own individual interest. *Then*, of course, he must judge for himself. Adieu! I expect some friends—foreigners—Carlists—to whist. You won't join them?"

"I never play, you know. You will write to me at Winandermere; and, at all events, you will keep off the man till I return?"

"Certainly."

Beaufort, whom the latter part of the conversation had comforted far less than the former, hesitated, and turned the door-handle three or four times; but glancing toward his brother-in-law, he saw in that cold face so little hope of sympathy in the struggle between interest and conscience, that he judged it best to withdraw at once.

As soon as he was gone, Lilburne summoned his valet who had lived with him many years, and who was his confidant in all the adventurous gallantries with which he still enlivened the autumn of his life.

"Dykeman," said he, "you have let out that lady?"

"Yes, my lord."

"I am not at home if she calls again. She is stupid; she can not get the girl to come to her again. I shall trust you with an adventure, Dykeman; an adventure that will remind you of our young days, man. This charming creature—I tell you she is irresistible—her very oddities bewitch me. You must—well, you look uneasy. What would you say?"

"My lord, I have found out more about her—and—and—"

"Well, well."

The valet drew near, and whispered something in his master's ear.

"They are idiots who say it, then," answered Lilburne.

"And," faltered the man, with the shame of humanity on his face, "she is not worthy your lordship's notice; a poor—"

"Yes, I know she is poor; and, for that reason, there can be no difficulty if the thing is properly managed. You never, perhaps, heard of a certain Philip, king of Macedon; but I will tell you what he once said, as well as I can remember it: 'Lead an ass with a pannier of gold: send the ass into the gates of a city, and all the sentinels will run away.' Poor! Where there is love there is charity also, Dykeman. Besides—"

Here Lilburne's countenance assumed a sudden aspect of dark and angry passion; he broke off abruptly, rose, and paced the room, muttering to himself. Suddenly he stopped, and put his hand to his hip, as an expression of pain again altered the character of his face.

"The limb pains me still. Dykeman—I was scarce—twenty-one—when—I became a cripple

for life." He paused, drew a long breath, smiled, rubbed his hands gently, and added, "Never fear—you shall be the ass; and thus Philip of Macedon begins to fill the pannier." And he tossed his purse into the hands of the valet, whose face seemed to lose its anxious embarrassment at the touch of the gold. Lilburne glanced at him with a quiet sneer: "Go: I will give you my orders when I undress."

"Yes!" he repeated to himself, "the limb pains me still. But he died!—shot as a man would shoot a jay or a polecat! I have the newspaper still in that drawer. *He* died an outcast—a felon—a murderer! And I blasted his name—and I seduced his mistress—and I—am John Lord Lilburne!"

About ten o'clock, some half a dozen of those gay lovers of London, who, like Lilburne, remain faithful to its charms when more vulgar worshipers desert its sunburned streets—mostly single men—mostly men of middle age—dropped in. And soon after came three or four high-born foreigners, who had followed into England the exile of the unfortunate Charles X. Their looks, at once proud and sad—their mustaches curled downward—their beards permitted to grow—made at first a strong contrast with the smooth, gay Englishmen. But Lilburne, who was fond of French society, and who, when he pleased, could be courteous and agreeable, soon placed the exiles at their ease; and, in the excitement of high play, all differences of mood and humor speedily vanished. Morning was in the skies before they sat down to supper.

"You have been very fortunate to-night, milord," said one of the Frenchmen, with an envious tone of congratulation.

"But, indeed," said another, who, having been several times his host's partner, had won largely, "you are the finest player, milord, I ever encountered."

"Always excepting Monsieur Deschapelles and *****," replied Lilburne, indifferently. And, turning the conversation, he asked one of the guests why he had not introduced him to a French officer of merit and distinction: "with whom," said Lord Lilburne, "I understand that you are intimate, and of whom I hear your countrymen very often speak."

"You mean De Vaudemont. Poor fellow!" said a middle-aged Frenchman, of a graver appearance than the rest.

"But why 'poor fellow,' Monsieur de Liancourt?"

"He was rising so high before the Revolution. There was not a braver officer in the army. But he is but a soldier of fortune, and his career is closed."

"Till the Bourbons return," said another Carlist, playing with his mustache.

"You will really honour me much by introducing me to him," said Lord Lilburne. "De Vaudemont—it is a good name—perhaps, too, he plays at whist."

"But," observed one of the Frenchmen, "I am by no means sure that he has the best right in the world to the name. 'Tis a strange story."

"May I hear it?" asked the host.

"Certainly. It is briefly this: There was an old Vicomte de Vaudemont about Paris—of good birth, but extremely poor—*a mauvais sujet*. He had already had two wives, and run through their fortunes. Being old and ugly, and men who survive two wives having a bad reputation among marriageable ladies at Paris, he found it difficult to get a third. Despairing of the *noblesse*, he went among the *bourgeoisie* with that hope. His family was kept in perpetual fear of a ridiculous *mésalliance*. Among these relations was Madame de Merville, whom you may have heard of."

"Madame de Merville! Ah, yes! Handsome, was she not?"

"It is true. Madame de Merville, whose failing was pride, was known more than once to have bought off the matrimonial inclinations of the amorous vicomte. Suddenly there appeared in her circles a very handsome young man. He was presented formally to her friends as the son of the Vicomte de Vaudemont by his second marriage with an English lady, brought up in England, and now, for the first time, publicly acknowledged. Some scandal was circulated—"

"Sir," interrupted Monsieur de Liancourt, very gravely, "the scandal was such as all honorable men must stigmatize and despise—it was only to be traced to some lying lackey—a scandal that the young man was already the lover of a woman of stainless reputation the very first day that he entered Paris! I answer for the falsity of that report. But that report, I own, was one that decided not only Madame de Merville, who was a sensitive—too sensitive a person, but my friend young De Vaudemont, to a marriage, from the pecuniary advantages of which he was too high-spirited not to shrink."

"Well," said Lord Lilburne, "then this young De Vaudemont married Madame de Merville?"

"No," said De Liancourt, somewhat sadly, "it was not so decreed; for De Vaudemont, with a feeling which belongs to a gentleman, and which I honor, while deeply and gratefully attached to Madame de Merville, desired that he might first carve for himself, at least, some honorable distinction before he claimed a hand to which men of fortunes so much higher had aspired in vain. I am not ashamed," he added, after a short pause, "to say that I had been one of the rejected suitors, and that I still revere the memory of Eugénie de Merville. The young man, therefore, was to have entered my regiment. Before, however, he had joined it, and while yet in the full flush of a young man's love for a woman formed to excite the strongest attachment, she—she—" The Frenchman's voice trembled, and he resumed, with affected composure, "Madame de Merville, who had the best and kindest heart that ever beat in a human breast, learned one day that there was a poor widow in the garret of the hotel she inhabited who was dangerously ill—without medicine and without food—having lost her only friend and supporter in her husband some time before. In the impulse of the moment, Madame de Merville tended herself this widow—caught the fever that preyed upon her—was confined to her bed ten days—and died, as she had lived, in serving others and forgetting self. And so much, sir, for the scandal you speak of!"

"A warning," observed Lord Lilburne, "against trifling with one's health by that vanity of parading a kind heart which is called

charity. If charity, *mon cher*, begins at home, it is in the drawing-room, not the garret!"

The Frenchman looked at his host in some disdain, bit his lip, and was silent.

"But still," resumed Lord Lilburne, "still it is probable that your old vicomte had a son; and I can so perfectly understand why he did not wish to be embarrassed with him as long as he could help it, that I do not understand why there should be any doubt of the younger De Vaudemont's parentage."

"Because," said the Frenchman who had first commenced the narrative, "because the young man refused to take the legal steps to proclaim his birth and naturalize himself a Frenchman; because, no sooner was Madame de Merville dead, than he forsook the father he had so newly discovered—forsook France, and entered with some other officers, under the brave *****, in the service of one of the native princes of India."

"But perhaps he was poor," observed Lord Lilburne. "A father is a very good thing, and a country is a very good thing, but still a man must have money; and if your father does not do much for you, somehow or other, your country generally follows his example."

"My lord," said De Liancourt, "my friend here has forgotten to say that Madame de Merville left to young Vaudemont the bulk of her fortune; and that, when sufficiently recovered from the stupor of his grief, he summoned her relations round him, declared that her memory was too dear to him for wealth to console him for her loss, and, reserving to himself but a modest and bare sufficiency for the common necessaries of a gentleman, he divided the rest among them, and repaired to the East, not only to conquer his sorrow by the novelty and stir of an exciting life, but to carve out with his own hand the reputation of an honorable and brave man. My friend remembered the scandal long buried—he forgot the generous action."

"Your friend, you see, my dear Monsieur de Liancourt," remarked Lilburne, "is more a man of the world than you are!"

"And I was just going to observe," said the friend thus referred to, "that that very action seemed to confirm the rumor that there had been some little maneuvering as to this unexpected addition to the name of De Vaudemont; for, if himself related, however distantly, to Madame de Merville, why have such scruples to receive her bequest?"

"A very shrewd remark," said Lord Lilburne, looking with some respect at the speaker; "and I own that it is a very unaccountable proceeding, and one of which I don't think you or I would ever have been guilty. Well, and the old vicomte?"

"Did not long live!" said the Frenchman, evidently gratified by his host's compliment, while De Liancourt threw himself back in his chair in grave displeasure. "The young man remained some years in India; and, when he returned to Paris, our friend here, Monsieur de Liancourt, (then in favor with Charles X.), and Madame de Merville's relations, took him up. He had already acquired a reputation in this foreign service, and he obtained a place at the court, and a commission in the king's guards. I allow that he would certainly have made a career, had it not been for the Three days. As it is, you see him in London, like the rest of us, an exile!"

"And, I suppose, without a sou."

"No; I believe that he had still saved, and even augmented, in India, the portion he allotted to himself, from Madame de Merville's bequest."

"And if he don't play whist, he ought to play it," said Lilburne. "You have roused my curiosity: I hope you will let me make his acquaintance, Monsieur de Liancourt. I am no politician, but allow me to propose this toast: 'Success to those, who have the wit to plan and the strength to execute.' In other words, 'The Right Divine!'"

Soon afterward the guests retired.

CHAPTER IV.

"*Ros.* Happily he's the second time come to them."
Hamlet.

It was the evening after that in which the conversations recorded in our last chapter were held—evening in the quiet suburb of H——. The desertion and silence of the metropolis in September had extended to its neighboring hamlets—a village in the heart of the country could scarcely have seemed more still—the lamps were lighted, many of the shops already closed, a few of the sober couples and retired spinsters of the place might here and there be seen slowly wandering homeward after their evening walk; two or three dogs, in spite of the prohibitions of the magistrates placarded on the walls—manifestoes which threatened all such stragglers with death, and all the inhabitants with madness—were playing in the main road, disturbed from time to time as the slow coach, plying between the city and the suburb, crawled along the thoroughfare, or as the brisk mails whirled rapidly by, announced by the cloudy dust and the guard's lively horn. Gradually even these evidences of life ceased; the saunterers disappeared, the mails had passed, the dogs gave place to the later and more stealthy perambulations of their feline successors "who love the moon." At unfrequent intervals, the more important shops—the linen-drapers', the chemists', and the gin-palace—still poured out across the shadowy road their streams of light from windows yet unclosed. But, with these exceptions, the business of the place stood still.

At this time there emerged from a milliner's house (shop, to outward appearance, it was not, evincing its gentility and its degree above the Capelocracy, to use a certain classical neologism, by a brass plate on an oak door, whereon was graven, "Miss Semper, Milliner and Dressmaker, from Madame Devy")—at this time, I say, and from this house, there emerged the light and graceful form of a young female. She held in her left hand a little basket, of the contents of which (for it was empty) she had apparently just disposed; and, as she stepped across the road, the lamplight fell on a face in the first bloom of youth, and characterized by an expression of childlike innocence and candor. It was a face regularly and exquisitely lovely, yet something there was in the aspect that saddened you; you knew not why, for it was not sad itself; on the contrary, the lips smiled and the eyes sparkled. As she now glided along the shadowy

street with a light, quick step, a man, who had hitherto been concealed by the portico of an attorney's house, advanced stealthily, and followed her at a little distance. Unconscious that she was dogged, and seemingly fearless of all danger, the girl went lightly on, swinging her basket playfully to and fro, and chanting, in a low but musical tone, some verses, that seemed rather to belong to the nursery than to that age which the fair singer had attained.

As she came to an angle which the main street formed with a lane narrow and partially lighted, a policeman stationed there looked hard at her, and then touched his hat with an air of respect, in which there seemed also a little of compassion.

"Good-night to you," said the girl, passing him, and with a frank, gay tone.

"Shall I attend you home, miss?" said the man.

"What for? I am very well!" answered the young woman, with an accent and look of innocent surprise.

Just at this time, the man who had hitherto followed her gained the spot and turned down the lane.

"Yes," replied the policeman; "but it is getting dark, miss."

"So it is every night when I walk home, except there's a moon. Good-by. The moon," she repeated to herself, as she walked on, "I used to be afraid of the moon when I was a little child;" and then, after a pause, she murmured, in a low chant,

"The moon, she is a wandering ghost,
That walks in penance nightly.
How sad she is, that wandering moon,
For all she shines so brightly!

"I watched her eyes when I was young,
Until they turned my brain,
And now I often weep to think
'Twill ne'er be right again."

As the murmur of these words died at distance down the lane in which the girl had disappeared, the policeman, who had paused to listen, shook his head mournfully, and said, while he moved on,

"Poor thing! they should not let her always go about by herself: and yet, who would harm her?"

Meanwhile the girl proceeded along the lane, which was skirted by small but not mean houses, till it terminated in a cross-stile that admitted into a church-yard. Here hung the last lamp in the path, and a few dim stars broke palely over the long grass and scattered grave-stones, without piercing the deep shadow which the church threw over a large portion of the sacred ground. Just as she passed the stile, the man whom we have before noticed, and who had been leaning, as if waiting for some one, against the pales, approached, and said gently,

"Ah, miss! it is a lone place for one so beautiful as you are to be alone. You ought never to be on foot."

The girl stopped, and looked full, but without any alarm in her eyes, into the man's face.

"Go away!" she said, with a half peevish, half kindly tone of command. "I don't know you."

"But I have been sent to speak to you by one who does know you, miss—one who loves you to distraction; he has seen you before at Mrs. West's. He is so grieved to think that you should walk—you, who ought, he says, to have every luxury—that he has sent his carriage for you. It is on the other side of the yard. Do come, now;" and he laid his hand, though very lightly, on her arm.

"At Mrs. West's!" she said; and, for the first time, her voice and look showed fear. "Go away directly! How dare you touch Fanny!"

"But, my dear miss, you have no idea how my employer loves you, and how rich he is. See, he has sent you all this money; it is gold—real gold. You may have what you like if you will but come. Now don't be silly, miss."

The girl made no answer, but, with a sudden spring, passed the man, and ran lightly and rapidly along the path, in an opposite direction from that to which the tempter had pointed when inviting her to the carriage. The man, surprised but not baffled, reached her in an instant, and caught hold of her dress.

"Stay! you must come—you must!" he said, threateningly; and, loosening his grasp on her shawl, he threw his arm round her waist.

"Don't!" cried the girl, pleadingly, and apparently subdued, turning her fair, soft face upon her pursuer, and clasping her hands. "Be quiet! Fanny is silly! No one is ever rude to poor Fanny!"

"And no one will be rude to you, miss," said the man, apparently touched; "but I dare not go without you. You don't know what you refuse. Come!" and he attempted gently to draw her back.

"No, no!" said the girl, changing from supplication to anger, and raising her voice into a loud shriek, "No! I will—"

"Nay, then," interrupted the man, looking round anxiously; and, with a quick and dextrous movement, he threw a large handkerchief over her face, and, as he held it fast to her lips with one hand, he lifted her from the ground. Still violently struggling, the girl contrived to remove the handkerchief, and once more her shriek of terror rang through the violated sanctuary.

At that instant a loud, deep voice was heard, "Who calls?" And a tall figure seemed to rise, as from the grave itself, and emerge from the shadow of the church. A moment more, and a strong gripe was laid on the shoulder of the ravisher. "What is this? On God's ground, too! Release her, wretch!"

The man, trembling, half with superstitious, half with bodily fear, let go of his captive, who fell at once at the knees of her deliverer.

"Don't hurt me, too," she said, as the tears rolled down her eyes. "I am a good girl—and my grandfather's blind."

The stranger bent down and raised her; then looking round for the assailant with an eye whose dark fire shone through the gloom, he perceived the coward stealing off. He disdained to pursue.

"My poor child," said he, with that voice which the strong assume to the weak—the man to some wounded infant—the voice of tender superiority and compassion, "there is no cause for fear now. Be soothed. Do you live near? Shall I see you home?"

"Thank you! That's kind! Pray do!" And, with an infantine confidence, she took his hand, as a child does that of a grown-up person; so they walked on together.

"And," said the stranger, "do you know that man? Has he insulted you before?"

"No—don't talk of him: *ce me fait mal!*" And she put her hand to her forehead.

The French was spoken with so French an accent, that, in some curiosity, the stranger cast his eye over her plain dress.

"You speak French well."

"Do I? I wish I knew more words; I only recollect a few. When I am very happy or very sad they come into my head. But I am happy now. I like your voice—I like you. Oh! I have dropped my basket!"

"Shall I go back for it, or shall I buy you another."

"Another! Oh, no! come back for it. How kind you are! Ah! I see it!" and she broke away and ran forward to pick it up.

When she had recovered it, she laughed—she spoke to it—she kissed it.

Her companion smiled as he said,

"Some sweetheart has given you that basket—it seems but a common basket, too."

"I have had it—oh, ever since—since—I don't know how long! It came with me from France—it was full of little toys. *They* are gone—I am so sorry!"

"How old are you?"

"I don't know."

"My pretty one," said the stranger, with deep pity in his rich voice, "your mother should not let you go out alone at this hour."

"Mother! mother!" repeated the girl, in a tone of surprise.

"Have you no mother?"

"No! I had a father once. But he died, they say. I did not see him die. I sometimes cry when I think that I shall never, never see him again! But," she said, changing her accent from melancholy almost to joy, "he is to have a grave here like the other girl's fathers—a fine stone upon it—and all to be done with my money!"

"Your money, my child"

"Yes, the money I make. I sell my work and take the money to my grandfather; but I lay by a little every week for a grave-stone for my father."

"Will the grave-stone be placed in *that* churchyard?" They were now in another lane, and, as he spoke, the stranger checked her, and, bending down to look into her face, murmured to himself, "Is it possible? Yes, it must be—it must!"

"Yes! I love that church-yard; my brother told me to put flowers there; and grandfather and I sit there in the summer, without speaking. But I don't talk much, I like singing better:

> 'All things that good and harmless are,
> Are taught, they say, to sing;
> The maiden resting at her work;
> The bird upon the wing;
> The little ones at church, in prayer,
> The angels in the sky—
> The angels less when babes are born
> Than when the aged die.'"

And, unconscious of the latent moral, dark or cheering, according as we estimate the value of *this* life, couched in the concluding rhyme, Fanny turned round to the stranger and said, "Why should the angels be glad when the aged die?"

"That they are released from a false, unjust, and miserable world, in which the first man was a rebel, and the second a murderer!" muttered the stranger between his teeth, which he gnashed as he spoke.

The girl did not understand him; she shook her head gently, and made no reply. A few moments, and she paused before a small house.

"This is my home."

"It is so," said her companion, examining the exterior of the house with an earnest gaze; "and your name is Fanny."

"Yes—every one knows Fanny. Come in;" and the girl opened the door with a latch-key.

The stranger bowed his stately height as he crossed the low threshold, and followed his guide into a little parlor.

Before a table, on which burned dimly, and with unheeded wick, a single candle, sat a man of advanced age; and, as he turned his face to the door, the stranger saw that he was blind. The girl bounded to his chair, passed her arms round the old man's neck, and kissed his forehead; then nestling herself at his feet, and leaning her clasped hands caressingly on his knee, she said,

"Grandpapa, I have brought you somebody you must love. He has been so kind to Fanny."

"And neither of you can remember me!" said the guest.

The old man, whose dull face seemed to indicate dotage, half raised himself at the sound of the stranger's voice.

"Who is that?" said he, with a feeble and querulous voice. "Who wants me?"

"I am the friend of your lost son. I am he who, ten years ago, brought Fanny to your roof, and gave her to your care—your son's last charge. And you blessed your son, and forgave him, and vowed to be a father to his Fanny."

The old man, who had now slowly risen to his feet, trembled violently, and stretched out his hands.

"Come near—near; let me put my hands on your head. I can not see you; but Fanny talks of you, and prays for you; and Fanny—she has been an angel to me!"

The stranger approached and half knelt, as the old man spread his hands over his head, muttering inaudibly. Meanwhile Fanny, pale as death—her lips apart—an eager, painful expression on her face—looked inquiringly on the dark, marked countenance of the visitor, and, creeping toward him inch by inch, fearfully touched his dress, his arms, his countenance.

"Brother!" she said at last, doubtingly and timidly, "Brother, I thought I could never forget you! But you are not like my brother; you are older; you are—you are—no! no! you are not my brother!"

"I am much changed, Fanny, and you too!" He smiled as he spoke; and the smile—sweet and pitying—thoroughly changed the character of his face, which was ordinarily stern, grave, and proud.

"I know you now," exclaimed Fanny, in a tone of wild joy. "And you come back from that grave! My flowers have brought you back at last! I knew they would. Brother! brother!"

And she threw herself on his breast and burst into passionate tears. Then, suddenly drawing herself back, she laid her finger on his arm, and looked up at him beseechingly.

"Pray, now, is *he* really dead? He, my father! he, too, was lost like you. Can't he come back again as you have done?"

"Do you grieve for him still, then? Poor girl!" said the stranger, evasively, and seating himself. Fanny continued to listen for an answer to her touching question; but, finding that none was given, she stole away to a corner of the room, and leaned her face on her hands, and seemed to think; till, at last, as she so sat, the tears began to flow down her cheeks, and she wept, but silently and unnoticed.

"But, sir," said the guest, after a short pause, "how is this? Fanny tells me she supports you by her work. Are you so poor, then? Yet I left your son's bequest; and you, too, I understood, though not rich, were not in want?"

"There was a curse on my gold," said the old man, sternly. "It was stolen from us."

There was another pause. Simon broke it.

"And you, young man, how has it fared with you? You have prospered, I hope."

"I am as I have been for years: alone in the world, without kindred and without friends. But, thanks to God, I am not a beggar!"

"No kindred and no friends!" repeated the old man. "No father—no brother—no wife—no sister!"

"None! No one to care whether I live or die," answered the stranger, with a mixture of pride and sadness in his voice. "But, as the song has it,

> 'I care for nobody—no, not I,
> For nobody cares for me!'"

There was a certain pathos in the mockery with which the repeated the homely lines, although, as he did, he gathered himself up, as if conscious of a certain consolation and reliance on the resources not dependent on others which he had found in his own strong limbs and his own stout heart.

At that moment he felt a soft touch upon his hand, and he saw Fanny looking at him through the tears that still flowed.

"You have no one to care for you? Don't say so! Come and live with us, brother; we'll care for you. I have never forgot the flowers—never! Do come! Fanny shall love you. Fanny can work for *three!*"

"And they call her an idiot!" mumbled the old man, with a vacant smile on his lips.

"My sister! You *shall* be my sister! Forlorn one, whom even Nature has fooled and betrayed! Sister!—we, both orphans!—Sister!" exclaimed that dark, stern man, passionately, and with a broken voice; and he opened his arms, and Fanny, without a blush or a thought of shame, threw herself on his breast. He kissed her forehead with a kiss that was, indeed, pure and holy as a brother's: and Fanny felt that he had left upon her cheek a tear that was not her own.

"Well," he said, with an altered voice, and taking the old man's hand, "what say you? Shall I take up my lodging with you? I have a little money; I can protect and aid you both. I shall be often away, in London or elsewhere, and will not intrude too much on you. But you blind, and she" (here he broke off the sentence abruptly, and went on)—"you should not be left alone. And this neighborhood, that burial-place, are dear to me. I too, Fanny, have lost a parent; and that grave—"

He paused, and then added, in a trembling voice, "and you have placed flowers over that grave?"

"Stay with us," said the blind man; "not for our sake, but your own. The world is a bad place. I have been long sick of the world. Yes! come and live near the burial-ground; the nearer you are to the grave, the safer you are: and you have a little money, you say!"

"I will come to-morrow, then. I must return now. To-morrow, Fanny, we shall meet again."

"*Must* you go," said Fanny, tenderly. "But you *will* come again; you know I used to think every one died when *he* left me. I am wiser now. Yet still, when you do leave me, it is true that you die for Fanny."

At this moment, as the three persons were grouped, each had assumed a posture of form, an expression of face, which a painter of fitting sentiment and skill would have loved to study. The visitor had gained the door; and as he stood there, his noble height, the magnificent strength and health of his manhood in its full prime, contrasted alike the almost spectral debility of extreme age and the graceful delicacy of Fanny, half girl, half child. There was something foreign in his air, and the half military habit, relieved by the red ribbon of the Bourbon knighthood. His complexion was dark as that of a Moor, and his raven hair curled close to the stately head. The soldier-mustache, thick, but glossy as silk, shaded the firm lip; and the pointed beard, assumed by the exiled Carlists, heightened the effect of the strong and haughty features, and the expression of the martial countenance.

But, as Fanny's voice died on his ear, he half averted that proud face; and the dark eyes—almost Oriental in their brilliancy and depth of shade—seemed soft and humid. And there stood Fanny, in a posture of such unconscious sadness, such childlike innocence; her arms drooping, her face wistfully turned to his, and a half smile upon the lips, that made still more touching the tears not yet dried upon her cheeks. While thin, frail, shadowy, with white hair and furrowed cheeks, the old man fixed his sightless orbs on space; and his face, usually only animated from the lethargy of advancing dotage by a certain querulous cynicism, now grew suddenly earnest, and even thoughtful, as Fanny spoke of Death!

CHAPTER V.

> "*Ulyss.* Time hath a wallet at his back
> Wherein he puts alms for oblivion.
> . . . . . Perseverance, dear my lord,
> Keeps honor bright."—*Troilus and Cressida.*

I have not sought—as would have been easy, by a little ingenuity in the earlier portion of this narrative—whatever source of vulgar interest might be derived from the mystery of names and persons. As in Charles Spencer the reader is allowed at a glance to detect Sidney Morton, so in Philip de Vaudemont (the stranger who rescued Fanny) the reader at once recognizes the hero of my tale; but, since neither of these young men has a better right to the name resigned than to the name adopted, it will be sim-

pler and more convenient to designate them by those appellations by which they were now known to the world. In truth, Philip de Vaudemont was scarcely the same being as Philip Morton. In the short visit he had paid to the elder Gawtrey when he consigned Fanny to his charge, he had given no name; and the one he now took (when, toward evening of the next day, he returned to Simon's house) the old man heard for the first time. Once more sunk into his usual apathy, Simon did not express any surprise that a Frenchman should be so well acquainted with English; he scarcely noticed that the name was French. Simon's age seemed daily to bring him more and more to that state when life is mere mechanism, and the soul, preparing for its departure, no longer heeds the tenement that crumbles silently and neglected into its lonely dust. Vaudemont came with but little luggage (for he had an apartment in London), and no attendant; a single horse was consigned to the stables of an inn at hand; and he seemed, as soldiers are, more careful for the comforts of the animal than his own. There was but one woman servant in the humble household, who did all the ruder work; for Fanny's industry could afford it. The solitary servant and the homely fare sufficed for the simple and hardy adventurer.

Fanny, with a countenance radiant with joy, took his hand and led him to his room. Poor child, with that instinct of *woman* which never deserted her, she had busied herself the whole day in striving to deck the chamber according to her own notions of comfort. She had stolen from her little hoard wherewithal to make some small purchases, on which the Dowbiggin of the suburb had been consulted. And, what with flowers on the table and a fire at the hearth, the room looked cheerful.

She watched him as he glanced around, and felt disappointed that he did not utter the admiration she expected. Angry at last with the indifference which, in fact, as to external accommodation, was habitual to him, she plucked his sleeve, and said,

"Why don't you speak? Is it not nice? Fanny did her best."

"And a thousand thanks to Fanny! It is all I could wish."

"There is another room, bigger than this, but the wicked woman who robbed us slept *there*; and, besides, you said you liked the church-yard. See!" and she opened the window, and pointed to the church-tower rising dark against the evening sky.

"This is better than all!" said Vaudemont; and he looked out from the window in a silent reverie, which Fanny did not disturb.

And now he was settled! From a career so wild, agitated, and various, the adventurer paused in that humble resting-nook. But quiet is not repose, obscurity is not content. Often as, morn and eve, he looked forth upon the spot where his mother's heart, unconscious of love and woe, moldered away, the indignant and bitter feelings of the wronged outcast and the son who could not clear the mother's name swept away the subdued and gentle melancholy into which time usually softens regret for the dead, and with which most of us think of the distant past and the once joyous childhood!

In this man's breast lay, concealed by his external calm, those memories and aspirations which are as strong as passions. In his earlier years, when he had been put to hard shifts for existence, he had found no leisure for close and brooding reflection upon that spoliation of just rights—that calumny upon his mother's name, which had first brought the Night into his Morning. His resentment toward the Beauforts, it is true, had ever been an intense, but a fitful and irregular passion. It was exactly in proportion as, by those rare and romantic incidents which Fiction can not invent, and which Narrative takes with diffidence from the great store-house of Real Life, his step had ascended in the social ladder, that all which his childhood had lost—all which the robbers of his heritage had gained, the grandeur and the power of WEALTH—above all, the hourly and the tranquil happiness of a stainless name, became palpable and distinct. He had loved Eugénie as a boy loves, for the first time, an accomplished woman. He regarded her—so refined, so gentle, so gifted—with the feelings due to a superior being—with an eternal recollection of the ministering angel that had shone upon him when he stood on the dark abyss. She was the first that had redeemed his fate—the first that had guided aright his path—the first that had tamed the savage at his breast: it was the young lion charmed by the eyes of Una. The outline of his story had been truly given at Lord Lilburne's. Despite his pride, which revolted from such obligations to another, and a woman—which disliked and struggled against a disguise which at once and alone saved him from the detection of the past and the terrors of the future—he had yielded to her, the wise and the gentle, as one whose judgment he could not doubt; and, indeed, the slanderous falsehoods circulated by the lackey, to whose discretion, the night of Gawtrey's death, Eugénie had preferred to confide her own honor rather than another's life, had (as Liancourt rightly stated) left Philip no option but that which Madame de Merville deemed the best, whether for her happiness or her good name. Then had followed a brief season—the holiday of his life—the season of young hope and passion, of brilliancy and joy, closing by that abrupt death which again left him lonely in the world.

When, from the grief that succeeded to the death of Eugénie, he woke to find himself amid the strange faces and exciting scenes of an Oriental court, he turned with hard and disgustful contempt from Pleasure as an infidelity to the dead. Ambition crept over him; his mind hardened as his cheek bronzed under those burning suns; his hardy frame—his energies prematurely awakened—his constitutional disregard to danger, made him a brave and skillful soldier. He acquired reputation and rank. But, as time went on, the ambition took a higher flight; he felt his sphere circumscribed; the Eastern indolence that filled up the long intervals between Eastern action chafed a temper never at rest: he returned to France; his reputation, Liancourt's friendship, and the relations of Eugénie—grateful, as has before been implied, for the generosity with which he surrendered the principal part of her bequest—opened for him a new career, but one painful and galling. In the In-

dian court there was no question of his birth; one adventurer was equal with the rest. But in Paris, a man attempting to rise provoked all the sarcasm of wit, all the cavils of party; and in polished and civil life, what valor has weapons against a jest? Thus, in civilization, all the passions that spring from humiliated self-love and baffled aspiration again preyed upon his breast. He saw, then, that the more he struggled from obscurity, the more acute would become research into his true origin: and his writhing pride almost stung to death his ambition. To succeed in life by regular means was indeed difficult for this man: always recoiling from the name he bore—always strong in the hope yet to regain that to which he conceived himself entitled—cherishing that pride of country which never deserts the native of a free state, however harsh a parent she may have proved—and, above all, whatever his ambition and his passions, taking, from the very misfortunes he had known, an indomitable belief in the ultimate justice of Heaven, he had refused to sever the last ties that connected him with his lost heritage and his forsaken land—he refused to be naturalized—to make the name he bore legally undisputed: he was contented to be an alien. Neither was Vaudemont fitted exactly for that crisis in the social world when the men of journals and talk bustle aside the men of action. He had not cultivated literature—he had no book-knowledge: the world had been his school, and stern life his teacher. Still, eminently skilled in those physical accomplishments which men admire and soldiers covet—calm and self-possessed in manner—of great personal advantages—of much ready talent, and of practiced observation in character, he continued to breast the obstacles around him, and to establish himself in the favor of those in power. It was natural to a person so reared and circumstanced to have no sympathy with what is called the popular cause. He was no citizen in the state—he was a stranger in the land. He had suffered, and still suffered, too much from mankind to have that philanthropy—sometimes visionary, but always noble—which, in fact, generally springs from the studies we cultivate, not in the forum, but the closet. Men, alas! too often lose the democratic enthusiasm in proportion as they find reason to suspect or despise their kind. And if there were not hopes for the future which this hard, practical, daily life does not suffice to teach us, the vision and the glory that belong to the great popular creed, dimmed beneath the injustice, the follies, and the vices of the world as it is, would fade into the lukewarm sectarianism of temporary party. Moreover, Vaudemont's habits of thought and reasoning were those of the camp, confirmed by the systems familiar to him in the East: he regarded the populace as a soldier, enamored of discipline and order, usually does. His theories, therefore, or, rather, his ignorance of what is sound in theory, went with Charles the Tenth in his excesses, but not with the timidity which terminated those excesses by dethronement and disgrace. Chafed to the heart, gnawed with proud grief, he obeyed the royal mandates, and followed the exiled monarch: his hopes overthrown, his career in France annihilated forever. But, on entering England, his temper, confident and ready of resource, fastened itself on new food. In the land where he had no name might he yet rebuild his fortunes. It was an arduous effort—an improbable hope; but the words heard by the bridge of Paris—words that had often cheered him in his exile through hardships and through dangers which it is unnecessary to our narrative to detail—yet rung again in his ear as he leaped on his native land: "Time, Faith, Energy."

While such his character in the larger and more distant relations of life, in the closer circles of companionship many rare and noble qualities were visible. It is true that he was stern, perhaps imperious—of a temper that always struggled to command; but he was deeply susceptible of kindness, and, if feared by those who opposed, loved by those who served him. About his character was that mixture of tenderness and fierceness which belonged of old to the descriptions of the warrior. Though so little lettered, Life had taught him a certain poetry of sentiment and idea: more poetry, perhaps, in the silent thoughts that, in his happier moments, filled his solitude, than in half the pages that his brother had read and written by the dreaming lake. A certain largeness of idea and nobility of impulse often made him *act* the sentiments of which bookmen *write*. With all his passions, he held licentiousness in disdain; with all his ambition for the *power* of wealth, he despised its *luxury*. Simple, masculine, severe, abstemious, he was of that mold in which, in earlier times, the successful men of action have been cast. But to successful action, circumstance is more necessary than to triumphant study.

It was to be expected that, in proportion as he had been familiar with a purer and nobler life, he should look with great and deep self-humiliation at his early association with Gawtrey. He was, in this respect, more severe on himself than any other mind ordinarily just and candid would have been, when fairly surveying the circumstances of penury, hunger, and despair which had driven him to Gawtrey's roof, the imperfect nature of his early education, the boyish trust and affection he had felt for his protector, and his own ignorance of, and exemption from, all the worse practices of that unhappy criminal. But still, when, with the knowledge he had now acquired, the *man* looked calmly back, his cheek burned with remorseful shame at his unreflecting companionship in a life of subterfuge and equivocation, the true nature of which the *boy* (so circumstanced as we have shown him) might be forgiven for not at that time comprehending. Two advantages resulted, however, from the error and the remorse: first, the humiliation it brought curbed, in some measure, a pride that might otherwise have been arrogant and unamiable; and, secondly, as I have before intimated, his profound gratitude to Heaven for his deliverance from the snares that had beset his youth, gave his future the guide of an earnest and heartfelt faith. He acknowledged in life no such thing as *accident*. Whatever his struggles, whatever his melancholy, whatever his sense of worldly wrong, he never despaired; for nothing now could shake his belief in one directing Providence.

The ways and habits of Vaudemont were not at discord with those of the quiet household in which he was now a guest. Like most men of

strong frames, and accustomed to active, not studious pursuits, he rose early, and usually rode to London, to come back late at noon to their frugal meal. And if again, perhaps at the hour when Fanny and Simon retired, he would often return to London, his own pass-key readmitted him, at whatever hour he came back, without disturbing the sleep of the household. Sometimes, when the sun began to decline, if the air was warm, the old man would crawl out, leaning on that strong arm, through the neighboring lanes, ever returning through the lonely burial-ground; or, when the blind host clung to his fireside, and composed himself to sleep, Philip would saunter forth alone with Fanny; and on the days when she went to sell her work, or select her petty purchases, he always made a point of attending her. And her cheek wore a flush of pride when she saw him carrying her little basket, or waiting without, in musing patience, while she performed her commissions in the shops. Though, in reality, Fanny's intellect was ripening within, yet still the surface often misled the eye as to the depths. It was rather that something yet held back the faculties from their growth, than that the faculties themselves were wanting. Her weakness was more of the nature of the infant's than of one afflicted with incurable imbecility. For instance, she managed the little household with skill and prudence; she could calculate in her head, as rapidly as Vaudemont himself, the arithmetic necessary to her simple duties; she knew the value of money, which is more than some of us wise folks do. Her art, even in her infancy so remarkable in various branches of female handiwork, was carried, not only by perseverance, but by invention and peculiar talent, to a marvelous and exquisite perfection. Her embroidery, especially in what was then more rare than at present, viz., of flowers on silk, was much in request among the great *modistes* of London, to whom it found its way through the agency of Miss Semper. So that all this had enabled her, for years, to provide every necessary comfort of life for herself and her blind protector. And her care for the old man was beautiful in its minuteness, its vigilance. Wherever her heart was interested there never seemed a deficiency of mind. Vaudemont was touched to see how much of affectionate and pitying respect she appeared to enjoy in the neighborhood, especially among the humbler classes; even the beggar who swept the crossings did not beg of *her*, but bade God bless her as she passed; and the rude, discontented artisan would draw himself from the wall and answer, with a softened brow, the smile with which the harmless one charmed his courtesy. In fact, whatever attraction she took from her youth, her beauty, her misfortune, and her affecting industry, was heightened, in the eyes of the poorer neighbors, by many little traits of charity and kindness; many a sick child had she tended, and many a breadless board had stolen something from the stock set aside for her father's grave.

"Don't you think," she once whispered to Vaudemont, "that God attends to us more if we are good to those who are sick and hungry?"

"Certainly we are taught to think so."

"Well, I'll tell you a secret—don't tell again. Grandpapa once said that my father had done bad things: now, if Fanny is good to those she can help, I think that God will hear her more kindly when she prays him to forgive what her father did. Do you think so too? Do say—you are so wise!"

"Fanny, you are wiser than all of us; and I feel myself better and happier when I hear you speak."

There were, indeed, many moments when Vaudemont thought that her deficiencies of intellect might have been repaired, long since, by skillful culture and habitual companionship with those of her own age; from which companionship, however, Fanny, even when at school, had shrunk aloof. At other moments there was something so absent and distracted about her, or so fantastic and incoherent, that Vaudemont, with the man's hard, worldly eye, read in it nothing but melancholy confusion. Nevertheless, if the skein of ideas was entangled, each thread, in itself, was a thread of gold.

Fanny's great object—her great ambition—her one hope, was a tomb for her supposed father. Whether from some of that early religion attached to the grave, which is most felt, perhaps, in Catholic countries, and which she had imbibed at the convent, or from her residence so near the burial-ground, and the affection with which she regarded the spot—whatever the cause, she had cherished for some years, as young maidens usually cherish the desire of the altar, the dream of the grave-stone. But the hoard was amassed so slowly—now old Gawtrey was attacked by illness—now there was some little difficulty in the rent—now some fluctuation in the price of work—and now, and more often than all, some demand on her charity, which interfered with, and drew from, the pious savings. This was a sentiment in which her new friend sympathized deeply; for he, too, remembered that his first gold had bought that humble stone which still preserved above the earth the memory of his mother.

Meanwhile, days crept on, and no new violence was offered to Fanny. Vaudemont learned, then, by little and little—and Fanny's account was very confused—the nature of the danger she had run.

It seemed that one day, tempted by the fineness of the weather up the road that led from the suburb farther into the country, Fanny was stopped by a gentleman in a carriage, who accosted her, as she said, very kindly, and, after several questions, which she answered with her usual unsuspecting innocence, learned her trade, insisted on purchasing some articles of work which she had at the moment in her basket, and promised to procure her a constant purchaser, upon much better terms than she had hitherto obtained, if she would call at a house about a mile from the suburb toward London. This she promised to do, and this she did, according to the address he gave her. She was admitted to a lady more gayly dressed than Fanny had ever seen a lady before; the gentleman was also present; they both loaded her with compliments, and bought her work at a price which seemed about to realize all the hopes of the poor girl as to the grave-stone for William Gawtrey (as if his evil fate pursued that wild man beyond the grave, and his very tomb was to be purchased by the gold of the polluter!). The lady then appointed

her to call again; but, meanwhile, she met Fanny in the streets, and while she was accosting her, it fortunately chanced that Miss Semper, the milliner, passed that way; turned round, looked hard at the lady, used very angry language to her, seized Fanny's hand, led her away, while the lady slunk off; and told her that the said lady was a very bad woman, and that Fanny must never speak to her again. Fanny most cheerfully promised this. And, in fact, the lady, probably afraid, whether of the mob or the magistrates, never again came near her.

"And," said Fanny, "I gave the money they had both given to me to Miss Semper, who said she would send it back."

"You did right, Fanny; and, as you made one promise to Miss Semper, so you must make me one: never to stir from home again without me or some other person. No, no *other* person—only me. I will give up every thing else to go with you."

"Will you? Oh, yes, I promise! I used to like going alone, but that was before you came, brother."

And, as Fanny kept her promise, it would have been a bold gallant indeed who would have ventured to molest her by the side of that stately and strong protector.

CHAPTER VI.

"*Timon.* Each thing's a thief:
The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power
Have uncheck'd theft.

. . . . . .

The sweet degrees that this brief world affords,
To such as may the passive drugs of it
Freely command."—*Timon of Athens.*

On the day and at the hour fixed for the interview with the stranger who had visited Mr. Beaufort, Lord Lilburne was seated in the library of his brother-in-law; and before the elbow-chair, in which he lolled carelessly, stood our old friend, Mr. Sharp of Bow-street notability.

"Mr. Sharp," said the peer, "I have sent for you to do me a little favor. I expect a man here who professes to give Mr. Beaufort, my brother-in-law, some information about a law-suit. It is necessary to know the exact value of his evidence. I wish you to ascertain all particulars about him. Be so good as to seat yourself in the porter's chair in the hall; note him when he enters, unobserved yourself; but, as he is probably a stranger to you, note him still more when he leaves the house; follow him at a distance; find out where he lives, whom he associates with, where he visits, their names and directions, what his character and calling are—in a word, every thing you can, and report to me each evening. Dog him well—never lose sight of him—you will be handsomely paid. You understand."

"Ah!" said Mr. Sharp, "leave me alone, my lord. Been employed before by your lordship's brother-in-law. We knows what's what."

"I don't doubt it. To your post. I expect him every moment."

And, in fact, Mr. Sharp had only just ensconced himself in the porter's chair when the stranger knocked at the door; in another moment he was shown in to Lord Lilburne.

"Sir," said his lordship, without rising, "be so good as to take a chair. Mr. Beaufort is obliged to leave town; he has asked me to see you; I am one of his family—his wife is my sister; you may be as frank with me as with him—more so, perhaps."

"I beg the favor of your name, sir," said the stranger, adjusting his collar.

"Yours first—business is business."

"Well, then, Captain Smith."

"Of what regiment?"

"Half-pay."

"I am Lord Lilburne. Your name is Smith—humph!" added the peer, looking over some notes before him. "I see it is also the name of the witness appealed to by Mrs. Morton—humph!"

At this remark, and still more at the look which accompanied it, the countenance, before impudent and complacent, of Captain Smith fell into visible embarrassment; he cleared his throat, and said, with a little hesitation,

"My lord, that witness is living!"

"No doubt of it; witnesses are never wanting where property is concerned and imposture intended."

At this moment the servant entered, and placed a little note, quaintly folded, before Lord Lilburne. He glanced at it in surprise; opened, and read as follows, in pencil.

"My Lord—I knows the man; take caer of of him; he is as big a roge as ever stept; he was transported some three year back, and, unless his time has been shortened by the Home, he's absent without leve. We used to call him Dashing Jerry. That ere youngster we went arter, by Mr. Bofort's wish, was a pal of his. Scuze the liberty I take. R. Sharp."

While Lord Lilburne held this effusion to the candle and spelled his way through it, Captain Smith, recovering his self-composure, thus proceeded:

"Imposture, my lord! imposture! I really don't understand. Your lordship really seems so suspicious that it is quite uncomfortable. I am sure it is all the same to me; and, if Mr. Beaufort does not think proper to see me himself, why, I'd best make my bow."

And Captain Smith rose.

"Stay a moment, sir. What Mr. Beaufort may yet do, I can not say; but I know this: you stand charged of a very grave offense; and, if your witness or witnesses—you may have fifty for what I care—are equally guilty, so much the worse for them."

"My lord, I really don't comprehend."

"Then I will be more plain. I accuse you of devising an infamous falsehood for the purpose of extorting money. Let your witnesses appear in court, and I promise that you, they, and the young man, Mr. Morton, whose claim they set up, shall be indicted for conspiracy—conspiracy, if accompanied (as in the case of your witnesses) with perjury, of the blackest die. Mr. Smith, I know you; and, before ten o'clock to-morrow, I shall know also if you had his majesty's leave to quit the colonies! Ah! I am plain enough now, I see."

And Lord Lilburne threw himself back in his chair, and coldly contemplated the white face and dismayed expression of the crest-fallen captain. That most worthy person, after a pause of confusion, amaze, and fear, made an involuntary stride, with a menacing gesture, toward Lilburne: the peer quietly placed his hand on the bell.

"One moment more," said the latter; "if I ring this bell, it is to place you in custody. Let Mr. Beaufort but see you here once again—nay, let him but hear another word of this pretended lawsuit, and you return to the colonies. Pshaw! Frown not at me, sir! A Bow-street officer is in the hall. Begone!—no, stop one moment, and take a lesson in life. Never again attempt to threaten people of property and station. Around every rich man is a wall—better not run your head against it."

"But I swear solemnly," cried the knave, with an emphasis so startling that it carried with it the appearance of truth, "that the marriage did take place."

"And I say, no less solemnly, that any one who swears it in a court of law shall be prosecuted for perjury! Bah! you are a sorry rogue, after all!"

And with an air of supreme and half-compassionate contempt, Lord Lilburne turned away and stirred the fire. Captain Smith muttered and fumbled a moment with his gloves, then shrugged his shoulders, and sneaked out.

That night Lord Lilburne again received his friends, and among his guests came Vaudemont. Lilburne was one who liked the study of character, especially the character of men wrestling against the world. Wholly free from every species of ambition, he seemed to reconcile himself to his apathy by examining into the disquietude, the mortification, the heart's wear and tear which are the lot of the ambitious. Like the spider in his hole, he watched with a hungry pleasure the flies struggling in the web, through whose slimy labyrinth he walked with an easy safety. Perhaps one reason why he loved gaming was less from the joy of winning than the philosophical complacency with which he feasted on the emotions of those who lost. Always serene, and, except in debauch, always passionless—Magendie, tracing the experiments of science in the agonies of some tortured dog, could not be more rapt in the science, and more indifferent to the dog, than Lord Lilburne, ruining a victim, in the analysis of human passions, and stoical to the writhings of the wretch whom he tranquilly dissected. He wished to win money of Vaudemont—to ruin this man, who presumed to be more generous than other people—to see a bold adventurer submitted to the wheel of the Fortune which reigns in a pack of cards; and all, of course, without the least hate to the man whom he then saw for the first time. On the contrary, he felt a respect for Vaudemont. Like most worldly men, Lord Lilburne was prepossessed in favor of those who seek to rise in life; and, like men who have excelled in manly and athletic exercises, he was also prepossessed in favor of those who appeared fitted for the same success.

Liancourt took aside his friend as Lord Lilburne was talking with his other guests:

"I need not caution you, who never play, not to commit yourself to Lord Lilburne's tender mercies."

"Nay," answered Vaudemont, "I want to know this man: I have reasons which alone induce me to enter his house. I can afford to venture something, because I wish to see if I can gain something for one dear to me. And for the rest, I know him too well not to be on my guard." With that he joined Lord Lilburne's group, and accepted the invitation to the card-table. At supper, Vaudemont conversed more than was habitual to him; he especially addressed himself to his host, and listened, with great attention, to Lilburne's caustic comments upon every topic successively started. And whether it was the art of De Vaudemont, or from an interest that Lord Lilburne took in studying what was to him a new character—or whether that, both men excelling peculiarly in all masculine accomplishments, their conversation was of a nature that was more attractive to themselves than to others—it so happened that they were still talking while the daylight already peered through the window-curtains.

"And I have outstaid all your guests," said De Vaudemont, glancing round the emptied room.

"It is the best compliment you could pay me. Another night we can enliven our *tête-à-tête* with *écarté;* though at your age, and with your appearance, I am surprised, Monsieur De Vaudemont, that you are fond of play: I should have thought that it was not in a pack of cards that you looked for hearts. But perhaps you are *blasé* betimes of the *beau sexe.*"

"Yet your devotion to it is, perhaps, as great now as ever?"

"Mine! No, not as ever. To different ages different degrees. At your age I wooed, at mine I purchase—the better plan of the two: it does not take up half so much time."

"Your marriage, I think, Lord Lilburne, was not blessed with children. Perhaps sometimes you feel the want of them?"

"If I did, I could have them by the dozen. Other ladies have been more generous in that department than the Lady Lilburne, Heaven rest her!"

"And," said Vaudemont, fixing his eyes with some earnestness on his host, "if you were really persuaded that you had a child, or perhaps a grandchild—the mother, one whom you loved in your first youth—a child affectionate, beautiful, and especially needing your care and protection, would you not suffer that child, though illegitimate, to supply to you the want of filial affection?"

"Filial affection, *mon cher!*" repeated Lord Lilburne; "needing my care and protection! Pshaw! In other words, would I give board and lodging to some young vagabond who was good enough to say he was son to Lord Lilburne?"

"But if you were convinced that the claimant were your son, or perhaps your daughter—a tenderer name of the two, and a more helpless claimant?"

"My dear Monsieur de Vaudemont, you are doubtless a man of gallantry and of the world. If the children whom the law forces on one, are, nine times out of ten, such damnable plagues, judge if one would father those whom the law

permits us to disown. Natural children are the Parias of the world, and *I*—am one of the Brahmins."

"But," persisted Vaudemont, "if you had loved—if you had wronged the mother; if in the child you saw one who, without your aid, might be exposed to every curse with which the Parias (true, the *Parias!*) of the world are too often visited, and who, with your aid, might become, as age advanced, your companion, your nurse, your comforter—"

"Tush!" interrupted Lilburne, with some impatience, "I know not how our conversation fell on such a topic: perhaps you know a young lady or gentlemen out of a father who wants to get into one; if so, rest assured that I have no mind to engage the applicant—nay, excuse me, I did but jest. But look you, Monsieur de Vaudemont, no man has studied the art of happiness more than I have; and I will tell you the great secret; have as few ties as possible. Nurse! Pooh! I could hire one by the week a thousand times more useful and careful than a bore of a child. Comforter! a man of mind never wants comfort. And there is no such thing as sorrow while we have health and money, and don't care a straw for any body in the world. If you choose to love people, *their* health and circumstances, if either go wrong can fret you: that opens many avenues to pain. Never *live* alone, but always *feel* alone. You think this unamiable: possibly. I am no hypocrite, and I never affect to be any thing but what I am—John Lilburne."

As the peer thus spoke, Vaudemont, leaning against the door, contemplated him with a strange mixture of interest and disgust. "And John Lilburne is thought a great man, and William Gawtrey was a great rogue. You don't conceal your heart?—no, I understand. Wealth and power have no need of hypocrisy: you are the man of vice, Gawtrey, the man of crime. You never sin against the law, he was a felon by his trade. And the felon saved from vice the child, and from want the grandchild (*your* flesh and blood), whom you disown: which will Heaven consider the worse man? No, poor Fanny! I see I am wrong. If he would own you, I would not give you up to the ice of such a soul: better the blind man than the dead heart!"

"Well, Lord Lilburne," said De Vaudemont, aloud, shaking off his revery, "I must own that your philosophy seems to me the wisest for yourself. For a poor man it might be different; the poor need affection."

"Certainly," said Lord Lilburne, with an air of patronizing candor—"

"And I will own farther," continued de Vaudemont, "that I have willingly lost my money in return for the instruction I have received in hearing you converse."

"You are kind: come and take your revenge next Thursday. Adieu."

As Lord Lilburne undressed, and his valet attended him, he said to that worthy functionary,

"So you have not been able to make out the name of the stranger—the new lodger you tell me of?"

"No, my lord. They only say he is a very fine-looking man."

"You have not seen him?"

"No, my lord. What do you wish me now to do?"

"Humph! Nothing at this moment! You manage things so badly, you might get me into a scrape. I never do any thing the law, or the police, or even the newspapers can take hold of. I must think of some other way, humph! I never give up any thing—do I Dykeman? I never fail in what I undertake! If life had been worth what fools trouble it with—business and ambition—I suppose I should have been a great man with a very bad liver—ha! ha! I alone of all the world ever found what the world was good for! Draw the curtains, Dykeman."

CHAPTER VII.

"*Org.* Welcome thou ice that sitt'st about *his* heart!
No heat can ever thaw thee!"—FORD: *Broken Heart.*

"*Nearch.* Honorable infamy!"—*Ibid.*

"*Amyc.* Her tenderness hath yet deserved no rigor,
So to be crossed by fate!
Arm. You misapply, sir,
With favor let me speak it, what Apollo
Hath clouded in dim sense!"—*Ibid.*

IF Vaudemont had fancied that, considering the age and poverty of Simon, it was his duty to see whether Fanny's not more legal, but more natural protector were indeed the unredeemed and unmalleable egotist which Gawtrey had painted him, the conversation of one night was sufficient to make him abandon forever the notion of advancing her claims upon Lord Lilburne. But Philip had another motive in continuing his acquaintance with that personage. The sight of his mother's grave had recalled to him the image of that lost brother over whom he had vowed to watch. And, despite the deep sense of wronged affection with which he yet remembered the cruel letter that had contained the last tidings of Sidney, Philip's heart clung with undying fondness to that fair shape associated with all the happy recollections of childhood; and his conscience as well as his love asked him, each time that he passed the church-yard, "Will you make no effort to obey that last prayer of the mother who consigned her darling to your charge?" Perhaps, had Philip been in want, or had the name he now bore been sullied by his conduct, he might have shrunk from seeking one whom he might injure, but could not serve. But, though not rich, he had more than enough for tastes as hardy and simple as any to which soldier of fortune ever limited his desires. And he thought, with a sentiment of just and noble pride, that the name which Eugénie had forced upon him had been borne spotless as the ermine through the trials and vicissitudes he had passed since he had assumed it. Sidney could give him nothing, and therefore it was his duty to seek Sidney out. Now, he had always believed in his heart that the Beauforts were acquainted with a secret which he more and more pined to penetrate. He would, for Sidney's sake, smother his hate to the Beauforts; he would not reject their acquaintance, if thrown in his way; nay, secure by his change of name and his altered features from all suspicion on their part, he would seek that acquaintance in order to find his brother, and fulfill Catharine's last commands. His intercourse with Lilburne would necessarily bring him easily into contact with Lilburne's family. And in this thought he did not reject

the invitations pressed on him. He felt, too, a dark and absorbing interest in examining a man who was in himself the incarnation of the world —the world of art—the world as the preacher paints it—the hollow, sensual, sharp-witted, self-wrapped world—the world that is all for this life, and thinks of no Future and no God!

Lord Lilburne was, indeed, a study for deep contemplation. A study to perplex the ordinary thinker, and task to the utmost the analysis of more profound reflection. William Gawtrey had possessed no common talents; *he* had discovered that his life had been one mistake: Lord Lilburne's intellect was far keener than Gawtrey's, and *he* had never made, and, if he had lived to the age of old Parr, never would have made a similar discovery. He never wrestled against a law, though he slipped through all laws! And he knew no remorse, for he knew no fear. Lord Lilburne had married early, and long survived, a lady of fortune, the daughter of the then premier: the best match, in fact, of his day. And for one very brief period of his life he had suffered himself to enter into the field of politics: the only ambition common with men of equal rank. He showed talents that might have raised one so gifted by circumstance to any height, and then retired at once into his old habits and old system of pleasure. "I wished to try," said he once, "if fame was worth one headache; and I have convinced myself that the man who can sacrifice the bone in his mouth to the shadow of the bone in the water, is a fool." From that time he never once attended the house of lords, and declared himself of no political opinions one way or the other. Nevertheless, the world had a general belief in his powers, and Vaudemont reluctantly subscribed to the world's verdict. Yet he had done nothing—he had read but little —he laughed at the world to its face; and *that* was, after all, the main secret of his ascendency over those who were drawn into his circle. That contempt of the world placed the world at his feet. His sardonic and polished indifference; his professed code that there was no life worth caring for but his own life; his exemption from all cant, prejudice, and disguise; the frigid lubricity with which he glided out of the grasp of the conventional, whenever it so pleased him, without shocking the decorums, whose sense is in their ear, and who are not roused by the deed, but by the noise; all this had in it the marrow and essence of a system triumphant with the vulgar; for little minds give importance to the man who gives importance to nothing. Lord Lilburne's authority, not in matters of taste alone, but in those which the world calls judgment and common sense, was regarded as an oracle. He cared not a straw for the ordinary baubles that attract his order; he had refused both a step in the peerage and the garter (both which had at one time been offered him, as inducements to join the administration), and this was often quoted in his honor. But you only try a man's virtue when you offer him something that he covets. The earldom and the garter were to Lord Lilburne no more tempting inducements than a doll or a skipping rope; had you offered him an infallible cure for the gout, or an antidote against old age, you might have hired him as your lackey on your own terms. Lord Lilburne's next heir was the son of his only brother, a person entirely dependent on his uncle. Lord Lilburne allowed him £1000 a year, and kept him always abroad in a diplomatic situation. He looked upon his successor as a man who wanted power, but not inclination, to become an assassin!

Though he lived sumptuously and grudged himself nothing, Lord Lilburne was far from an extravagant man: he might, indeed, be considered close; for he knew how much of comfort and consideration he owed to his money, and valued it accordingly; he knew the best speculations and the best investments. If he took shares in an American canal, you might be sure that the shares would soon be double in value; if he purchased an estate, you might be certain it was a bargain. This pecuniary tact and success necessarily augmented his fame for wisdom.

He had been, in early life, a successful gambler, and some suspicions of his fair play had been noised abroad; but, as has been recently seen in the instance of a man of rank equal to Lilburne's, though, perhaps, of less acute if more cultivated intellect, it is long before the pigeon will turn round upon a falcon of breed and metal. The rumors, indeed, were so vague as to carry with them no weight. During the middle of his career, when in the full flush of health and fortune, he had renounced the gaming-table. Of late years, as advancing age made time more heavy, he had resumed the resource, and with all his former good luck. The money-market, the table, the sex, constituted the other occupations and amusements with which Lord Lilburne filled up his rosy leisure.

Another way by which this man had acquired reputation for ability was this: he never pretended to any branch of knowledge of which he was ignorant, any more than to any virtue in which he was deficient. Honesty itself was never more free from quackery or deception than was this imbodied and walking Vice. If the world chose to esteem him, he did not buy its opinion by imposture. No man ever saw Lord Lilburne's name in a public subscription, whether for a new church, or a Bible Society, or a distressed family; no man ever heard of his doing one generous, benevolent, or kindly action; no man was ever startled by one philanthropical, pious, or amiable sentiment from those mocking lips. Yet, in spite of all this, Lord John Lilburne was not only esteemed, but liked by the world, and set up in the chair of its Rhadamanthuses. In a word, he seemed to Vaudemont—and he was so in reality—a brilliant example of the might of Circumstance; an instance of what may be done in the way of reputation and influence by a rich, well-born man, to whom the will a kingdom is. A little of genius, and Lord Lilburne would have made his vices notorious and his deficiencies glaring; a little of heart, and his habits would have led him into countless follies and discreditable scrapes. It was the lead and the stone that, like the lean poet in a gale of wind, he carried about him, that preserved his equilibrium, no matter which way the breeze blew. But all his qualities, positive or negative, would have availed him nothing without that position which enabled him to take his ease in that inn—the world—which presented, to every detection of his want of intrinsic nobleness, the irreproachable respectability of a high

name, a splendid mansion, and a rent-roll without a flaw. Vaudemont drew comparisons between Lilburne and Gawtrey, and he comprehended at last why one was a low rascal and the other a great man.

Although it was but a few days after their first introduction to each other, Vaudemont had been twice to Lord Liburne's, and their acquaintance was already on an easy footing, when one afternoon, as the former was riding through the streets toward H——, he met the peer, mounted on a stout cob, which, from its symmetrical strength, pure English breed, and exquisite grooming, showed something of those sporting tastes for which, in earlier life, Lord Liburne had been noted.

"Why, Monsieur de Vaudemont, what brings you to this part of the town? Curiosity, and the desire to explore?"

"That might be natural enough in me; but you, who know London, so well, rather what brings *you* here?"

"Why, I am returned from a long ride. I have had symptoms of a fit of the gout, and been trying to keep it off by exercise. I have been to a cottage that belongs to me some miles from town—a pretty place enough, by-the-way—you must come and see me there next month. I shall fill the house for a *battue!* I have some tolerable covers: you are a good shot, I suppose?"

"I have not practiced, except with a rifle, for some years."

"That's a pity; for, as I think a week's shooting once a year quite enough, I fear that your visit to me at Fernside may not be sufficiently long to put your hand in."

"Fernside!"

"Yes; is the name familiar to you?"

"I think I have heard it before. Did your lordship purchase or inherit it?"

"I bought it of my brother-in-law. It belonged to *his* brother: a gay, wild sort of fellow, who broke his neck over a six-barred gate; through that gate my friend Robert walked the same day into a very fine estate!"

"I have heard so. The late Mr. Beaufort, then, left no children?"

"Yes; two. But they came into the world in the primitive way Mr. Owen wishes us all to come: too naturally for the present state of society; and Mr. Owen's parallelogram was not ready for them. By-the-way, one of them disappeared at Paris: you never met with him, I suppose?"

"Under what name?"

"Morton."

"Morton! hem! What Christian name?"

"Philip."

"Philip! no. But did Mr. Beaufort do nothing for the young men? I think I have heard somewhere that he took compassion on *one* of them."

"Have you? Ah, my brother-in-law is precisely one of those excellent men of whom the world always speaks well. No; he would very willingly have served either or both the boys, but the mother refused all his overtures and went to law, I fancy. The elder of these bastards turned out a sad fellow; and the younger—I don't know exactly where he is, but no doubt with one of his mother's relations. You seem to interest yourself in natural children, my dear Vaudemont?"

"Perhaps you have heard that people have doubted if I were a natural son?"

"Pardon me, no! But are you going? I was in hopes you would have turned back my way, and—"

"You are very good; but I have a particular appointment, and I am now too late. Good-morning, Lord Lilburne."

Sidney with one of his mother's relations! Returned, perhaps, to the Mortons! How had he never *before* chanced on a conjecture so probable? He would go at once! that very night he would go to the house from which he had taken his brother. At least, and at the worst, they might give him some clew.

Buoyed with this hope and this resolve, he rode hastily to H—— to announce to Simon and Fanny that he should not return to them, perhaps, for two or three days. As he entered the suburb, he drew up by the statuary of whom he had purchased his mother's grave-stone.

The artist of the melancholy trade was at work in his yard.

"Ho! there!" said Vaudemont, looking over the low railing, "is the tomb I have ordered nearly finished?"

"Why, sir, as you were so anxious for dispatch, and as it would take a long time to get a new one ready, I thought of giving you this, which is finished all but the inscription. It was meant for Miss Deborah Primme; but her nephew and heir called on me yesterday to say that, as the poor lady died worth less by £5000 than he had expected, he thought a handsome wooden tomb would do as well, if I could get rid of this for him. It is a beauty, sir. It will look so cheerful—"

"Well, that will do: and you can place it now where I told you?"

"In three days, sir."

"So be it." And he rode on, muttering, "Fanny, your pious wish will be fulfilled. But flowers—will they suit *that* stone?"

He put up his horse, and walked through the lane to Simon's.

As he approached the house, he saw Fanny's bright eyes at the window. She was watching his return. She hastened to open the door to him, and the world's wanderer felt what music there is in the footstep, what summer there is in the smile, of *Welcome!*

"My dear Fanny," he said, affected by her joyous greeting, "it makes my heart warm to see you. I have brought you a present from town. When I was a boy, I remember that my poor mother was fond of singing some simple songs, which often, somehow or other, come back to me when I see and hear you. I fancy you would understand and like them as well at least as I do; for, Heaven knows," he added to himself, "my ear is dull enough generally to the jingle of rhyme." And he placed in her hand a little volume of those exquisite songs in which Burns has set Nature to music.

"Oh! you are so kind, brother," said Fanny, with tears swimming in her eyes; and she kissed the book.

After their simple meal, Vaudemont broke to Fanny and Simon the intelligence of his intended departure for a few days. Simon heard it with