

Devereux, Book II.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THE HERO IN LONDON.--PLEASURE IS OFTEN THE SHORTEST, AS IT IS THE EARLIEST ROAD TO WISDOM, AND WE MAY SAY OF THE WORLD WHAT ZEAL-OF-THE-LAND-BUSY SAYS OF THE PIG-BOOTH, "WE ESCAPE SO MUCH OF THE OTHER VANITIES BY OUR EARLY ENTERING."

IT had, when I first went to town, just become the fashion for young men of fortune to keep house, and to give their bachelor establishments the importance hitherto reserved for the household of a Benedict.

Let the reader figure to himself a suite of apartments, magnificently furnished, in the vicinity of the court. An anteroom is crowded with divers persons, all messengers in the various negotiations of pleasure. There, a French valet,--that inestimable valet, Jean Desmarais,--sitting over a small fire, was watching the operations of a coffee-pot, and conversing, in a mutilated attempt at the language of our nation, though with the enviable fluency of his own, with the various loiterers who were beguiling the hours they were obliged to wait for an audience of the master himself, by laughing at the master's Gallic representative. There stood a tailor with his books of patterns just imported from Paris,--that modern Prometheus, who makes a man what he is! Next to him a tall, gaunt fellow, in a coat covered with tarnished lace, a night-cap wig, and a large whip in his hands, comes to vouch for the pedigree and excellence of the three horses he intends to dispose of, out of pure love and amity for the buyer. By the window stood a thin starveling poet, who, like the grammarian of Cos, might have put lead in his pockets to prevent being blown away, had he not, with a more paternal precaution, put so much in his works that he had left none to spare. Excellent trick of the times, when ten guineas can purchase every virtue under the sun, and when an author thinks to vindicate the sins of his book by proving the admirable qualities of the paragon to whom it is dedicated.* There with an air of supercilious contempt upon his smooth cheeks, a page, in purple and silver, sat upon the table, swinging his legs to and fro, and big with all the reflected importance of a /billet-doux/. There stood the pert haberdasher, with his box of silver-fringed gloves, and lace which Diana might have worn. At that time there was indeed no enemy to female chastity like the former article of man-millinery: the delicate whiteness of the glove, the starry splendour of the fringe, were irresistible, and the fair Adorna, in poor Lee's tragedy of "Caesar Borgia," is far from the only lady who has been killed by a pair of gloves.

* Thank Heaven, for the honour of literature, /nous avons change tout cela!--ED.

Next to the haberdasher, dingy and dull of aspect, a book-hunter bent beneath the load of old works gathered from stall and shed, and about to be re-sold according to the price exacted from all literary gallants who affect to unite the fine gentleman with the profound scholar. A little

girl, whose brazen face and voluble tongue betrayed the growth of her intellectual faculties, leaned against the wainscot, and repeated, in the anteroom, the tart repartees which her mistress (the most celebrated actress of the day) uttered on the stage; while a stout, sturdy, bull-headed gentleman, in a gray surtout and a black wig, mingled with the various voices of the motley group the gentle phrases of Hockley-in-the-Hole, from which place of polite merriment he came charged with a message of invitation. While such were the inmates of the anteroom, what picture shall we draw of the /salon/ and its occupant?

A table was covered with books, a couple of fencing foils, a woman's mask, and a profusion of letters; a scarlet cloak, richly laced, hung over, trailing on the ground. Upon a slab of marble lay a hat, looped with diamonds, a sword, and a lady's lute. Extended upon a sofa, loosely robed in a dressing-gown of black velvet, his shirt collar unbuttoned, his stockings ungartered, his own hair (undressed and released for a brief interval from the false locks universally worn) waving from his forehead in short yet dishevelled curls, his whole appearance stamped with the morning negligence which usually follows midnight dissipation, lay a young man of about nineteen years. His features were neither handsome nor ill-favoured, and his stature was small, slight, and somewhat insignificant, but not, perhaps, ill-formed either for active enterprise or for muscular effort. Such, reader, is the picture of the young prodigal who occupied the apartments I have described, and such (though somewhat flattered by partiality) is a portrait of Morton Devereux, six months after his arrival in town.

The door was suddenly thrown open with that unhesitating rudeness by which our friends think it necessary to signify the extent of their familiarity; and a young man of about eight-and-twenty, richly dressed, and of a countenance in which a dissipated /nonchalance/ and an aristocratic /hauteur/ seemed to struggle for mastery, abruptly entered.

"What! ho, my noble royster," cried he, flinging himself upon a chair, "still suffering from St. John's Burgundy! Fie, fie, upon your apprenticeship!--why, before I had served half your time, I could take my three bottles as easily as the sea took the good ship 'Revolution,' swallow them down with a gulp, and never show the least sign of them the next morning!"

"I really believe you, most magnanimous Tarleton. Providence gives to each of its creatures different favours,--to one wit, to the other a capacity for drinking. A thousand pities that they are never united!"

"So bitter, Count!--ah, what will ever cure you of sarcasm?"

"A wise man by conversation, or fools by satiety."

"Well, I dare say that is witty enough, but I never admire fine things of a morning. I like letting my faculties live till night in a deshabille; let us talk easily and sillily of the affairs of the day. /Imprimis/, will you stroll to the New Exchange? There is a black eye there that measures out ribbons, and my green ones long to flirt with it."

"With all my heart--and in return you shall accompany me to Master Powell's puppet-show."

"You speak as wisely as Solomon himself in the puppet-show. I own that I love that sight: 'tis a pleasure to the littleness of human nature to see great things abused by mimicry; kings moved by bobbins, and the pomps of the earth personated by Punch."

"But how do you like sharing the mirth of the groundlings, the filthy plebeians, and letting them see how petty are those distinctions which you value so highly, by showing them how heartily you can laugh at such distinctions yourself? Allow, my superb Coriolanus, that one purchases pride by the loss of consistency."

"Ah, Devereux, you poison my enjoyment by the mere word 'plebeian'! Oh, what a beastly thing is a common person!--a shape of the trodden clay without any alloy; a compound of dirty clothes, bacon breaths, villanous smells, beggarly cowardice, and cattish ferocity. Pah, Devereux! rub civet on the very thought!"

"Yet they will laugh to-day at the same things you will, and consequently there would be a most flattering congeniality between you. Emotion, whether of ridicule, anger, or sorrow; whether raised at a puppet-show, a funeral, or a battle,--is your grandest of levellers. The man who would be always superior should be always apathetic."

"Oracular, as usual, Count,--but, hark, the clock gives tongue. One, by the Lord!--will you not dress?"

And I rose and dressed. We passed through the anteroom; my attendant assistants in the art of wasting money drew up in a row.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said I ("gentlemen, indeed!" cried Tarleton), "for keeping you so long. Mr. Snivelship, your waistcoats are exquisite: favour me by conversing with my valet on the width of the lace for my liveries; he has my instructions. Mr. Jockelton, your horses shall be tried to-morrow at one. Ay, Mr. Rymer, I beg you a thousand pardons; I beseech you to forgive the ignorance of my rascals in suffering a gentleman of your merit to remain for a moment unattended to. I have read your ode; it is splendid,--the ease of Horace with the fire of Pindar; your Pegasus never touches the earth, and yet in his wildest excesses you curb him with equal grace and facility: I object, sir, only to your dedication; it is too flattering."

"By no means, my Lord Count, it fits you to a hair."

"Pardon me," interrupted I, "and allow me to transfer the honour to Lord Halifax; he loves men of merit; he loves also their dedications. I will mention it to him to-morrow: everything you say of me will suit him exactly. You will oblige me with a copy of your poem directly it is printed, and suffer me to pay your bookseller for it now, and through your friendly mediation; adieu!"

"Oh, Count, this is too generous."

"A letter for me, my pretty page? Ah! tell her ladyship I shall wait upon her commands at Powell's: time will move with a tortoise speed till I kiss her hands. Mr. Fribbleden, your gloves would fit the giants at Guildhall: my valet will furnish you with my exact size; you will see to the legitimate breadth of the fringe. My little beauty, you are from Mrs. Bracegirdle: the play /shall/ succeed; I have taken seven boxes;

Mr. St. John promised his influence. Say, therefore, my Hebe, that the thing is certain, and let me kiss thee: thou hast dew on thy lip already. Mr. Thumpen, you are a fine fellow, and deserve to be encouraged; I will see that the next time your head is broken it shall be broken fairly: but I will not patronize the bear; consider that peremptory. What, Mr. Bookworm, again! I hope you have succeeded better this time: the old songs had an autumn fit upon them, and had lost the best part of their /leaves/; and Plato had mortgaged one half his "Republic," to pay, I suppose, the exorbitant sum you thought proper to set upon the other. As for Diogenes Laertius, and his philosophers--"

"Pish!" interrupted Tarleton; "are you going, by your theoretical treatises on philosophy, to make me learn the practical part of it, and prate upon learning while I am supporting myself with patience?"

"Pardon me! Mr. Bookworm; you will deposit your load, and visit me to-morrow at an earlier hour. And now, Tarleton, I am at your service."

CHAPTER II.

GAY SCENES AND CONVERSATIONS.--THE NEW EXCHANGE AND THE PUPPET-SHOW.--THE ACTOR, THE SEXTON, AND THE BEAUTY.

"WELL, Tarleton," said I, looking round that mart of millinery and love-making, which, so celebrated in the reign of Charles II., still preserved the shadow of its old renown in that of Anne,--"well, here we are upon the classical ground so often commemorated in the comedies which our chaste grandmothers thronged to see. Here we can make appointments, while we profess to buy gloves, and should our mistress tarry too long, beguile our impatience by a flirtation with her milliner. Is there not a breathing air of gayety about the place?--does it not still smack of the Ethereges and Sedleys?"

"Right," said Tarleton, leaning over a counter and amorously eying the pretty coquette to whom it belonged; while, with the coxcombry then in fashion, he sprinkled the long curls that touched his shoulders with a fragrant shower from a bottle of jessamine water upon the counter,--"right; saw you ever such an eye? Have you snuff of the true scent, my beauty--foh! this is for the nostril of a Welsh parson--choleric and hot, my beauty,--pulverized horse-radish,--why, it would make a nose of the coldest constitution imaginable sneeze like a washed school-boy on a Saturday night.--Ah, this is better, my princess: there is some courtesy in this snuff; it flatters the brain like a poet's dedication. Right, Devereux, right, there is something infectious in the atmosphere; one catches good humour as easily as if it were cold. Shall we stroll on?--/my/ Clelia is on the other side of the Exchange.--You were speaking of the play-writers: what a pity that our Ethereges and Wycherleys should be so frank in their gallantry that the prudish public already begins to look shy on them. They have a world of wit!"

"Ay," said I; "and, as my good uncle would say, a world of knowledge of human nature, namely, of the worst part of it. But they are worse than merely licentious: they are positively villanous; pregnant with the most redemptionless /scoundrelism/,--cheating, lying, thieving, and fraud; their humour debauches the whole moral system; they are like the

Sardinian herb,--they make you laugh, it is true, but they poison you in the act. But who comes here?"

"Oh, honest Coll!--Ah, Cibber, how goes it with you?"

The person thus addressed was a man of about the middle age, very grotesquely attired, and with a periwig preposterously long. His countenance (which, in its features, was rather comely) was stamped with an odd mixture of liveliness, impudence, and a coarse yet not unjoyous spirit of reckless debauchery. He approached us with a saunter, and saluted Tarleton with an air servile enough, in spite of an affected familiarity.

"What think you," resumed my companion, "we were conversing upon?"

"Why, indeed, Mr. Tarleton," answered Cibber, bowing very low, "unless it were the exquisite fashion of your waistcoat, or your success with my Lady Duchess, I know not what to guess."

"Pooh, man," said Tarleton, haughtily, "none of your compliments;" and then added in a milder tone, "No, Colley, we were abusing the immoralities that existed on the stage until thou, by the light of thy virtuous example, didst undertake to reform it."

"Why," rejoined Cibber, with an air of mock sanctity, "Heaven be praised, I have pulled out some of the weeds from our theatrical /parterre/--"

"Hear you that, Count? Does he not look a pretty fellow for a censor?"

"Surely," said Cibber, "ever since Dicky Steele has set up for a saint, and assumed the methodistical twang, some hopes of conversion may be left even for such reprobates as myself. Where, may I ask, will Mr. Tarleton drink to-night?"

"Not with thee, Coll. The Saturnalia don't happen every day. Rid us now of thy company: but stop, I will do thee a pleasure; know you this gentleman?"

"I have not that extreme honour."

"Know a Count, then! Count Devereux, demean yourself by sometimes acknowledging Colley Cibber, a rare fellow at a song, a bottle, and a message to an actress; a lively rascal enough, but without the goodness to be loved, or the independence to be respected."

"Mr. Cibber," said I, rather hurt at Tarleton's speech, though the object of it seemed to hear this description with the most unruffled composure--"Mr. Cibber, I am happy and proud of an introduction to the author of the 'Careless Husband.' Here is my address; oblige me with a visit at your leisure."

"How could you be so galling to the poor devil?" said I, when Cibber, with a profusion of bows and compliments, had left us to ourselves.

"Ah, hang him,--a low fellow, who pins all his happiness to the skirts of the quality, is proud of being despised, and that which would excruciate the vanity of others only flatters his. And now for my Clelia."

After my companion had amused himself with a brief flirtation with a young lady who affected a most edifying demureness, we left the Exchange, and repaired to the puppet-show.

On entering the Piazza, in which, as I am writing for the next century, it may be necessary to say that Punch held his court, we saw a tall, thin fellow, loitering under the columns, and exhibiting a countenance of the most ludicrous discontent. There was an insolent arrogance about Tarleton's good-nature, which always led him to consult the whim of the moment at the expense of every other consideration, especially if the whim referred to a member of the /canaille/ whom my aristocratic friend esteemed as a base part of the exclusive and despotic property of gentlemen.

"Egad, Devereux," said he, "do you see that fellow? he has the audacity to affect spleen. Faith, I thought melancholy was the distinguishing patent of nobility: we will smoke him." And advancing towards the man of gloom, Tarleton touched him with the end of his cane. The man started and turned round. "Pray, sirrah," said Tarleton, coldly, "pray who the devil are you that you presume to look discontented?"

"Why, Sir," said the man, good-humouredly enough, "I have some right to be angry."

"I doubt it, my friend," said Tarleton. "What is your complaint? a rise in the price of tripe, or a drinking wife? Those, I take it, are the sole misfortunes incidental to your condition."

"If that be the case," said I, observing a cloud on our new friend's brow, "shall we heal thy sufferings? Tell us thy complaints, and we will prescribe thee a silver specific; there is a sample of our skill."

"Thank you humbly, gentlemen," said the man, pocketing the money, and clearing his countenance; "and seriously, mine is an uncommonly hard case. I was, till within the last few weeks, the under-sexton of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, and my duty was that of ringing the bells for daily prayers but a man of Belial came hitherwards, set up a puppet-show, and, timing the hours of his exhibition with a wicked sagacity, made the bell I rang for church serve as a summons to Punch,—so, gentlemen, that whenever your humble servant began to pull for the Lord, his perverted congregation began to flock to the devil; and, instead of being an instrument for saving souls, I was made the innocent means of destroying them. Oh, gentlemen, it was a shocking thing to tug away at the rope till the sweat ran down one, for four shillings a week; and to see all the time that one was thinning one's own congregation and emptying one's own pockets!"

"It was indeed a lamentable dilemma; and what did you, Mr. Sexton?"

"Do, Sir? why, I could not stifle my conscience, and I left my place. Ever since then, Sir, I have stationed myself in the Piazza, to warn my poor, deluded fellow-creatures of their error, and to assure them that when the bell of St. Paul's rings, it rings for prayers, and not for puppet-shows, and—Lord help us, there it goes at this very moment; and look, look, gentlemen, how the wigs and hoods are crowding to the motion* instead of the minister."

* An antiquated word in use for puppet-shows.

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried Tarleton, "Mr. Powell is not the first man who has wrested things holy to serve a carnal purpose, and made use of church bells in order to ring money to the wide pouch of the church's enemies. Hark ye, my friend, follow my advice, and turn preacher yourself; mount a cart opposite to the motion, and I'll wager a trifle that the crowd forsake the theatrical mountebank in favour of the religious one; for the more sacred the thing played upon, the more certain is the game."

"Body of me, gentlemen," cried the ex-sexton, "I'll follow your advice."

"Do so, man, and never presume to look doleful again; leave dulness to your superiors."*

* See "Spectator," No. 14, for a letter from this unfortunate under-sexton.

And with this advice, and an additional compensation for his confidence, we left the innocent assistant of Mr. Powell, and marched into the puppet-show, by the sound of the very bells the perversion of which the good sexton had so pathetically lamented.

The first person I saw at the show, and indeed the express person I came to see, was the Lady Hasselton. Tarleton and myself separated for the present, and I repaired to the coquette. "Angels of grace!" said I, approaching; "and, by the by, before I proceed another word, observe, Lady Hasselton, how appropriate the exclamation is to /you/! Angels of /grace/! why, you have moved all your patches--one--two--three--six--eight--as I am a gentleman, from the left side of your cheek to the right! What is the reason of so sudden an emigration?"

"I have changed my politics, Count,* that is all, and have resolved to lose no time in proclaiming the change. But is it true that you are going to be married?"

* Whig ladies patched on one side of the cheek, Tories on the other.

"Married! Heaven forbid! which of my enemies spread so cruel a report?"

"Oh, the report is universal!" and the Lady Hasselton flirted her fan with the most flattering violence.

"It is false, nevertheless; I cannot afford to buy a wife at present, for, thanks to jointures and pin-money, these things are all matters of commerce; and (see how closely civilized life resembles the savage!) the English, like the Tartar gentleman, obtains his wife only by purchase! But who is the bride?"

"The Duke of Newcastle's rich daughter, Lady Henrietta Pelham."

"What, Harley's object of ambition!* Faith, Madam, the report is not so cruel as I thought for!"

* Lord Bolingbroke tells us that it was the main end of Harley's administration to marry his son to this lady. Thus is the fate of nations a bundle made up of a thousand little private schemes.

"Oh, you fop!--but is it not true?"

"By my honour, I fear not; my rivals are too numerous and too powerful. Look now, yonder! how they already flock around the illustrious heiress; note those smiles and simpers. Is it not pretty to see those very fine gentlemen imitating bumpkins at a fair, and grinning their best /for a gold ring/! But you need not fear me, Lady Hasselton, my love cannot wander if it would. In the quaint thought of Sidney,* love having once flown to my heart, burned its wings there, and cannot fly away."

* In the "Arcadia," that museum of oddities and beauties.

"La, you now!" said the Beauty; "I do not comprehend you exactly: your master of the graces does not teach you your compliments properly."

"Yes, he does, but in your presence I forget them; and now," I added, lowering my voice into the lowest of whispers, "now that you are assured of my fidelity, will you not learn at last to discredit rumours and trust to me?"

"I love you too well!" answered the Lady Hasselton in the same tone, and that answer gives an admirable idea of the affection of every coquette! love and confidence with them are qualities that have a natural antipathy, and can never be united. Our /tete-a-tete/ was at an end; the people round us became social, and conversation general.

"Betterton acts to-morrow night," cried the Lady Pratterly: "we must go!"

"We must go," cried the Lady Hasselton.

"We must go!" cried all.

And so passed the time till the puppet-show was over, and my attendance dispensed with.

It is a charming thing to be the lover of a lady of the mode! One so honoured does with his hours as a miser with his guineas; namely, nothing but count them!

CHAPTER III.

MORE LIONS.

THE next night, after the theatre, Tarleton and I strolled into Wills's. Half-a-dozen wits were assembled. Heavens! how they talked! actors, actresses, poets, statesmen, philosophers, critics, divines, were all pulled to pieces with the most gratifying malice imaginable. We sat

ourselves down, and while Tarleton amused himself with a dish of coffee and the "Flying Post," I listened very attentively to the conversation. Certainly if we would take every opportunity of getting a grain or two of knowledge, we should soon have a chest-full; a man earned an excellent subsistence by asking every one who came out of a tobacconist's shop for a pinch of snuff, and retailing the mixture as soon as he had filled his box.*

* "Tatler."

While I was listening to a tall lusty gentleman, who was abusing Dogget, the actor, a well-dressed man entered, and immediately attracted the general observation. He was of a very flat, ill-favoured countenance, but of a quick eye, and a genteel air; there was, however, something constrained and artificial in his address, and he appeared to be endeavouring to clothe a natural good-humour with a certain primness which could never be made to fit it.

"Ha, Steele!" cried a gentleman in an orange-coloured coat, who seemed by a fashionable swagger of importance desirous of giving the tone to the company,--"Ha, Steele, whence come you? from the chapel or the tavern?" and the speaker winked round the room as if he wished us to participate in the pleasure of a good thing.

Mr. Steele drew up, seemingly a little affronted; but his good-nature conquering the affectation of personal sanctity, which, at the time I refer to, that excellent writer was pleased to assume, he contented himself with nodding to the speaker, and saying,--

"All the world knows, Colonel Cleland, that you are a wit, and therefore we take your fine sayings as we take change from an honest tradesman,--rest perfectly satisfied with the coin we get, without paying any attention to it."

"Zounds, Cleland, you got the worst of it there," cried a gentleman in a flaxen wig. And Steele slid into a seat near my own.

Tarleton, who was sufficiently well educated to pretend to the character of a man of letters, hereupon thought it necessary to lay aside the "Flying Post," and to introduce me to my literary neighbour.

"Pray," said Colonel Cleland, taking snuff and swinging himself to and fro with an air of fashionable grace, "has any one seen the new paper?"

"What!" cried the gentleman in the flaxen wig, "what! the 'Tatler's' successor,--the 'Spectator'?"

"The same," quoth the colonel.

"To be sure; who has not?" returned he of the flaxen ornament. "People say Congreve writes it."

"They are very much mistaken, then," cried a little square man with spectacles; "to my certain knowledge Swift is the author."

"Pooh!" said Cleland, imperiously, "pooh! it is neither the one nor the other; I, gentlemen, am in the secret--but--you take me, eh? One must

not speak well of one's self; mum is the word."

"Then," asked Steele, quietly, "we are to suppose that you, Colonel, are the writer?"

"I never said so, Dicky; but the women will have it that I am," and the colonel smoothed down his cravat.

"Pray, Mr. Addison, what say you?" cried the gentleman in the flaxen wig; "are you for Congreve, Swift, or Colonel Cleland?" This was addressed to a gentleman of a grave but rather prepossessing mien; who, with eyes fixed upon the ground, was very quietly and to all appearance very inattentively solacing himself with a pipe; without lifting his eyes, this personage, then eminent, afterwards rendered immortal, replied,

"Colonel Cleland must produce other witnesses to prove his claim to the authorship of the 'Spectator:' the women, we well know, are prejudiced in his favour."

"That's true enough, old friend," cried the colonel, looking askant at his orange-coloured coat; "but faith, Addison, I wish you would set up a paper of the same sort, d'ye see; you're a nice judge of merit, and your sketches of character would do justice to your friends."

"If ever I do, Colonel, I, or my coadjutors, will study at least to do justice to you."*

* This seems to corroborate the suspicion entertained of the identity of Colonel Cleland with the Will Honeycomb of the "Spectator."

"Prithee, Steele," cried the stranger in spectacles, "prithee, tell us thy thoughts on the subject: dost thou know the author of this droll periodical?"

"I saw him this morning," replied Steele, carelessly.

"Aha! and what said you to him?"

"I asked him his name."

"And what did he answer?" cried he of the flaxen wig, while all of us crowded round the speaker, with the curiosity every one felt in the authorship of a work then exciting the most universal and eager interest.

"He answered me solemnly," said Steele, "in the following words,--

""Graeci carent ablativo, Itali dativo, ego nominativo.""*

* "The Greek wants an ablative, the Italians a dative, I a nominative."

"Famous--capital!" cried the gentleman in spectacles; and then, touching Colonel Cleland, added, "what does it exactly mean?"

"Ignoramus!" said Cleland, disdainfully, "every /schoolboy knows Virgil/!"

"Devereux," said Tarleton, yawning, "what a d----d delightful thing it is to hear so much wit: pity that the atmosphere is so fine that no lungs unaccustomed to it can endure it long, Let us recover ourselves by a walk."

"Willingly," said I; and we sauntered forth into the streets.

"Wills's is not what it was," said Tarleton; "'tis a pitiful ghost of its former self, and if they had not introduced cards, one would die of the vapours there."

"I know nothing so insipid," said I, "as that mock literary air which it is so much the fashion to assume. 'Tis but a wearisome relief to conversation to have interludes of songs about Strephon and Sylvia, recited with a lisp by a gentleman with fringed gloves and a languishing look."

"Fie on it," cried Tarleton, "let us seek for a fresher topic. Are you asked to Abigail Masham's to-night, or will you come to Dame de la Riviere Manley's?"

"Dame de la what?--in the name of long words who is she?"

"Oh! Learning made libidinous: one who reads Catullus and profits by it."

"Bah, no, we will not leave the gentle Abigail for her. I have promised to meet St. John, too, at the Mashams'."

"As you like. We shall get some wine at Abigail's, which we should never do at the house of her cousin of Marlborough."

And, comforting himself with this belief, Tarleton peaceably accompanied me to that celebrated woman, who did the Tories such notable service, at the expense of being termed by the Whigs one great want divided into two parts; namely, a great want of every shilling belonging to other people, and a great want of every virtue that should have belonged to herself. As we mounted the staircase, a door to the left (a private apartment) was opened, and I saw the favourite dismiss, with the most flattering air of respect, my old preceptor, the Abbe Montreuil. He received her attentions as his due, and, descending the stairs, came full upon me. He drew back, changed neither hue nor muscle, bowed civilly enough, and disappeared. I had not much opportunity to muse over this circumstance, for St. John and Mr. Domville--excellent companions both--joined us; and the party being small, we had the unwonted felicity of talking, as well as bowing, to each other. It was impossible to think of any one else when St. John chose to exert himself; and so even the Abbe Montreuil glided out of my brain as St. John's wit glided into it. We were all of the same way of thinking on politics, and therefore were witty without being quarrelsome,--a rare thing. The trusty Abigail told us stories of the good Queen, and we added /bons mots/ by way of corollary. Wine, too, wine that even Tarleton approved, lit up our intellects, and we spent altogether an evening such as gentlemen and Tories very seldom have the sense to enjoy.

O Apollo! I wonder whether Tories of the next century will be such clever, charming, well-informed fellows as we were!

CHAPTER IV.

AN INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURE.

A LITTLE affected by the vinous potations which had been so much an object of anticipation with my companion, Tarleton and I were strolling homeward when we perceived a remarkably tall man engaged in a contest with a couple of watchmen. Watchmen were in all cases the especial and natural enemies of the gallants in my young days; and no sooner did we see the unequal contest than, drawing our swords with that true English valour which makes all the quarrels of other people its own, we hastened to the relief of the weaker party.

"Gentlemen," said the elder watchman, drawing back, "this is no common brawl; we have been shamefully beaten by this here madman, and for no earthly cause."

"Who ever did beat a watchman for any earthly cause, you rascal?" cried the accused party, swinging his walking cane over the complainant's head with a menacing air.

"Very true," cried Tarleton, coolly. "Seigneurs of the watch, you are both made and paid to be beaten; /ergo/--you have no right to complain. Release this worthy cavalier, and depart elsewhere to make night hideous with your voices."

"Come, come," quoth the younger Dogberry, who perceived a reinforcement approaching, "move on, good people, and let us do our duty."

"Which," interrupted the elder watchman, "consists in taking this hulking swaggerer to the watchhouse."

"Thou speakest wisely, man of peace," said Tarleton; "defend thyself;" and without adding another word he ran the watchman through--not the body but the coat; avoiding with great dexterity the corporeal substance of the attacked party, and yet approaching it so closely as to give the guardian of the streets very reasonable ground for apprehension. No sooner did the watchman find the hilt strike against his breast, than he uttered a dismal cry and fell upon the pavement as if he had been shot.

"Now for thee, varlet," cried Tarleton, brandishing his rapier before the eyes of the other watchman, "tremble at the sword of Gideon."

"O Lord, O Lord!" ejaculated the terrified comrade of the fallen man, dropping on his knees, "for Heaven's sake, sir, have a care."

"What argument canst thou allege, thou screech-owl of the metropolis, that thou shouldst not share the same fate as thy brother owl?"

"Oh, sir!" cried the craven night-bird (a bit of a humourist in its way), "because I have a nest and seven little owlets at home, and t' other owl is only a bachelor."

"Thou art an impudent thing to jest at us," said Tarleton; "but thy wit

has saved thee; rise."

At this moment two other watchmen came up.

"Gentlemen," said the tall stranger whom we had rescued, "we had better fly."

Tarleton cast at him a contemptuous look, and placed himself in a posture of offence.

"Hark ye," said I, "let us effect an honourable peace. Messieurs the watch, be it lawful for you to carry off the slain, and for us to claim the prisoners."

But our new foes understood not a jest, and advanced upon us with a ferocity which might really have terminated in a serious engagement, had not the tall stranger thrust his bulky form in front of the approaching battalion, and cried out with a loud voice, "Zounds, my good fellows, what's all this for? If you take us up you will get broken heads to-night, and a few shillings perhaps to-morrow. If you leave us alone, you will have whole heads, and a guinea between you. Now, what say you?"

Well spoke Phaedra against the dangers of eloquence. The watchmen looked at each other. "Why really, sir," said one, "what you say alters the case very much; and if Dick here is not much hurt, I don't know what we may say to the offer."

So saying, they raised the fallen watchman, who, after three or four grunts, began slowly to recover himself.

"Are you dead, Dick?" said the owl with seven owlets.

"I think I am," answered the other, groaning.

"Are you able to drink a pot of ale, Dick?" cried the tall stranger.

"I think I am," reiterated the dead man, very lack-a-daisically. And this answer satisfying his comrades, the articles of peace were subscribed to.

Now, then, the tall stranger began searching his pockets with a most consequential air.

"Gad, so!" said he at last; "not in my breeches pocket!--well, it must be in my waistcoat. No. Well, 'tis a strange thing--demme it is! Gentlemen, I have had the misfortune to leave my purse behind me: add to your other favours by lending me wherewithal to satisfy these honest men."

And Tarleton lent him the guinea. The watchmen now retired, and we were left alone with our portly ally.

Placing his hand to his heart he made us half-a-dozen profound bows, returned us thanks for our assistance in some very courtly phrases, and requested us to allow him to make our acquaintance. We exchanged cards and departed on our several ways.

"I have met that gentleman before," said Tarleton. "Let us see what

name he pretends to. 'Fielding--Fielding;' ah, by the Lord, it is no less a person! It is the great Fielding himself."

"Is Mr. Fielding, then, as elevated in fame as in stature?"

"What, is it possible that you have not yet heard of Beau Fielding, who bared his bosom at the theatre in order to attract the admiring compassion of the female part of the audience?"

"What!" I cried, "the Duchess of Cleveland's Fielding?"

"The same; the best-looking fellow of his day! A sketch of his history is in the 'Tatler,' under the name of 'Orlando the Fair.' He is terribly fallen as to fortune since the day when he drove about in a car like a sea-shell, with a dozen tall fellows, in the Austrian livery, black and yellow, running before and behind him. You know he claims relationship to the house of Hapsburg. As for the present, he writes poems, makes love, is still good-natured, humorous, and odd; is rather unhappily addicted to wine and borrowing, and rigidly keeps that oath of the Carthusians which never suffers them to carry any money about them."

"An acquaintance more likely to yield amusement than profit."

"Exactly so. He will favour you with a visit--to-morrow, perhaps, and you will remember his propensities."

"Ah! who ever forgets a warning that relates to his purse!"

"True!" said Tarleton, sighing. "Alas! my guinea, thou and I have parted company forever! /vale, vale, inquit lolas/!"

CHAPTER V.

THE BEAU IN HIS DEN, AND A PHILOSOPHER DISCOVERED.

MR. FIELDING having twice favoured me with visits, which found me from home, I thought it right to pay my respects to him; accordingly one morning I repaired to his abode. It was situated in a street which had been excessively the mode some thirty years back; and the house still exhibited a stately and somewhat ostentatious exterior. I observed a considerable cluster of infantine ragamuffins collected round the door, and no sooner did the portal open to my summons than they pressed forward in a manner infinitely more zealous than respectful. A servant in the Austrian livery, with a broad belt round his middle, officiated as porter. "Look, look!" cried one of the youthful gazers, "look at the Beau's /keeper/!" This imputation on his own respectability and that of his master, the domestic seemed by no means to relish; for, muttering some maledictory menace, which I at first took to be German, but which I afterwards found to be Irish, he banged the door in the faces of the intrusive impertinents, and said, in an accent which suited very ill with his Continental attire,--

"And is it my master you're wanting, Sir?"

"It is."

"And you would be after seeing him immediately?"

"Rightly conjectured, my sagacious friend."

"Fait then, your honour, my master's in bed with a terrible fit of the megrims."

"Then you will favour me by giving this card to your master, and expressing my sorrow at his indisposition."

Upon this the orange-coloured lacquey, very quietly reading the address on the card, and spelling letter by letter in an audible mutter, rejoined,

"C--o--u (cou) n--t (unt) Count, D--e--v. Och, by my shoul, and it's Count Devereux after all I'm thinking?"

"You think with equal profundity and truth."

"You may well say that, your honour. Stip in a bit: I'll tell my master; it is himself that will see you in a twinkling!"

"But you forget that your master is ill?" said I.

"Sorrow a bit for the matter o' that: my master is never ill to a jontleman."

And with this assurance "the Beau's keeper" ushered me up a splendid staircase into a large, dreary, faded apartment, and left me to amuse myself with the curiosities within, while he went to perform a cure upon his master's "megrims." The chamber, suiting with the house and the owner, looked like a place in the other world set apart for the reception of the ghosts of departed furniture. The hangings were wan and colourless; the chairs and sofas were most spiritually unsubstantial; the mirrors reflected all things in a sepulchral sea-green; even a huge picture of Mr. Fielding himself, placed over the chimney-piece, seemed like the apparition of a portrait, so dim, watery, and indistinct had it been rendered by neglect and damp. On a huge tomb-like table in the middle of the room, lay two pencilled profiles of Mr. Fielding, a pawnbroker's ticket, a pair of ruffles, a very little muff, an immense broadsword, a Wycherley comb, a jackboot, and an old plumed hat; to these were added a cracked pomatum-pot containing ink, and a scrap of paper, ornamented with sundry paintings of hearts and torches, on which were scrawled several lines in a hand so large and round that I could not avoid seeing the first verse, though I turned away my eyes as quickly as possible; that verse, to the best of my memory, ran thus: "Say, lovely Lesbia, when thy swain." Upon the ground lay a box of patches, a periwig, and two or three well thumbed books of songs. Such was the reception-room of Beau Fielding, one indifferently well calculated to exhibit the propensities of a man, half bully, half fribble; a poet, a fop, a fighter, a beauty, a walking museum of all odd humours, and a living shadow of a past renown. "There are changes in wit as in fashion," said Sir William Temple, and he proceeds to instance a nobleman who was the greatest wit of the court of Charles I., and the greatest dullard in that of Charles II.* But Heavens! how awful are the revolutions of coxcomby! what a change from Beau Fielding the Beauty, to Beau Fielding the Oddity!

* The Earl of Norwich.

After I had remained in this apartment about ten minutes, the great man made his appearance. He was attired in a dressing-gown of the most gorgeous material and colour, but so old that it was difficult to conceive any period of past time which it might not have been supposed to have witnessed; a little velvet cap, with a tarnished gold tassel, surmounted his head, and his nether limbs were sheathed in a pair of military boots. In person he still retained the trace of that extraordinary symmetry he had once possessed, and his features were yet handsome, though the complexion had grown coarse and florid, and the expression had settled into a broad, hardy, farcical mixture of effrontery, humour, and conceit.

But how different his costume from that of old! Where was the long wig with its myriad curls? the coat stiff with golden lace? the diamond buttons,--"the pomp, pride, and circumstance of glorious war?" the glorious war Beau Fielding had carried on throughout the female world,--finding in every saloon a Blenheim, in every play-house a Ramilies? Alas! to what abyss of fate will not the love of notoriety bring men! to what but the lust of show do we owe the misanthropy of Timon, or the ruin of Beau Fielding!

"By the Lord!" cried Mr. Fielding, approaching, and shaking me familiarly by the hand, "by the Lord, I am delighted to see thee! As I am a soldier, I thought thou wert a spirit, invisible and incorporeal; and as long as I was in that belief I trembled for thy salvation, for I knew at least that thou wert not a spirit of Heaven, since thy door is the very reverse of the doors above, which we are assured shall be opened unto our knocking. But thou art early, Count; like the ghost in "Hamlet," thou snuffest the morning air. Wilt thou not keep out the rank atmosphere by a pint of wine and a toast?"

"Many thanks to you, Mr. Fielding; but I have at least one property of a ghost, and don't drink after daybreak."

"Nay, now, 'tis a bad rule! a villanous bad rule, fit /only for/ ghosts and graybeards. We youngsters, Count, should have a more generous policy. Come, now, where didst thou drink last night? has the bottle bequeathed thee a qualm or a headache, which preaches repentance and abstinence this morning?"

"No, but I visit my mistress this morning; would you have me smell of strong potations, and seem a worshipper of the '/Glass/ of Fashion,' rather than of 'the Mould of Form'? Confess, Mr. Fielding, that the women love not an early tippler, and that they expect sober and sweet kisses from a pair 'of youngsters' like us."

"By the Lord," cried Mr. Fielding, stroking down his comely stomach, "there is a great show of reason in thy excuses, but only the show, not substance, my noble Count. You know me, you know my experience with the women: I would not boast, as I'm a soldier; but 'tis something! nine hundred and fifty locks of hair have I got in my strong box, under padlock and key; fifty within the last week,--true, on my soul,--so that I may pretend to know a little of the dear creatures; well, I give thee my honour, Count, that they like a royster; they love a fellow who can carry his six bottles under a silken doublet; there's vigour and manhood in it; and, then, too, what a power of toasts can a six-bottle man drink to his mistress! Oh, 'tis your only chivalry now,--your modern

substitute for tilt and tournament; true, Count, as I am a soldier!"

"I fear my Dulcinea differs from the herd, then; for she quarrelled with me for supping with St. John three nights ago, and--"

"St. John," interrupted Fielding, cutting me off in the beginning of a witticism, "St. John, famous fellow, is he not? By the Lord, we will drink to his administration, you in chocolate, I in Madeira. O'Carroll, you dog,--O'Carroll--rogue--rascal--ass--dolt!"

"The same, your honour," said the orange-coloured lacquey, thrusting in his lean visage.

"Ay, the same indeed, thou anatomized son of Saint Patrick; why dost thou not get fat? Thou shamest my good living, and thy belly is a rascally minister to thee, devouring all things for itself, without fattening a single member of the body corporate. Look at /me/, you dog, am // thin? Go and get fat, or I will discharge thee: by the Lord I will! the sun shines through thee like an empty wineglass."

"And is it upon your honour's lavings you would have me get fat?" rejoined Mr. O'Carroll, with an air of deferential inquiry.

"Now, as I live, thou art the impudentest varlet!" cried Mr. Fielding, stamping his foot on the floor, with an angry frown.

"And is it for talking of your honour's lavings? an' sure that's /nothing/ at all, at all," said the valet, twirling his thumbs with exostulating innocence.

"Begone, rascal!" said Mr. Fielding, "begone; go to the Salop, and bring us a pint of Madeira, a toast, and a dish of chocolate."

"Yes, your honour, in a twinkling," said the valet, disappearing.

"A sorry fellow," said Mr. Fielding, "but honest and faithful, and loves me as well as a saint loves gold; 'tis his love makes him familiar."

Here the door was again opened, and the sharp face of Mr. O'Carroll again intruded.

"How now, sirrah!" exclaimed his master.

Mr. O'Carroll, without answering by voice, gave a grotesque sort of signal between a wink and a beckon. Mr. Fielding rose muttering an oath, and underwent a whisper. "By the Lord," cried he, seemingly in a furious passion, "and thou hast not got the bill cashed yet, though I told thee twice to have it done last evening? Have I not my debts of honour to discharge, and did I not give the last guinea I had about me for a walking cane yesterday? Go down to the city immediately, sirrah, and bring me the change."

The valet again whispered.

"Ah," resumed Fielding, "ah--so far, you say, 'tis true; 'tis a great way, and perhaps the Count can't wait till you return. Prithee (turning to me), prithee now, is it not vexatious,--no change about me, and my fool has not cashed a trifling bill I have, for a thousand or so, on

Messrs. Child! and the cursed Salop puts not its /trust/ even in princes; 'tis its way; 'Gad now, you have not a guinea about you?"

What could I say? My guinea joined Tarleton's, in a visit to that bourne whence no /such/ traveller e'er returned.

Mr. O'Carroll now vanished in earnest, the wine and the chocolate soon appeared. Mr. Fielding brightened up, recited his poetry, blessed his good fortune, promised to call on me in a day or two; and assured me, with a round oath, that the next time he had the honour of seeing me, he would treat me with another pint of Madeira, exactly of the same sort.

I remember well that it was the evening of the same day in which I had paid this visit to the redoubted Mr. Fielding, that, on returning from a drum at Lady Hasselton's, I entered my anteroom with so silent a step, that I did not arouse even the keen senses of Monsieur Desmarais. He was seated by the fire, with his head supported by his hands, and intently poring over a huge folio. I had often observed that he possessed a literary turn, and all the hours in which he was unemployed by me he was wont to occupy with books. I felt now, as I stood still and contemplated his absorbed attention in the contents of the book before him, a strong curiosity to know the nature of his studies; and so little did my taste second the routine of trifles in which I had been lately engaged, that in looking upon the earnest features of the man on which the solitary light streamed calm and full; and impressed with the deep quiet and solitude of the chamber, together with the undisturbed sanctity of comfort presiding over the small, bright hearth, and contrasting what I saw with the brilliant scene--brilliant with gaudy, wearing, wearisome frivolities--which I had just quitted, a sensation of envy at the enjoyments of my dependant entered my breast, accompanied with a sentiment resembling humiliation at the nature of my own pursuits. I am generally thought a proud man; but I am never proud to my inferiors; nor can I imagine pride where there is no competition. I approached Desmarais, and said, in French,--

"How is this? why did you not, like your fellows, take advantage of my absence to pursue your own amusements? They must be dull indeed if they do not hold out to you more tempting inducements than that colossal offspring of the press."

"Pardon me, Sir," said Desmarais, very respectfully, and closing the book, "pardon me, I was not aware of your return. Will Monsieur doff his cloak?"

"No; shut the door, wheel round that chair, and favour me with a sight of your book."

"Monsieur will be angry, I fear," said the valet (obeying the first two orders, but hesitating about the third), "with my course of reading: I confess it is not very compatible with my station."

"Ah, some long romance, the 'Clelia,' I suppose,--nay, bring it hither; that is to say, if it be movable by the strength of a single man."

Thus urged, Desmarais modestly brought me the book. Judge of my surprise when I found it was a volume of Leibnitz, a philosopher then very much the rage,--because one might talk of him very safely, without having read him.* Despite of my surprise, I could not help smiling when my eye turned from the book to the student. It is impossible to

conceive an appearance less like a philosopher's than that of Jean Desmarais. His wig was of a nicety that would not have brooked the irregularity of a single hair; his dress was not preposterous, for I do not remember, among gentles or valets, a more really exquisite taste than that of Desmarais; but it evinced, in every particular, the arts of the toilet. A perpetual smile sat upon his lips,--sometimes it deepened into a sneer, but that was the only change it ever experienced; an irresistible air of self-conceit gave piquancy to his long, marked features, small glittering eye, and withered cheeks, on which a delicate and soft bloom excited suspicion of artificial embellishment. A very fit frame of body this for a valet; but I humbly opine a very unseemly one for a student of Leibnitz.

* Which is possibly the reason why there are so many disciples of Kant at the present moment.--ED.

"And what," said I, after a short pause, "is your opinion of this philosopher? I understand that he has just written a work* above all praise and comprehension."

* The "Theodicaea."

"It is true, Monsieur, that it is above his own understanding. He knows not what sly conclusions may be drawn from his premises; but I beg Monsieur's pardon, I shall be tedious and intrusive."

"Not a whit! speak out, and at length. So you conceive that Leibnitz makes ropes which /others/ will make into ladders?"

"Exactly so," said Desmarais; "all his arguments go to swell the sails of the great philosophical truth,--'Necessity!' We are the things and toys of Fate, and its everlasting chain compels even the Power that creates as well as the things created."

"Ha!" said I, who, though little versed at that time in these metaphysical subtleties, had heard St. John often speak of the strange doctrine to which Desmarais referred, "you are, then, a believer in the fatalism of Spinoza?"

"No, Monsieur," said Desmarais, with a complacent smile, "my system is my own: it is composed of the thoughts of others; but my thoughts are the cords which bind the various sticks into a fagot."

"Well," said I, smiling at the man's conceited air, "and what is your main dogma?"

"Our utter impotence."

"Pleasing! Mean you that we have no free will?"

"None."

"Why, then, you take away the very existence of vice and virtue; and, according to you, we sin or act well, not from our own accord, but because we are compelled and preordained to it."

Desmarais' smile withered into the grim sneer with which, as I have said, it was sometimes varied.

"Monsieur's penetration is extreme; but shall I not prepare his nightly draught?"

"No; answer me at length; and tell me the difference between good and ill, if we are compelled by Necessity to either."

Desmarais hemmed, and began. Despite of his caution, the coxcomb loved to hear himself talk, and he talked, therefore, to the following purpose:

"Liberty is a thing impossible! Can you /will/ a single action, however simple, independent of your organization,--independent of the organization of others,--independent of the order of things past,--independent of the order of things to come? You cannot. But if not independent, you are dependent; if dependent, where is your liberty? where your freedom of will? Education disposes our characters: can you control your own education, begun at the hour of birth? You cannot. Our character, joined to the conduct of others, disposes of our happiness, our sorrow, our crime, our virtue. Can you control your character? We have already seen that you cannot. Can you control the conduct of others,--others perhaps whom you have never seen, but who may ruin you at a word; a despot, for instance, or a warrior? You cannot. What remains? that if we cannot choose our characters, nor our fates, we cannot be accountable for either. If you are a good man, you are a lucky man; but you are not to be praised for what you could not help. If you are a bad man, you are an unfortunate one; but you are not to be execrated for what you could not prevent."*

* Whatever pretensions Monsieur Desmarais may have had to originality, this tissue of opinions is as old as philosophy itself.--ED.

"Then, most wise Desmarais, if you steal this diamond loop from my hat, you are only an unlucky man, not a guilty one, and worthy of my sympathy, not anger?"

"Exactly so; but you must hang me for it. You cannot control events, but you can modify man. Education, law, adversity, prosperity, correction, praise, modify him,--without his choice, and sometimes without his perception. But once acknowledge Necessity, and evil passions cease; you may punish, you may destroy others, if for the safety and good of the commonwealth; but motives for doing so cease to be private: you can have no personal hatred to men for committing actions which they were irresistibly compelled to commit."

I felt that, however I might listen to and dislike these sentiments, it would not do for the master to argue with the domestic, especially when there was a chance that he might have the worst of it. And so I was suddenly seized with a fit of sleepiness, which broke off our conversation. Meanwhile I inly resolved, in my own mind, to take the first opportunity of discharging a valet who saw no difference between good and evil, but that of luck; and who, by the irresistible compulsion of Necessity, might some day or other have the involuntary misfortune to cut the throat of his master!

I did not, however, carry this unphilosophical resolution into effect. Indeed, the rogue, doubting perhaps the nature of the impression he had made on me, redoubled so zealously his efforts to please me in the science of his profession that I could not determine upon relinquishing such a treasure for a speculative opinion, and I was too much accustomed to laugh at my Sosia to believe there could be any reason to fear him.

CHAPTER VI.

A UNIVERSAL GENIUS.--PERICLES TURNED BARBER.--NAMES OF BEAUTIES IN 171.--THE TOASTS OF THE KIT-CAT CLUB.

As I was riding with Tarleton towards Chelsea, one day, he asked me if I had ever seen the celebrated Mr. Salter. "No," said I, "but I heard Steele talk of him the other night at Wills's. He is an antiquarian and a barber, is he not?"

"Yes, a shaving virtuoso; really a comical and strange character, and has oddities enough to compensate one for the debasement of talking with a man in his rank."

"Let us go to him forthwith," said I, spurring my horse into a canter.

"/Quod petis hic est/," cried Tarleton, "there is his house." And my companion pointed to a coffee-house.

"What!" said I, "does he draw wine as well as teeth?"

"To be sure: Don Saltero is a universal genius. Let us dismount."

Consigning our horses to the care of our grooms, we marched into the strangest-looking place I ever had the good fortune to behold. A long narrow coffee-room was furnished with all manner of things that, belonging neither to heaven, earth, nor the water under the earth, the redoubted Saltero might well worship without incurring the crime of idolatry. The first thing that greeted my eyes was a bull's head, with a most ferocious pair of vulture's wings on its neck. While I was surveying this, I felt something touch my hat; I looked up and discovered an immense alligator swinging from the ceiling, and fixing a monstrous pair of glass eyes upon me. A thing which seemed to me like an immense shoe, upon a nearer approach expanded itself into an Indian canoe; and a most hideous spectre with mummy skin, and glittering teeth, that made my blood run cold, was labelled, "Beautiful specimen of a Calmuc Tartar."

While lost in wonder, I stood in the middle of the apartment, up walks a little man as lean as a miser, and says to me, rubbing his hands,--

"Wonderful, Sir, is it not?"

"Wonderful, indeed, Don!" said Tarleton; "you look like a Chinese Adam surrounded by a Japanese creation."

"He, he, he, Sir, you have so pleasant a vein," said the little Don, in a sharp shrill voice. "But it has been all done, Sir, by one man; all of it collected by me, simple as I stand."

"Simple, indeed," quoth Tarleton; "and how gets on the fiddle?"

"Bravely, Sir, bravely; shall I play you a tune?"

"No, no, my good Don; another time."

"Nay, Sir, nay," cried the antiquarian, "suffer me to welcome your arrival properly."

And, forthwith disappearing, he returned in an instant with a marvellously ill-favoured old fiddle. Throwing a /penseroso/ air into his thin cheeks, our Don then began a few preliminary thrummings, which set my teeth on edge, and made Tarleton put both hands to his ears. Three sober-looking citizens, who had just sat themselves down to pipes and the journal, started to their feet like so many pieces of clockwork; but no sooner had Don Saltero, with a /degage/ air of graceful melancholy, actually launched into what he was pleased to term a tune, than a universal irritation of nerves seized the whole company. At the first overture, the three citizens swore and cursed, at the second division of the tune, they seized their hats, at the third they vanished. As for me, I found all my limbs twitching as if they were dancing to St. Vitus's music; the very drawers disappeared; the alligator itself twirled round, as if revived by so harsh an experiment on the nervous system; and I verily believe the whole museum, bull, wings, Indian canoe, and Calmuc Tartar, would have been set into motion by this new Orpheus, had not Tarleton, in a paroxysm of rage, seized him by the tail of the coat, and whirled him round, fiddle and all, with such velocity that the poor musician lost his equilibrium, and falling against a row of Chinese monsters, brought the whole set to the ground, where he lay covered by the wrecks that accompanied his overthrow, screaming and struggling, and grasping his fiddle, which every now and then, touched involuntarily by his fingers, uttered a dismal squeak, as if sympathizing in the disaster it had caused, until the drawer ran in, and, raising the unhappy antiquarian, placed him on a great chair.

"O Lord!" groaned Don Saltero, "O Lord! my monsters--my monsters--the pagoda--the mandarin, and the idol where are they?--broken--ruined--annihilated!"

"No, Sir; all safe, Sir," said the drawer, a smart, small, smug, pert man; "put 'em down in the bill, nevertheless, Sir. Is it Alderman Atkins, Sir, or Mr. Higgins?"

"Pooh," said Tarleton, "bring me some lemonade; send the pagoda to the bricklayer, the mandarin to the surgeon, and the idol to the Papist over the way! There's a guinea to pay for their carriage. How are you, Don?"

"Oh, Mr. Tarleton, Mr. Tarleton! how could you be so cruel?"

"The nature of things demanded it, my good Don. Did I not call you a Chinese Adam? and how could you bear that name without undergoing the fall?"

"Oh, Sir, this is no jesting matter,--broke the railing of my pagoda, bruised my arm, cracked my fiddle, and cut me off in the middle of that beautiful air!--no jesting matter."

"Come, Mr. Salter," said I, "'tis very true! but cheer up. 'The gods,' says Seneca, 'look with pleasure on a great man falling with the statesmen, the temples, and the divinities of his country;' all of which, mandarin, pagoda, and idol, accompanied /your/ fall. Let us have a bottle of your best wine, and the honour of your company to drink it."

"No, Count, no," said Tarleton, haughtily; "we can drink not with the Don; but we'll have the wine, and he shall drink it. Meanwhile, Don, tell us what possible combination of circumstances made thee fiddler, barber, anatomist, and virtuoso!"

Don Saltero loved fiddling better than anything in the world, but next to fiddling he loved talking. So being satisfied that he should be reimbursed for his pagoda, and fortifying himself with a glass or two of his own wine, he yielded to Tarleton's desire, and told us his history. I believe it was very entertaining to the good barber, but Tarleton and I saw nothing extraordinary in it; and long before it was over, we wished him an excellent good day, and a new race of Chinese monsters.

That evening we were engaged at the Kit-Cat Club, for though I was opposed to the politics of its members, they admitted me on account of my literary pretensions. Halifax was there, and I commended the poet to his protection. We were very gay, and Halifax favoured us with three new toasts by himself. O Venus! what beauties we made, and what characters we murdered! Never was there so important a synod to the female world as the gods of the Kit-Cat Club. Alas! I am writing for the children of an after age, to whom the very names of those who made the blood of their ancestors leap within their veins will be unknown. What cheek will colour at the name of Carlisle? What hand will tremble as it touches the paper inscribed by that of Brudenel? The graceful Godolphin, the sparkling enchantment of Harper, the divine voice of Claverine, the gentle and bashful Bridgewater, the damask cheek and ruby lips of the Hebe Manchester,—what will these be to the race for whom alone these pages are penned? This history is a union of strange contrasts! like the tree of the Sun, described by Marco Polo, which was green when approached on one side, but white when perceived on the other: to me it is clothed in the verdure and spring of the existing time; to the reader it comes covered with the hoariness and wanness of the Past!

CHAPTER VII.

A DIALOGUE OF SENTIMENT SUCCEEDED BY THE SKETCH OF A CHARACTER, IN WHOSE EYES SENTIMENT WAS TO WISE MEN WHAT RELIGION IS TO FOOLS; NAMELY, A SUBJECT OF RIDICULE.

ST. JOHN was now in power, and in the full flush of his many ambitious and restless schemes. I saw as much of him as the high rank he held in the state, and the consequent business with which he was oppressed, would suffer me,—me, who was prevented by religion from actively embracing any political party, and who, therefore, though inclined to Toryism, associated pretty equally with all. St. John and myself formed a great friendship for each other, a friendship which no after change or chance could efface, but which exists, strengthened and mellowed by time, at the very hour in which I write.

One evening he sent to tell me he should be alone, if I would sup with him; accordingly I repaired to his house. He was walking up and down the room with uneven and rapid steps, and his countenance was flushed with an expression of joy and triumph, very rare to the thoughtful and earnest calm which it usually wore. "Congratulate me, Devereux," said he, seizing me eagerly by the hand, "congratulate me!"

"For what?"

"Ay, true: you are not yet a politician; you cannot yet tell how dear--how inexpressibly dear to a politician--is a momentary and petty victory,--but--if I were Prime Minister of this country, what would you say?"

"That you could bear the duty better than any man living; but remember Harley is in the way."

"Ah, there's the rub," said St. John, slowly, and the expression of his face again changed from triumph to thoughtfulness; "but this is a subject not to your taste: let us choose another." And flinging himself into a chair, this singular man, who prided himself on suiting his conversation to every one, began conversing with me upon the lighter topics of the day; these we soon exhausted, and at last we settled upon that of love and women.

"I own," said I, "that, in this respect, pleasure has disappointed as well as wearied me. I have longed for some better object of worship than the trifler of fashion, or the yet more ignoble minion of the senses. I ask a vent for enthusiasm, for devotion, for romance, for a thousand subtle and secret streams of unuttered and unutterable feeling. I often think that I bear within me the desire and the sentiment of poetry, though I enjoy not its faculty of expression; and that that desire and that sentiment, denied legitimate egress, centre and shrink into one absorbing passion,--which is the want of love. Where am I to satisfy this want? I look round these great circles of gayety which we term the world; I send forth my heart as a wanderer over their regions and recesses, and it returns, sated and palled and languid, to myself again."

"You express a common want in every less worldly or more morbid nature," said St. John; "a want which I myself have experienced, and if I had never felt it, I should never, perhaps, have turned to ambition to console or to engross me. But do not flatter yourself that the want will ever be fulfilled. Nature places us alone in this hospitable world, and no heart is cast in a similar mould to that which we bear within us. We pine for sympathy; we make to ourselves a creation of ideal beauties, in which we expect to find it: but the creation has no reality; it is the mind's phantasma which the mind adores; and it is because the phantasma can have no actual being that the mind despairs. Throughout life, from the cradle to the grave, it is no real living thing which we demand; it is the realization of the idea we have formed within us, and which, as we are not gods, we can never call into existence. We are enamoured of the statue ourselves have graven; but, unlike the statue of the Cyprian, it kindles not to our homage nor melts to our embraces."

"I believe you," said I; "but it is hard to undeceive ourselves. The heart is the most credulous of all fanatics, and its ruling passion the most enduring of all superstitions. Oh! what can tear from us, to the

last, the hope, the desire, the yearning for some bosom which, while it mirrors our own, parts not with the reflection! I have read that, in the very hour and instant of our birth, one exactly similar to ourselves, in spirit and form, is born also, and that a secret and unintelligible sympathy preserves that likeness, even through the vicissitudes of fortune and circumstance, until, in the same point of time, the two beings are resolved once more into the elements of earth: confess that there is something welcome, though unfounded in the fancy, and that there are few of the substances of worldly honour which one would not renounce, to possess, in the closest and fondest of all relations, this shadow of ourselves!"

"Alas!" said St. John, "the possession, like all earthly blessings, carries within it its own principle of corruption. The deadliest foe to love is not change nor misfortune nor jealousy nor wrath, nor anything that flows from passion or emanates from fortune; the deadliest foe to it is custom! With custom die away the delusions and the mysteries which encircle it; leaf after leaf, in the green poetry on which its beauty depends, droops and withers, till nothing but the bare and rude trunk is left. With all passion the soul demands something unexpressed, some vague recess to explore or to marvel upon,--some veil upon the mental as well as the corporeal deity. Custom leaves nothing to romance, and often but little to respect. The whole character is bared before us like a plain, and the heart's eye grows wearied with the sameness of the survey. And to weariness succeeds distaste, and to distaste one of the myriad shapes of the Proteus Aversion; so that the passion we would make the rarest of treasures fritters down to a very instance of the commonest of proverbs,--and out of familiarity cometh indeed contempt!"

"And are we, then," said I, "forever to forego the most delicious of our dreams? Are we to consider love as an entire delusion, and to reconcile ourselves to an eternal solitude of heart? What, then, shall fill the crying and unappeasable void of our souls? What shall become of those mighty sources of tenderness which, refused all channel in the rocky soil of the world, must have an outlet elsewhere or stagnate into torpor?"

"Our passions," said St. John, "are restless, and will make each experiment in their power, though vanity be the result of all. Disappointed in love, they yearn towards ambition; /and the object of ambition, unlike that of love, never being wholly possessed, ambition is the more durable passion of the two/. But sooner or later even that and all passions are sated at last; and when wearied of too wide a flight we limit our excursions, and looking round us discover the narrow bounds of our proper end, we grow satisfied with the loss of rapture if we can partake of enjoyment; and the experience which seemed at first so bitterly to betray us becomes our most real benefactor, and ultimately leads us to content. For it is the excess and not the nature of our passions which is perishable. Like the trees which grew by the tomb of Protesilaus, the passions flourish till they reach a certain height, but no sooner is that height attained than they wither away."

Before I could reply, our conversation received an abrupt and complete interruption for the night. The door was thrown open, and a man, pushing aside the servant with a rude and yet a dignified air, entered the room unannounced, and with the most perfect disregard to ceremony--

"How d'ye do, Mr. St. John," said he,--"how d'ye do?--Pretty sort of a

day we've had. Lucky to find you at home,--that is to say if you will give me some broiled oysters and champagne for supper."

"With all my heart, Doctor," said St. John, changing his manner at once from the pensive to an easy and somewhat brusque familiarity,--"with all my heart; but I am glad to hear you are a convert to champagne: you spent a whole evening last week in endeavouring to dissuade me from the sparkling sin."

"Pish! I had suffered the day before from it; so, like a true Old Bailey penitent, I preached up conversion to others, not from a desire of their welfare, but a plaguy sore feeling for my own misfortune. Where did you dine to-day? At home! Oh! the devil! I starved on three courses at the Duke of Ormond's."

"Aha! Honest Matt was there?"

"Yes, to my cost. He borrowed a shilling of me for a chair. Hang this weather, it costs me seven shillings a day for coach-fare, besides my paying the fares of all my poor brother parsons, who come over from Ireland to solicit my patronage for a bishopric, and end by borrowing half-a-crown in the meanwhile. But Matt Prior will pay me again, I suppose, out of the public money?"

"To be sure, if Chloe does not ruin him first."

"Hang the slut: don't talk of her. How Prior rails against his place!* He says the excise spoils his wit, and that the only rhymes he ever dreams of now-a-days are 'docket and cocket.'"

* In the Customs.

"Ha, ha! we must do something better for Matt,--make him a bishop or an ambassador. But pardon me, Count, I have not yet made known to you the most courted, authoritative, impertinent, clever, independent, haughty, delightful, troublesome parson of the age: do homage to Dr. Swift. Doctor, be merciful to my particular friend, Count Devereux."

Drawing himself up, with a manner which contrasted his previous one strongly enough, Dr. Swift saluted me with a dignity which might even be called polished, and which certainly showed that however he might prefer, as his usual demeanour, an air of negligence and semi-rudeness, he had profited sufficiently by his acquaintance with the great to equal them in the external graces, supposed to be peculiar to their order, whenever it suited his inclination. In person Swift is much above the middle height, strongly built, and with a remarkably fine outline of throat and chest; his front face is certainly displeasing, though far from uncomely; but the clear chiselling of the nose, the curved upper lip, the full, round Roman chin, the hanging brow, and the resolute decision, stamped upon the whole expression of the large forehead, and the clear blue eye, make his profile one of the most striking I ever saw. He honoured me, to my great surprise, with a fine speech and a compliment; and then, with a look, which menaced to St. John the retort that ensued, he added: "And I shall always be glad to think that I owe your acquaintance to Mr. Secretary St. John, who, if he talked less about operas and singers,--thought less about Alcibiades and Pericles,--if he never complained of the load of business not being

suited to his temper, at the very moment he had been working, like Gumdragon, to get the said load upon his shoulders; and if he persuaded one of his sincerity being as great as his genius,--would appear to all time as adorned with the choicest gifts that Heaven has yet thought fit to bestow on the children of men. Prithee now, Mr. Sec., when shall we have the oysters? Will you be merry to-night, Count?"

"Certainly; if one may find absolution for the champagne."

"I'll absolve you, with a vengeance, on condition that you'll walk home with me, and protect the poor parson from the Mohawks. Faith, they ran young Davenant's chair through with a sword, t' other night. I hear they have sworn to make daylight through my Tory cassock,--all Whigs you know, Count Devereux, nasty, dangerous animals, how I hate them! they cost me five-and-sixpence a week in chairs to avoid them."

"Never mind, Doctor, I'll send my servants home with you," said St. John.

"Ay, a nice way of mending the matter--that's curing the itch by scratching the skin off. I could not give your tall fellows less than a crown a-piece, and I could buy off the bloodiest Mohawk in the kingdom, if he's a Whig, for half that sum. But, thank Heaven, the supper is ready."

And to supper we went. The oysters and champagne seemed to exhilarate, if it did not refine, the Doctor's wit. St. John was unusually brilliant. I myself caught the infection of their humour, and contributed my quota to the common stock of jest and repartee; and that evening, spent with the two most extraordinary men of the age, had in it more of broad and familiar mirth than any I have ever wasted in the company of the youngest and noisiest disciples of the bowl and its concomitants. Even amidst all the coarse ore of Swift's conversation, the diamond perpetually broke out; his vulgarity was never that of a vulgar mind. Pity that, while he condemned St. John's over affectation of the grace of life, he never perceived that his own affectation of coarseness and brutality was to the full as unworthy of the simplicity of intellect;* and that the aversion to cant, which was the strongest characteristic of his mind, led him into the very faults he despised, only through a more displeasing and offensive road. That same aversion to cant is, by the way, the greatest and most prevalent enemy to the reputation of high and of strong minds; and in judging Swift's character in especial, we should always bear it in recollection. This aversion--the very antipodes to hypocrisy--leads men not only to disclaim the virtues they have, but to pretend to the vices they have not. Foolish trick of disguised vanity! the world, alas, readily believes them! Like Justice Overdo, in the garb of poor Arthur of Bradley, they may deem it a virtue to have assumed the disguise; but they must not wonder if the sham Arthur is taken for the real, beaten as a vagabond, and set in the stocks as a rogue!

* It has been said that Swift was only coarse in his later years, and, with a curious ignorance both of fact and of character, that Pope was the cause of the Dean's grossness of taste. There is no doubt that he grew coarser with age; but there is also no doubt that, graceful and dignified as that great genius could be when he pleased, he affected at a period earlier than the one in which he is now introduced, to be coarse both in speech and manner. I seize upon this opportunity, /mal a

propos/ as it is, to observe that Swift's preference of Harley to St. John is by no means so certain as writers have been pleased generally to assert. Warton has already noted a passage in one of Swift's letters to Bolingbroke, to which I will beg to call the reader's attention.

"It is /you were/ my hero, but the other (Lord Oxford) /never was/; yet if he were, it was your own fault, who taught me to love him, and often vindicated him, in the beginning of your ministry, from my accusations. But I granted he had the greatest inequalities of any man alive; and his whole scene was fifty times more a what-d'ye-call-it than yours; for I declare yours was /unie/, and I wish you would so order it that the world may be as wise as I upon that article."

I have to apologize for introducing this quotation, which I have done because (and I entreat the reader to remember this) I observe that Count Devereux always speaks of Lord Bolingbroke as he was spoken of by the eminent men of that day,--not as he is now rated by the judgment of posterity.--ED.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIGHTLY WON, LIGHTLY LOST.--A DIALOGUE OF EQUAL INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT.--A VISIT TO SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

ONE morning Tarleton breakfasted with me. "I don't see the little page," said he, "who was always in attendance in your anteroom; what the deuce has become of him?"

"You must ask his mistress; she has quarrelled with me, and withdrawn both her favour and her messenger."

"What! the Lady Hasselton quarrelled with you! / Diable! Wherefore?"

"Because I am not enough of the 'pretty fellow;' am tired of carrying hood and scarf, and sitting behind her chair through five long acts of a dull play; because I disappointed her in not searching for her at every drum and quadrille party; because I admired not her monkey; and because I broke a teapot with a toad for a cover."

"And is not that enough?" cried Tarleton. "Heavens! what a black bead-roll of offences; Mrs. Merton would have discarded me for one of them. However, thy account has removed my surprise; I heard her praise thee the other day; now, as long as she loved thee, she always abused thee like a pickpocket."

"Ha! ha! ha!--and what said she in my favour?"

"Why, that you were certainly very handsome, though you were small; that you were certainly a great genius, though every one would not discover it; and that you certainly had the air of high birth, though you were not nearly so well dressed as Beau Tippetly. But /entre nous/, Devereux, I think she hates you, and would play you a trick of spite--revenge is too strong a word--if she could find an opportunity."

"Likely enough, Tarleton; but a coquette's lover is always on his guard; so she will not take me unawares."

"So be it. But tell me, Devereux, who is to be your next mistress, Mrs. Denton or Lady Clancathcart? the world gives them both to you."

"The world is always as generous with what is worthless as the bishop in the fable was with his blessing. However, I promise thee, Tarleton, that I will not interfere with thy claims either upon Mrs. Denton or Lady Clancathcart."

"Nay," said Tarleton, "I will own that you are a very Scipio; but it must be confessed, even by you, satirist as you are, that Lady Clancathcart has a beautiful set of features."

"A handsome face, but so vilely made. She would make a splendid picture if, like the goddess Laverna, she could be painted as a head without a body."

"Ha! ha! ha!--you have a bitter tongue, Count; but Mrs. Denton, what have you to say against her?"

"Nothing; she has no pretensions for me to contradict. She has a green eye and a sharp voice; a mincing gait and a broad foot. What friend of Mrs. Denton would not, therefore, counsel her to a prudent obscurity?"

"She never had but one lover in the world," said Tarleton, "who was old, blind, lame, and poor; she accepted him, and became Mrs. Denton."

"Yes," said I, "she was like the magnet, and received her name from the very first person* sensible of her attraction."

*Magnes.

"Well, you have a shrewd way of saying sweet things," said Tarleton; "but I must own that you rarely or never direct it towards women individually. What makes you break through your ordinary custom?"

"Because I am angry with women collectively; and must pour my spleen through whatever channel presents itself."

"Astonishing," said Tarleton; "I despise women myself. I always did; but you were their most enthusiastic and chivalrous defender a month or two ago. What makes thee change, my Sir Amadis?"

"Disappointment! they weary, vex, disgust me; selfish, frivolous, mean, heartless: out on them! 'tis a disgrace to have their love!"

"O /Ciel!/ What a sensation the news of thy misogyny will cause; the young, gay, rich Count Devereux, whose wit, vivacity, splendour of appearance, in equipage and dress, in the course of one season have thrown all the most established beaux and pretty fellows into the shade; to whom dedications and odes and /billet-doux/ are so much waste paper; who has carried off the most general envy and dislike that any man ever was blest with, since St. John turned politician; what! thou all of a sudden to become a railer against the divine sex that made thee what thou art! Fly, fly, unhappy apostate, or expect the fate of Orpheus, at least!"

"None of your raileries, Tarleton, or I shall speak to you of plebeians

and the /canaille!"

"/Sacre!/ my teeth are on edge already! Oh, the base, base /canaille/, how I loathe them! Nay, Devereux, joking apart, I love you twice as well for your humour. I despise the sex heartily. Indeed, /sub rosa/ be it spoken, there are few things that breathe that I do not despise. Human nature seems to me a most pitiful bundle of rags and scraps, which the gods threw out of Heaven, as the dust and rubbish there."

"A pleasant view of thy species," said I.

"By my soul it is. Contempt is to me a luxury. I would not lose the privilege of loathing for all the objects which fools ever admired. What does old Persius say on the subject?"

""Hoc ridere meum, tam nil, nulla tibi vendo Iliade.""*

* "This privilege of mine, to laugh,--such a nothing as it seems,--I would not barter to thee for an Iliad."

"And yet, Tarleton," said I, "the littlest feeling of all is a delight in contemplating the littleness of other people. Nothing is more contemptible than habitual contempt."

"Prithee, now," answered the haughty aristocrat, "let us not talk of these matters so subtly: leave me my enjoyment without refining upon it. What is your first pursuit for the morning?"

"Why, I have promised my uncle a picture of that invaluable countenance which Lady Hasselton finds so handsome; and I am going to give Kneller my last sitting."

"So, so, I will accompany you; I like the vain old dog; 'tis a pleasure to hear him admire himself so wittily."

"Come, then!" said I, taking up my hat and sword; and, entering Tarleton's carriage, we drove to the painter's abode.

We found him employed in finishing a portrait of Lady Godolphin.

"He, he!" cried he, when he beheld me approach. "By Got, I am glad to see you, Count Tevereux; dis painting is tammed poor work by one's self, widout any one to make /des grands yeux/, and cry, 'Oh, Sir Godfrey Kneller, how fine dis is!'"

"Very true, indeed," said I, "no great man can be expected to waste his talents without his proper reward of praise. But, Heavens, Tarleton, did you ever see anything so wonderful? that hand, that arm, how exquisite! If Apollo turned painter, and borrowed colours from the rainbow and models from the goddesses, he would not be fit to hold the pallet to Sir Godfrey Kneller."

"By Got, Count Tevereux, you are von grand judge of painting," cried the artist, with sparkling eyes, "and I will paint you as von tammed handsome man!"

"Nay, my Apelles, you might as well preserve some likeness."

"Likeness, by Got! I vill make you like and handsome both. By my shoul you make me von Apelles, I vill make you von Alexander!"

"People in general," said Tarleton, gravely, "believe that Alexander had a wry neck, and was a very plain fellow; but no one can know about Alexander like Sir Godfrey Kneller, who has studied military tactics so accurately, and who, if he had taken up the sword instead of the pencil, would have been at least an Alexander himself."

"By Got, Meester Tarleton, you are as goot a judge of de talents for de war as Count Tevereux of de /genie/ for de painting! Meester Tarleton, I vill paint your picture, and I vill make your eyes von goot inch bigger than dey are!"

"Large or small," said I (for Tarleton, who had a haughty custom of contracting his orbs till they were scarce perceptible, was so much offended, that I thought it prudent to cut off his reply), "large or small, Sir Godfrey, Mr. Tarleton's eyes are capable of admiring your genius; why, your painting is like lightning, and one flash of your brush would be sufficient to restore even a blind man to sight."

"It is tammed true," said Sir Godfrey, earnestly; "and it did restore von man to sight once! By my shoul, it did! but sit yourself town, Count Tevereux, and look over your left shoulder--ah, dat is it--and now, praise on, Count Tevereux; de thought of my genius gives you--vat you call it--von animation--von fire, look you--by my shoul, it does!"

And by dint of such moderate panegyric, the worthy Sir Godfrey completed my picture, with equal satisfaction to himself and the original. See what a beautifier is flattery: a few sweet words will send the Count Devereux down to posterity with at least three times as much beauty as he could justly lay claim to.*

* This picture represents the Count in an undress. The face is decidedly, though by no means remarkably, handsome; the nose is aquiline,--the upper lip short and chiselled,--the eyes gray, and the forehead, which is by far the finest feature in the countenance, is peculiarly high, broad, and massive. The mouth has but little beauty; it is severe, caustic, and rather displeasing, from the extreme compression of the lips. The great and prevalent expression of the face is energy. The eye, the brow, the turn of the head, the erect, penetrating aspect,--are all strikingly bold, animated, and even daring. And this expression makes a singular contrast to that in another likeness to the Count, which was taken at a much later period of life. The latter portrait represents him in a foreign uniform, decorated with orders. The peculiar sarcasm of the month is hidden beneath a very long and thick mustachio, of a much darker colour than the hair (for in both portraits, as in Jervas's picture of Lord Bolingbroke, the hair is left undisguised by the odious fashion of the day). Across one cheek there is a slight scar, as of a sabre cut. The whole character of this portrait is widely different from that in the earlier one. Not a trace of the fire, the animation, which were so striking in the physiognomy of the youth of twenty, is discoverable in the calm, sedate, stately, yet somewhat stern expression, which seems immovably spread over the paler hue and the more prominent features of the man of about four or five and thirty. Yet, upon the whole, the face in the latter portrait is

handsomer; and, from its air of dignity and reflection, even more impressive than that in the one I have first described.--ED.

CHAPTER IX.

A DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER, AND A LONG LETTER; A CHAPTER, ON THE WHOLE, MORE IMPORTANT THAN IT SEEMS.

THE scenes through which, of late, I have conducted my reader are by no means episodal: they illustrate far more than mere narration the career to which I was so honourably devoted.

Dissipation,--women,--wine,--Tarleton for a friend, Lady Hasselton for a mistress. Let me now throw aside the mask.

To people who have naturally very intense and very acute feelings, nothing is so fretting, so wearing to the heart, as the commonplace affections, which are the properties and offspring of the world. We have seen the birds which, with wings unclipt, children fasten to a stake. The birds seek to fly, and are pulled back before their wings are well spread; till, at last, they either perpetually strain at the end of their short tether, exciting only ridicule by their anguish and their impotent impatience; or, sullen and despondent, they remain on the ground, without any attempt to fly, nor creep, even to the full limit which their fetters will allow. Thus it is with the feelings of the keen, wild nature I speak of: they are either striving forever to pass the little circle of slavery to which they are condemned, and so move laughter by an excess of action and a want of adequate power; or they rest motionless and moody, disdainng the petty indulgence they /might/ enjoy, till sullenness is construed into resignation, and despair seems the apathy of content. Time, however, cures what it does not kill; and both bird and beast, if they pine not to the death at first, grow tame and acquiescent at last.

What to me was the companionship of Tarleton, or the attachment of Lady Hasselton? I had yielded to the one, and I had half eagerly, half scornfully, sought the other. These, and the avocations they brought with them, consumed my time, and of Time murdered there is a ghost which we term /ennui/. The hauntings of this spectre are the especial curse of the higher orders; and hence springs a certain consequence to the passions. Persons in those ranks of society so exposed to /ennui/ are either rendered totally incapable of real love, or they love far more intensely than those in a lower station; for the affections in them are either utterly frittered away on a thousand petty objects (poor shifts to escape the persecuting spectre), or else, early disgusted with the worthlessness of these objects, the heart turns within and languishes for something not found in the daily routine of life. When this is the case, and when the pining of the heart is once satisfied, and the object of love is found, there are two mighty reasons why the love should be most passionately cherished. The first is, the utter indolence in which aristocratic life oozes away, and which allows full food for that meditation which can nurse by sure degrees the weakest desire into the strongest passion; and the second reason is, that the insipidity and hollowness of all patrician pursuits and pleasures render the excitement of love more delicious and more necessary to the "/ignavi terrarum domini/," than it is to those orders of society more usefully, more constantly, and more engrossingly engaged.

Wearied and sated with the pursuit of what was worthless, my heart, at last, exhausted itself in pining for what was pure. I recurred with a tenderness which I struggled with at first, and which in yielding to I blushed to acknowledge, to the memory of Isora. And in the world, surrounded by all which might be supposed to cause me to forget her, my heart clung to her far more endearingly than it had done in the rural solitudes in which she had first allured it. The truth was this; at the time I first loved her, other passions--passions almost equally powerful--shared her empire. Ambition and pleasure--vast whirlpools of thought--had just opened themselves a channel in my mind, and thither the tides of my desires were hurried and lost. Now those whirlpools had lost their power, and the channels, being dammed up, flowed back upon my breast. Pleasure had disgusted me, and the only ambition I had yet courted and pursued had palled upon me still more. I say, the only ambition, for as yet that which is of the loftier and more lasting kind had not afforded me a temptation; and the hope which had borne the name and rank of ambition had been the hope rather to glitter than to rise.

These passions, not yet experienced when I lost Isora, had afforded me at that period a ready comfort and a sure engrossment. And, in satisfying the hasty jealousies of my temper, in deeming Isora unworthy and Gerald my rival, I naturally aroused in my pride a dexterous orator as well as a firm ally. Pride not only strengthened my passions, it also persuaded them by its voice; and it was not till the languid yet deep stillness of sated wishes and palled desires fell upon me, that the low accent of a love still surviving at my heart made itself heard in answer.

I now began to take a different view of Isora's conduct. I now began to doubt where I had formerly believed; and the doubt, first allied to fear, gradually brightened into hope. Of Gerald's rivalry, at least of his identity with Barnard, and, consequently, of his power over Isora, there was, and there could be, no feeling short of certainty. But of what nature was that power? Had not Isora assured me that it was not love? Why should I disbelieve her? Nay, did she not love myself? had not her cheek blushed and her hand trembled when I addressed her? Were these signs the counterfeits of love? Were they not rather of that heart's dye which no skill /can/ counterfeit? She had declared that she could not, that she could never, be mine; she had declared so with a fearful earnestness which seemed to annihilate hope; but had she not also, in the same meeting, confessed that I was dear to her? Had not her lip given me a sweeter and a more eloquent assurance of that confession than words?--and could hope perish while love existed? She had left me,--she had bid me farewell forever; but that was no proof of a want of love, or of her unworthiness. Gerald, or Barnard, evidently possessed an influence over father as well as child. Their departure from ----- might have been occasioned by him, and she might have deplored, while she could not resist it; or she might not even have deplored; nay, she might have desired, she might have advised it, for my sake as well as hers, were she thoroughly convinced that the union of our loves was impossible.

But, then, of what nature could be this mysterious authority which Gerald possessed over her? That which he possessed over the sire, political schemes might account for; but these, surely, could not have much weight for the daughter. This, indeed, must still remain doubtful and unaccounted for. One presumption, that Gerald was either no favoured lover or that he was unacquainted with her retreat, might be

drawn from his continued residence at Devereux Court. If he loved Isora, and knew her present abode, would he not have sought her? Could he, I thought, live away from that bright face, if once allowed to behold it? unless, indeed (terrible thought!) there hung over it the dimness of guilty familiarity, and indifference had been the offspring of possession. But was that delicate and virgin face, where changes with every moment coursed each other, harmonious to the changes of the mind, as shadows in a valley reflect the clouds of heaven!--was that face, so ingenuous, so girlishly revelant of all,--even of the slightest, the most transitory, emotion,--the face of one hardened in deceit and inured to shame? The countenance is, it is true, but a faithless mirror; but what man that has studied women will not own that there is, at least while the down of first youth is not brushed away, in the eye and cheek of zoned and untainted Innocence, that which survives not even the fruition of a lawful love, and has no (nay, not even a shadowed and imperfect) likeness in the face of guilt? Then, too, had any worldlier or mercenary sentiment entered her breast respecting me, would Isora have flown from the suit of the eldest scion of the rich house of Devereux? and would she, poor and destitute, the daughter of an alien and an exile, would she have spontaneously relinquished any hope of obtaining that alliance which maidens of the loftiest houses of England had not disdained to desire? Thus confused and incoherent, but thus yearning fondly towards her image and its imagined purity, did my thoughts daily and hourly array themselves; and, in proportion as I suffered common ties to drop from me one by one, those thoughts clung the more tenderly to that which, though severed from the rich argosy of former love, was still indissolubly attached to the anchor of its hope.

It was during this period of revived affection that I received the following letter from my uncle:--

I thank thee for thy long letter, my dear boy; I read it over three times with great delight. Ods fish, Morton, you are a sad Pickle, I fear, and seem to know all the ways of the town as well as your old uncle did some thirty years ago! 'Tis a very pretty acquaintance with human nature that your letters display. You put me in mind of little Sid, who was just about your height, and who had just such a pretty, shrewd way of expressing himself in simile and point. Ah, it is easy to see that you have profited by your old uncle's conversation, and that Farquhar and Etherege were not studied for nothing.

But I have sad news for thee, my child, or rather it is sad for me to tell thee my tidings. It is sad for the old birds to linger in their nest when the young ones take wing and leave them; but it is merry for the young birds to get away from the dull old tree, and frisk it in the sunshine,--merry for them to get mates, and have young themselves. Now, do not think, Morton, that by speaking of mates and young I am going to tell thee thy brothers are already married; nay, there is time enough for those things, and I am not friendly to early weddings, nor to speak truly, a marvellous great admirer of that holy ceremony at any age; for the which there may be private reasons too long to relate to thee now. Moreover, I fear my young day was a wicked time,--a heinous wicked time, and we were wont to laugh at the wedded state, until, body of me, some of us found it no laughing matter.

But to return, Morton,--to return to thy brothers: they have both left me; and the house seems to me not the good old house it did when ye were all about me; and, somehow or other, I look now oftener at the

churchyard than I was wont to do. You are all gone now,--all shot up and become men; and when your old uncle sees you no more, and recollects that all his own contemporaries are out of the world, he cannot help saying, as William Temple, poor fellow, once prettily enough said, "Methinks it seems an impertinence in me to be still alive." You went first, Morton; and I missed you more than I cared to say: but you were always a kind boy to those you loved, and you wrote the old knight merry letters, that made him laugh, and think he was grown young again (faith, boy, that was a jolly story of the three Squires at Button's!), and once a week comes your packet, well filled, as if you did not think it a task to make me happy, which your handwriting always does; nor a shame to my gray hairs that I take pleasure in the same things that please thee! So, thou seest, my child, that I have got through thy absence pretty well, save that I have had no one to read thy letters to; for Gerald and thou are still jealous of each other,--a great sin in thee, Morton, which I prithee to reform. And Aubrey, poor lad, is a little too rigid, considering his years, and it looks not well in the dear boy to shake his head at the follies of his uncle. And as to thy mother, Morton, I read her one of thy letters, and she said thou wert a graceless reprobate to think so much of this wicked world, and to write so familiarly to thine aged relative. Now, I am not a young man, Morton; but the word aged has a sharp sound with it when it comes from a lady's mouth.

Well, after thou hadst been gone a month, Aubrey and Gerald, as I wrote thee word long since, in the last letter I wrote thee with my own hand, made a tour together for a little while, and that was a hard stroke on me. But after a week or two Gerald returned; and I went out in my chair to see the dear boy shoot,--'sdeath, Morton, he handles the gun well. And then Aubrey returned alone: but he looked pined and moping, and shut himself up, and as thou dost love him so, I did not like to tell thee till now, when he is quite well, that he alarmed me much for him; he is too much addicted to his devotions, poor child, and seems to forget that the hope of the next world ought to make us happy in this. Well, Morton, at last, two months ago, Aubrey left us again, and Gerald last week set off on a tour through the sister kingdom, as it is called. Faith, boy, if Scotland and England are sister kingdoms, 'tis a thousand pities for Scotland that they are not co-heiresses!

I should have told thee of this news before, but I have had, as thou knowest, the gout so villanously in my hand that, till t' other day, I have not held a pen, and old Nicholls, my amanuensis, is but a poor scribe; and I did not love to let the dog write to thee on all our family affairs, especially as I have a secret to tell thee which makes me plaguy uneasy. Thou must know, Morton, that after thy departure Gerald asked me for thy rooms; and though I did not like that any one else should have what belonged to thee, yet I have always had a foolish antipathy to say "No!" so thy brother had them, on condition to leave them exactly as they were, and to yield them to thee whenever thou shouldst return to claim them. Well, Morton, when Gerald went on his tour with thy youngest brother, old Nicholls--you know 'tis a garrulous fellow--told me one night that his son Hugh--you remember Hugh, a thin youth and a tall--lingering by the beach one evening, saw a man, wrapped in a cloak, come out of the castle cave, unmoor one of the boats, and push off to the little island opposite. Hugh swears by more than yea and nay that the man was Father Montreuil. Now, Morton, this made me very uneasy, and I saw why thy brother Gerald wanted thy rooms, which communicate so snugly with the sea. So I told Nicholls, slyly, to have the great iron gate at the mouth of the passage carefully locked; and

when it was locked, I had an iron plate put over the whole lock, that the lean Jesuit might not creep even through the keyhole. Thy brother returned, and I told him a tale of the smugglers, who have really been too daring of late, and insisted on the door being left as I had ordered; and I told him, moreover, though not as if I had suspected his communication with the priest, that I interdicted all further converse with that limb of the Church. Thy brother heard me with an indifferently bad grace; but I was peremptory, and the thing was agreed on.

Well, child, the day before Gerald last left us, I went to take leave of him in his own room,--to tell thee the truth, I had forgotten his travelling expenses; when I was on the stairs of the tower I heard--by the Lord I did--Montreuil's voice in the outer room, as plainly as ever I heard it at prayers. Ods fish, Morton, I was an angered, and I made so much haste to the door that my foot slipped by the way: thy brother heard me fall, and came out; but I looked at him as I never looked at thee, Morton, and entered the room. Lo, the priest was not there: I searched both chambers in vain; so I made thy brother lift up the trapdoor, and kindle a lamp, and I searched the room below, and the passage. The priest was invisible. Thou knowest, Morton, that there is only one egress in the passage, and that was locked, as I have said before, so where the devil--the devil indeed--could thy tutor have escaped? He could not have passed me on the stairs without my seeing him; he could not have leaped the window without breaking his neck; he could not have got out of the passage without making himself a current of air. Ods fish, Morton, this thing might puzzle a wiser man, than thine uncle. Gerald affected to be mighty indignant at my suspicions; but, God forgive him, I saw he was playing a part. A man does not write plays, my child, without being keen-sighted in these little intrigues; and, moreover, it is impossible I could have mistaken thy tutor's voice, which, to do it justice, is musical enough, and is the most singular voice I ever heard,--unless little Sid's be excepted.

/A propos/ of little Sid. I remember that in the Mall, when I was walking there alone, three weeks after my marriage, De Grammont and Sid joined me. I was in a melancholic mood ('sdeath, Morton, marriage tames a man as water tames mice!)--"Aha, Sir William," cried Sedley, "thou hast a cloud on thee; prithee now brighten it away: see, thy wife shines on thee from the other end of the Mall." "Ah, talk not to a dying man of his physic!" said Grammont (that Grammont was a shocking rogue, Morton!) "Prithee, Sir William, what is the chief characteristic of wedlock? is it a state of war or of peace?" "Oh, peace to be sure!" cried Sedley, "and Sir William and his lady carry with them the emblem." "How!" cried I; for I do assure thee, Morton, I was of a different turn of mind. "How!" said Sid, gravely, "why, the emblem of peace is the /cornucopia/, which your lady and you equitably divide: she carries the /copia/, and you the /cor/--." Nay, Morton, nay, I cannot finish the jest; for, after all, it was a sorry thing in little Sid, whom I had befriended like a brother, with heart and purse, to wound me so cuttingly; but 'tis the way with your jesters.

Ods fish, now how I have got out of my story! Well, I did not go back to my room, Morton, till I had looked to the outside of the iron door, and seen that the plate was as firm as ever: so now you have the whole of the matter. Gerald went the next day, and I fear me much lest he should already be caught in some Jacobite trap. Write me thy advice on the subject. Meanwhile, I have taken the precaution to have the trap-door removed, and the aperture strongly boarded over.

But 'tis time for me to give over. I have been four days on this letter, for the gout comes now to me oftener than it did, and I do not know when I may again write to thee with my own hand; so I resolved I would e'en empty my whole budget at once. Thy mother is well and blooming; she is, at the present, abstractedly employed in a prodigious piece of tapestry which old Nicholls informs me is the wonder of all the women.

Heaven bless thee, my child! Take care of thyself, and drink moderately. It is hurtful, at thy age, to drink above a gallon or so at a sitting. Heaven bless thee again, and when the weather gets warmer, thou must come with thy kind looks, to make me feel at home again. At present the country wears a cheerless face, and everything about us is harsh and frosty, except the blunt, good-for-nothing heart of thine uncle, and that, winter or summer, is always warm to thee.

WILLIAM DEVEREUX.

P. S. I thank thee heartily for the little spaniel of the new breed thou gottest me from the Duchess of Marlborough. It has the prettiest red and white, and the blackest eyes possible. But poor Ponto is as jealous as a wife three years married, and I cannot bear the old hound to be vexed, so I shall transfer the little creature, its rival, to thy mother.

This letter, tolerably characteristic of the blended simplicity, penetration, and overflowing kindness of the writer, occasioned me much anxious thought. There was no doubt in my mind but that Gerald and Montreuil were engaged in some intrigue for the exiled family. The disguised name which the former assumed, the state reasons which D'Alvarez confessed that Barnard, or rather Gerald, had for concealment, and which proved, at least, that some state plot in which Gerald was engaged was known to the Spaniard, joined to those expressions of Montreuil, which did all but own a design for the restoration of the deposed line, and the power which I knew he possessed over Gerald, whose mind, at once bold and facile, would love the adventure of the intrigue, and yield to Montreuil's suggestions on its nature,--these combined circumstances left me in no doubt upon a subject deeply interesting to the honour of our house, and the very life of one of its members. Nothing, however, for me to do, calculated to prevent or impede the designs of Montreuil and the danger of Gerald, occurred to me. Eager alike in my hatred and my love, I said, inly, "What matters it whether one whom the ties of blood never softened towards me, with whom, from my childhood upwards, I have wrestled as with an enemy, what matters it whether he win fame or death in the perilous game he has engaged in?" And turning from this most generous and most brotherly view of the subject, I began only to think whether the search or the society of Isora also influenced Gerald in his absence from home. After a fruitless and inconclusive meditation on that head, my thoughts took a less selfish turn, and dwelt with all the softness of pity, and the anxiety of love, upon the morbid temperament and ascetic devotions of Aubrey. What, for one already so abstracted from the enjoyments of earth, so darkened by superstitious misconceptions of the true nature of God and the true objects of His creatures,--what could be anticipated but wasted powers and a perverted life? Alas! when will men perceive the difference between religion and priestcraft? When will they perceive that reason, so far from extinguishing religion by a more gaudy

light, sheds on it all its lustre? It is fabled that the first legislator of the Peruvians received from the Deity a golden rod, with which in his wanderings he was to strike the earth, until in some destined spot the earth entirely absorbed it, and there--and there alone--was he to erect a temple to the Divinity. What is this fable but the cloak of an inestimable moral? Our reason is the rod of gold; the vast world of truth gives the soil, which it is perpetually to sound; and only where without resistance the soil receives the rod which guided and supported us will our altar be sacred and our worship be accepted.

CHAPTER X.

BEING A SHORT CHAPTER, CONTAINING A MOST IMPORTANT EVENT.

SIR WILLIAM'S letter was still fresh in my mind, when, for want of some less noble quarter wherein to bestow my tediousness, I repaired to St. John. As I crossed the hall to his apartment, two men, just dismissed from his presence, passed me rapidly; one was unknown to me, but there was no mistaking the other,--it was Montreuil. I was greatly startled; the priest, not appearing to notice me, and conversing in a whispered yet seemingly vehement tone with his companion, hurried on and vanished through the street door. I entered St. John's room: he was alone, and received me with his usual gayety.

"Pardon me, Mr. Secretary," said I; "but if not a question of state, do inform me what you know respecting the taller one of those two gentlemen who have just quitted you."

"It is a question of state, my dear Devereux, so my answer must be brief,--very little."

"You know who he is?"

"Yes, a Jesuit, and a marvellously shrewd one: the Abbe Montreuil."

"He was my tutor."

"Ah, so I have heard."

"And your acquaintance with him is positively and /bona fide/ of a state nature?"

"Positively and /bona fide/."

"I could tell you something of him; he is certainly in the service of the Court at St. Germain's, and a terrible plotter on this side the Channel."

"Possibly; but I wish to receive no information respecting him."

One great virtue of business did St. John possess, and I have never known any statesman who possessed it so eminently: it was the discreet distinction between friends of the statesman and friends of the man. Much and intimately as I knew St. John, I could never glean from him a single secret of a state nature, until, indeed, at a later period, I leagued myself to a portion of his public schemes. Accordingly I found him, at the present moment, perfectly impregnable to my inquiries; and

it was not till I knew Montreuil's companion was that celebrated intrigant, the Abbe Gaultier, that I ascertained the exact nature of the priest's business with St. John, and the exact motive of the civilities he had received from Abigail Masham.* Being at last forced, despairingly, to give over the attempt on his discretion, I suffered St. John to turn the conversation upon other topics, and as these were not much to the existent humour of my mind, I soon rose to depart.

* Namely, that Count Devereux ascertained the priest's communications and overtures from the Chevalier. The precise extent of Bolingbroke's secret negotiations with the exiled Prince is still one of the darkest portions of the history of that time. That negotiations /were/ carried on, both by Harley and by St. John, very largely, and very closely, I need not say that there is no doubt.

"Stay, Count," said St. John; "shall you ride to-day?"

"If you will bear me company."

"/Volontiers/,--to say the truth, I was about to ask you to canter your bay horse with me first to Spring Gardens,* where I have a promise to make to the director; and, secondly, on a mission of charity to a poor foreigner of rank and birth, who, in his profound ignorance of this country, thought it right to enter into a plot with some wise heads, and to reveal it to some foolish tongues, who brought it to us with as much clatter as if it were a second gunpowder project. I easily brought him off that scrape, and I am now going to give him a caution for the future. Poor gentleman, I hear that he is grievously distressed in pecuniary matters, and I always had a kindness for exiles. Who knows but that a state of exile may be our own fate! and this alien is sprung from a race as haughty as that of St. John or of Devereux. The /res angusta domi/ must gall him sorely!"

* Vauxhall.

"True," said I, slowly. "What may be the name of the foreigner?"

"Why--complain not hereafter that I do not trust you in state matters--I will indulge--D'Alvarez--Don Diego,--a hidalgo of the best blood of Andalusia; and not unworthy of it, I fancy, in the virtues of fighting, though he may be in those of council. But--Heavens! Devereux--you seem ill!"

"No, no! Have you ever seen this man?"

"Never."

At this word a thrill of joy shot across me, for I knew St. John's fame for gallantry, and I was suspicious of the motives of his visit.

"St. John, I know this Spaniard; I know him well, and intimately. Could you not commission me to do your errand, and deliver your caution? Relief from me he might accept; from you, as a stranger, pride might forbid it; and you would really confer on me a personal and essential kindness, if you would give me so fair an opportunity to confer kindness upon him."

"Very well, I am delighted to oblige you in any way. Take his direction; you see his abode is in a very pitiful suburb. Tell him from me that he is quite safe at present; but tell him also to avoid, henceforth, all imprudence, all connection with priests, plotters, /et tous ces gens-la, as he values his personal safety, or at least his continuance in this most hospitable country. It is not from every wood that we make a Mercury, nor from every brain that we can carve a Mercury's genius of intrigue."

"Nobody ought to be better skilled in the materials requisite for such productions than Mr. Secretary St. John!" said I; "and now, adieu."

"Adieu, if you will not ride with me. We meet at Sir William Wyndham's to-morrow."

Masking my agitation till I was alone, I rejoiced when I found myself in the open streets. I summoned a hackney-coach, and drove as rapidly as the vehicle would permit to the petty and obscure suburb to which St. John had directed me. The coach stopped at the door of a very humble but not absolutely wretched abode. I knocked at the door. A woman opened it, and, in answer to my inquiries, told me that the poor foreign gentleman was very ill,--very ill indeed,--had suffered a paralytic stroke,--not expected to live. His daughter was with him now,--would see no one,--even Mr. Barnard had been denied admission.

At that name my feelings, shocked and stunned at first by the unexpected intelligence of the poor Spaniard's danger, felt a sudden and fierce revulsion. I combated it. "This is no time," I thought, "for any jealous, for any selfish, emotion. If I can serve her, if I can relieve her father, let me be contented."--"She will see me," I said aloud, and I slipped some money in the woman's hand. "I am an old friend of the family, and I shall not be an unwelcome intruder on the sickroom of the sufferer."

"Intruder, sir,--bless you, the poor gentleman is quite speechless and insensible."

At hearing this I could refrain no longer. Isora's disconsolate, solitary, destitute condition broke irresistibly upon me, and all scruple of more delicate and formal nature vanished at once. I ascended the stairs, followed by the old woman--she stopped me by the threshold of a room on the second floor, and whispered "/There!/" I paused an instant,--collected breath and courage, and entered. The room was partially darkened. The curtains were drawn closely around the bed. By a table, on which stood two or three phials of medicine, I beheld Isora, listening with an eager, a /most/ eager and intent face to a man whose garb betrayed his healing profession, and who, laying a finger on the outstretched palm of his other hand, appeared giving his precise instructions, and uttering that oracular breath which--mere human words to him--was a message of fate itself,--a fiat on which hung all that makes life life to his trembling and devout listener. Monarchs of earth, ye have not so supreme a power over woe and happiness as one village leech! As he turned to leave her, she drew from a most slender purse a few petty coins, and I saw that she muttered some words indicative of the shame of poverty, as she tremblingly tended them to the outstretched palm. Twice did that palm close and open on the paltry sum; and the third time the native instinct of the heart overcame the later impulse of the profession. The limb of Galen drew back, and

shaking with a gentle oscillation his capitalian honours, he laid the money softly on the table, and buttoning up the pouch of his nether garment, as if to resist temptation, he pressed the poor hand still extended towards him, and bowing over it with a kind respect for which I did long to approach and kiss his most withered and undainty cheek, he turned quickly round, and almost fell against me in the abstracted hurry of his exit.

"Hush!" said I, softly. "What hope of your patient?"

The leech glanced at me meaningly, and I whispered to him to wait for me below. Isora had not yet seen me. It is a notable distinction in the feelings, that all but the solitary one of grief sharpen into exquisite edge the keenness of the senses, but grief blunts them to a most dull obtuseness. I hesitated now to come forward; and so I stood, hat in hand, by the door, and not knowing that the tears streamed down my cheeks as I fixed my gaze upon Isora. She too stood still, just where the leech had left her, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, and her head drooping. The right hand, which the man had pressed, had sunk slowly and heavily by her side, with the small snowy fingers half closed over the palm. There is no describing the despondency which the listless position of that hand spoke, and the left hand lay with a like indolence of sorrow on the table, with one finger outstretched and pointing towards the phials, just as it had, some moments before, seconded the injunctions of the prim physician. Well, for my part, if I were a painter I would come now and then to a sick chamber for a study.

At last Isora, with a very quiet gesture of self-recovery, moved towards the bed, and the next moment I was by her side. If my life depended on it, I could not write one, no, not /one/ syllable more of this scene.

CHAPTER XI.

CONTAINING MORE THAN ANY OTHER CHAPTER IN THE SECOND BOOK OF THIS HISTORY.

MY first proposal was to remove the patient, with all due care and gentleness, to a better lodging, and a district more convenient for the visits of the most eminent physicians. When I expressed this wish to Isora, she looked at me long and wistfully, and then burst into tears. "/You/ will not deceive us," said she, "and I accept your kindness at once,--from /him/ I rejected the same offer."

"Him?--of whom speak you?--this Barnard, or rather--but I know him!" A startling expression passed over Isora's speaking face.

"Know him!" she cried, interrupting me, "you do not,--you cannot!"

"Take courage, dearest Isora,--if I may so dare to call you,--take courage: it is fearful to have a rival in that quarter; but I am prepared for it. This Barnard, tell me again, do you love him?"

"Love--O God, no!"

"What then? do you still fear him?--fear him, too, protected by the unsleeping eye and the vigilant hand of a love like mine?"

"Yes!" she said falteringly, "I fear for /you/!"

"Me!" I cried, laughing scornfully, "me! nay, dearest, there breathes not that man whom you need fear on /my/ account. But, answer me; is not--"

"For Heaven's sake, for mercy's sake!" cried Isora, eagerly, "do not question me; I may not tell you who, or what this man is; I am bound, by a most solemn oath, never to divulge that secret."

"I care not," said I, calmly, "I want no confirmation of my knowledge: this masked rival is my own brother!"

I fixed my eyes full on Isora while I said this, and she quailed beneath my gaze: her cheek, her lips, were utterly without colour, and an expression of sickening and keen anguish was graven upon her face. She made no answer.

"Yes!" resumed I, bitterly, "it is my brother,--be it so,--I am prepared; but if you can, Isora, say one word to deny it."

Isora's tongue seemed literally to cleave to her mouth; at last with a violent effort, she muttered, "I have told you, Morton, that I am bound by oath not to divulge this secret; nor may I breathe a single syllable calculated to do so,--if I deny one name, you may question me on more,--and, therefore, to deny one is a breach of my oath. But, beware!" she added vehemently, "oh! beware how your suspicions--mere vague, baseless suspicions--criminate a brother; and, above all, whomsoever you believe to be the real being under this disguised name, as you value your life, and therefore mine,--breathe not to him a syllable of your belief."

I was so struck with the energy with which this was said, that, after a short pause, I rejoined, in an altered tone,--

"I cannot believe that I have aught against life to fear from a brother's hand; but I will promise you to guard against latent danger. But is your oath so peremptory that you cannot deny even one name?--if not, and you /can/ deny this, I swear to you that I will never question you upon another."

Again a fierce convulsion wrung the lip and distorted the perfect features of Isora. She remained silent for some moments, and then murmured, "My oath forbids me even that single answer: tempt me no more; now, and forever, I am mute upon this subject."

Perhaps some slight and momentary anger, or doubt, or suspicion, betrayed itself upon my countenance; for Isora, after looking upon me long and mournfully, said, in a quiet but melancholy tone, "I see your thoughts, and I do not reproach you for them--it is natural that you should think ill of one whom this mystery surrounds,--one too placed under such circumstances of humiliation and distrust. I have lived long in your country: I have seen, for the last few months, much of its inhabitants; I have studied too the works which profess to unfold its national and peculiar character: I know that you have a distrust of the people of other climates; I know that you are cautious and full of suspicious vigilance, even in your commerce with each other; I know, too [and Isora's heart swelled visibly as she spoke], that poverty itself, in the eyes of your commercial countrymen, is a crime, and that they

rarely feel confidence or place faith in those who are unhappy;--why, Count Devereux, why should I require more of you than of the rest of your nation? Why should you think better of the penniless and friendless girl, the degraded exile, the victim of doubt,--which is so often the disguise of guilt,--than any other, any one even among my own people, would think of one so mercilessly deprived of all the decent and appropriate barriers by which a maiden should be surrounded? No--no: leave me as you found me; leave my poor father where you see him; any place will do for us to die in."

"Isora!" I said, clasping her in my arms, "you do not know me yet: had I found you in prosperity, and in the world's honour; had I wooed you in your father's halls, and girt around with the friends and kinsmen of your race,--I might have pressed for more than you will now tell me; I might have indulged suspicion where I perceived mystery, and I might not have loved as I love you now! Now, Isora, in misfortune, in destitution, I place without reserve my whole heart--its trust, its zeal, its devotion--in your keeping; come evil or good, storm or sunshine, I am yours, wholly and forever. Reject me if you will, I will return to you again; and never, never--save from my own eyes or your own lips--will I receive a single evidence detracting from your purity, or, Isora,--mine own, own Isora,--may I not add also--from your love?"

"Too, too generous!" murmured Isora, struggling passionately with her tears, "may Heaven forsake me if ever I am ungrateful to thee; and believe--believe, that if love more fond, more true, more devoted than woman ever felt before can repay you, you shall be repaid!"

Why, at that moment, did my heart leap so joyously within me?--why did I say inly,--"The treasure I have so long yearned for is found at last: we have met, and through the waste of years, we will work together, and never part again"? Why, at that moment of bliss, did I not rather feel a foretaste of the coming woe? Oh, blind and capricious Fate, that gives us a presentiment at one while and withholds it at another! Knowledge, and Prudence, and calculating Foresight, what are ye?--warnings unto others, not ourselves. Reason is a lamp which sheddeth afar a glorious and general light, but leaveth all that is around it in darkness and in gloom. We foresee and foretell the destiny of others: we march credulous and benighted to our own; and like Laocoon, from the very altars by which we stand as the soothsayer and the priest, creep forth, unsuspected and undreamt of, the serpents which are fated to destroy us!

That very day, then, Alvarez was removed to a lodging more worthy of his birth, and more calculated to afford hope of his recovery. He bore the removal without any evident signs of fatigue; but his dreadful malady had taken away both speech and sense, and he was already more than half the property of the grave. I sent, however, for the best medical advice which London could afford. They met, prescribed, and left the patient just as they found him. I know not, in the progress of science, what physicians may be to posterity, but in my time they are false witnesses subpoenaed against death, whose testimony always tells less in favour of the plaintiff than the defendant.

Before we left the poor Spaniard's former lodging, and when I was on the point of giving some instructions to the landlady respecting the place to which the few articles of property belonging to Don Diego and Isora were to be moved, Isora made me a sign to be silent, which I obeyed. "Pardon me," said she afterwards; "but I confess that I am anxious our

next residence should not be known,--should not be subject to the intrusion of--of this--"

"Barnard, as you call him. I understand you; be it so!" and accordingly I enjoined the goods to be sent to my own house, whence they were removed to Don Diego's new abode and I took especial care to leave with the good lady no clew to discover Alvarez and his daughter, otherwise than /through me/. The pleasure afforded me of directing Gerald's attention to myself, I could not resist. "Tell Mr. Barnard, when he calls," said I, "that only through Count Morton Devereux will he hear of Don Diego d'Alvarez and the lady his daughter."

"I will, your honour," said the landlady; and then looking at me more attentively, she added: "Bless me! now when you speak, there is a very strong likeness between yourself and Mr. Barnard."

I recoiled as if an adder had stung me, and hurried into the coach to support the patient, who was already placed there.

Now then my daily post was by the bed of disease and suffering: in the chamber of death was my vow of love ratified; and in sadness and in sorrow was it returned. But it is in such scenes that the deepest, the most endearing, and the most holy species of the passion is engendered. As I heard Isora's low voice tremble with the suspense of one who watches over the hourly severing of the affection of Nature and of early years; and as I saw her light step flit by the pillow which she smoothed, and her cheek alternately flush and fade, in watching the wants which she relieved; as I marked her mute, her unwearying tenderness, breaking into a thousand nameless but mighty cares, and pervading like an angel's vigilance every--yea, the minutest--course into which it flowed,--did I not behold her in that sphere in which woman is most lovely, and in which love itself consecrates its admiration and purifies its most ardent desires? That was not a time for our hearts to speak audibly to each other; but we felt that they grew closer and closer, and we asked not for the poor eloquence of words. But over this scene let me not linger.

One morning, as I was proceeding on foot to Isora's, I perceived on the opposite side of the way Montreuil and Gerald: they were conversing eagerly; they both saw me. Montreuil made a slight, quiet, and dignified inclination of the head: Gerald coloured, and hesitated. I thought he was about to leave his companion and address me; but, with a haughty and severe air, I passed on, and Gerald, as if stung by my demeanour, bit his lip vehemently and followed my example. A few minutes afterwards I felt an inclination to regret that I had not afforded him an opportunity of addressing me. "I might," thought I, "have then taunted him with his persecution of Isora, and defied him to execute those threats against me, in which it is evident, from her apprehensions for my safety, that he indulged."

I had not, however, much leisure for these thoughts. When I arrived at the lodgings of Alvarez, I found that a great change had taken place in his condition; he had recovered speech, though imperfectly, and testified a return to sense. I flew upstairs with a light step to congratulate Isora: she met me at the door. "Hush!" she whispered: "my father sleeps!" But she did not speak with the animation I had anticipated.

"What is the matter, dearest?" said I, following her into another

apartment: "you seem sad, and your eyes are red with tears, which are not, methinks, entirely the tears of joy at this happy change in your father."

"I am marked out for suffering," returned Isora, more keenly than she was wont to speak. I pressed her to explain her meaning; she hesitated at first, but at length confessed that her father had always been anxious for her marriage with this /soi-disant/ Barnard, and that his first words on his recovery had been to press her to consent to his wishes.

"My poor father," said she, weepingly, "speaks and thinks only for my fancied good; but his senses as yet are only recovered in part, and he cannot even understand me when I speak of you. 'I shall die,' he said, 'I shall die, and you will be left on the wide world!' I in vain endeavoured to explain to him that I should have a protector: he fell asleep muttering those words, and with tears in his eyes."

"Does he know as much of this Barnard as you do?" said I.

"Heavens, no!--or he would never have pressed me to marry one so wicked."

"Does he know even who he is?"

"Yes!" said Isora, after a pause; "but he has not known it long."

Here the physician joined us, and taking me aside, informed me that, as he had foreboded, sleep had been the harbinger of death, and that Don Diego was no more. I broke the news as gently as I could to Isora: but her grief was far more violent than I could have anticipated; and nothing seemed to cut her so deeply to the heart as the thought that his last wish had been one with which she had not complied, and could never comply.

I pass over the first days of mourning: I come to the one after Don Diego's funeral. I had been with Isora in the morning; I left her for a few hours, and returned at the first dusk of evening with some books and music, which I vainly hoped she might recur to for a momentary abstraction from her grief. I dismissed my carriage, with the intention of walking home, and addressing the woman-servant who admitted me, inquired, as was my wont, after Isora. "She has been very ill," replied the woman, "ever since the strange gentleman left her."

"The strange gentleman?"

Yes, he had forced his way upstairs, despite of the denial the servant had been ordered to give to all strangers. He had entered Isora's room; and the woman, in answer to my urgent inquiries, added that she had heard his voice raised to a loud and harsh key in the apartment; he had stayed there about a quarter of an hour, and had then hurried out, seemingly in great disorder and agitation.

"What description of man was he?" I asked.

The woman answered that he was mantled from head to foot in his cloak, which was richly laced, and his hat was looped with diamonds, but slouched over that part of his face which the collar of his cloak did

not hide, so that she could not further describe him than as one of a haughty and abrupt bearing, and evidently belonging to the higher ranks.

Convinced that Gerald had been the intruder, I hastened up the stairs to Isora. She received me with a sickly and faint smile, and endeavoured to conceal the traces of her tears.

"So!" said I, "this insolent persecutor of yours has discovered your abode, and again insulted or intimidated you. He shall do so no more! I will seek him to-morrow; and no affinity of blood shall prevent--"

"Morton, dear Morton!" cried Isora, in great alarm, and yet with a certain determination stamped upon her features, "hear me! It is true this man has been here; it is true that, fearful and terrible as he is, he has agitated and alarmed me: but it was only for you, Morton,--by the Holy Virgin, it was only for you! 'The moment,' said he, and his voice ran shivering through my heart like a dagger, 'the moment Morton Devereux discovers who is his rival, that moment his death-warrant is irrevocably sealed!'"

"Arrogant boaster!" I cried, and my blood burned with the intense rage which a much slighter cause would have kindled from the natural fierceness of my temper. "Does he think my life is at his bidding, to allow or to withhold? Unhand me, Isora, unhand me! I tell you I will seek him this moment, and dare him to do his worst!"

"Do so," said Isora, calmly, and releasing her hold; "do so; but hear me first: the moment you breathe to him your suspicions you place an eternal barrier betwixt yourself and me! Pledge me your faith that you will never, while I live at least, reveal to him--to any one whom you suspect--your reproach, your defiance, your knowledge--nay, not even your lightest suspicion--of his identity with my persecutor; promise me this, Morton Devereux, or I, in my turn, before that crucifix, whose sanctity we both acknowledge and adore,--that crucifix which has descended to my race for three unbroken centuries,--which, for my departed father, in the solemn vow, and in the death-agony, has still been a witness, a consolation, and a pledge, between the soul and its Creator,--by that crucifix which my dying mother clasped to her bosom when she committed me, an infant, to the care of that Heaven which hears and records forever our lightest word,--I swear that I will never be yours!"

"Isora!" said I, awed and startled, yet struggling against the impression her energy had made upon me, "you know not to what you pledge yourself, nor what you require of me. If I do not seek out this man, if I do not expose to him my knowledge of his pursuit and unhallowed persecution of you, if I do not effectually prohibit and prevent their continuance, think well, what security have I for your future peace of mind,--nay, even for the safety of your honour or your life? A man thus bold, daring and unbaffled in his pursuit, thus vigilant and skilful in his selection of time and occasion,--so that, despite my constant and anxious endeavour to meet him in your presence, I have never been able to do so,--from a man, I say, thus pertinacious in resolution, thus crafty in disguise, what may you not dread when you leave him utterly fearless by the license of impunity? Think too, again, Isora, that the mystery dishonours as much as the danger menaces. Is it meet that my betrothed and my future bride should be subjected to these secret and terrible visitations,--visitations of a man professing himself her lover, and evincing the vehemence of his passion by that of his pursuit?"

Isora--Isora--you have not weighed these things; you know not what you demand of me."

"I do!" answered Isora; "I do know all that I demand of you; I demand of you only to preserve your life."

"How," said I, impatiently, "cannot my hand preserve my life? and is it for you, the daughter of a line of warriors, to ask your lover and your husband to shrink from a single foe?"

"No, Morton," answered Isora. "Were you going to battle, I would gird on your sword myself; were, too, this man other than he is, and you were about to meet him in open contest, I would not wrong you, nor degrade your betrothed, by a fear. But I know my persecutor well,--fierce, unrelenting,--dreadful in his dark and ungovernable passions as he is, he has not the courage to confront you: I fear not the open foe, but the lurking and sure assassin. His very earnestness to avoid you, the precautions he has taken, are alone sufficient to convince you that he dreads personally to oppose your claim or to vindicate himself."

"Then what have I to fear?"

"Everything! Do you not know that from men, at once fierce, crafty, and shrinking from bold violence, the stuff for assassins is always made? And if I wanted surer proof of his designs than inference, his oath--it rings in my ears now--is sufficient. 'The moment Morton Devereux discovers who is his rival, that moment his death-warrant is irrevocably sealed.' Morton, I demand your promise; or, though my heart break, I will record my own vow."

"Stay--stay," I said, in anger, and in sorrow: "were I to promise this, and for my own safety hazard yours, what could you deem me?"

"Fear not for me, Morton," answered Isora; "you have no cause. I tell you that this man, villain as he is, ever leaves me humbled and abased. Do not think that in all times, and all scenes, I am the foolish and weak creature you behold me now. Remember that you said rightly I was the daughter of a line of warriors; and I have that within me which will not shame my descent."

"But, dearest, your resolution may avail you for a time; but it cannot forever baffle the hardened nature of a man. I know my own sex, and I know my own ferocity, were it once aroused."

"But, Morton, you do not know me," said Isora, proudly, and her face, as she spoke, was set, and even stern: "I am only the coward when I think of you; a word--a look of mine--can abash this man; or, if it could not, I am never without a weapon to defend myself, or--or--" Isora's voice, before firm and collected, now faltered, and a deep blush flowed over the marble paleness of her face.

"Or what?" said I, anxiously.

"Or thee, Morton!" murmured Isora, tenderly, and withdrawing her eyes from mine.

The tone, the look that accompanied these words, melted me at once. I rose,--I clasped Isora to my heart.

"You are a strange compound, my own fairy queen; but these lips, this cheek, those eyes, are not fit features for a heroine."

"Morton, if I had less determination in my heart, I could not love you so well."

"But tell me," I whispered, with a smile, "where is this weapon on which you rely so strongly?"

"Here!" answered Isora, blushing; and, extricating herself from me, she showed me a small two-edged dagger, which she wore carefully concealed between the folds of her dress. I looked over the bright, keen blade, with surprise, and yet with pleasure, at the latent resolution of a character seemingly so soft. I say with pleasure, for it suited well with my own fierce and wild temper. I returned the weapon to her, with a smile and a jest.

"Ah!" said Isora, shrinking from my kiss, "I should not have been so bold, if I only feared danger for myself."

But if, for a moment, we forgot, in the gushings of our affection, the object of our converse and dispute, we soon returned to it again. Isora was the first to recur to it. She reminded me of the promise she required; and she spoke with a seriousness and a solemnity which I found myself scarcely able to resist.

"But," I said, "if he ever molest you hereafter; if again I find that bright cheek blanched, and those dear eyes dimmed with tears; and I know that, in my own house, some one has dared thus to insult its queen,--am I to be still torpid and inactive, lest a dastard and craven hand should avenge my assertion of your honour and mine?"

"No, Morton; after our marriage, whenever that be, you will have nothing to apprehend from him on the same ground as before; my fear for you, too, will not be what it is now; your honour will be bound in mine, and nothing shall induce me to hazard it,--no, not even your safety. I have every reason to believe that, after that event, he will subject me no longer to his insults: how, indeed, can he, under your perpetual protection? or, for what cause should he attempt it, if he could? I shall be then yours,--only and ever yours; what hope could, therefore, then nerve his hardihood or instigate his intrusions? Trust to me at that time, and suffer me to--nay, I repeat, promise me that I may--trust in you now!"

What could I do? I still combated her wish and her request; but her steadiness and rigidity of purpose made me, though reluctantly, yield to them at last. So sincere, and so stern, indeed, appeared her resolution, that I feared, by refusal, that she would take the rash oath that would separate us forever. Added to this, I felt in her that confidence which, I am apt to believe, is far more akin to the latter stages of real love than jealousy and mistrust; and I could not believe that either now, or, still less after our nuptials, she would risk aught of honour, or the seemings of honour, from a visionary and superstitious fear. In spite, therefore, of my deep and keen interest in the thorough discovery of this mysterious persecution; and, still more, in the prevention of all future designs from his audacity, I constrained myself to promise her that I would on no account seek out the person I suspected, or wilfully betray to him by word or deed my belief of his identity with Barnard.

Though greatly dissatisfied with my self-compulsion, I strove to reconcile myself to its idea. Indeed, there was much in the peculiar circumstances of Isora, much in the freshness of her present affliction, much in the unfriended and utter destitution of her situation, that, while on the one hand, it called forth her pride, and made stubborn that temper which was naturally so gentle and so soft; on the other hand, made me yield even to wishes that I thought unreasonable, and consider rather the delicacy and deference due to her condition, than insist upon the sacrifices which, in more fortunate circumstances, I might have imagined due to myself. Still more indisposed to resist her wish and expose myself to its penalty was I, when I considered her desire was the mere excess and caution of her love, and when I felt that she spoke sincerely when she declared that it was only for me that she was the coward. Nevertheless, and despite all these considerations, it was with a secret discontent that I took my leave of her, and departed homeward.

I had just reached the end of the street where the house was situated, when I saw there, very imperfectly, for the night was extremely dark, the figure of a man entirely enveloped in a long cloak, such as was commonly worn by gallants in affairs of secrecy or intrigue; and, in the pale light of a single lamp near which he stood, something like the brilliance of gems glittered on the large Spanish hat which overhung his brow. I immediately recalled the description the woman had given me of Barnard's dress, and the thought flashed across me that it was he whom I beheld. "At all events," thought I, "I may confirm my doubts, if I may not communicate them, and I may watch over her safety if I may not avenge her injuries." I therefore took advantage of my knowledge of the neighbourhood, passed the stranger with a quick step, and then, running rapidly, returned by a circuitous route to the mouth of a narrow and dark street, which was exactly opposite to Isora's house. Here I concealed myself by a projecting porch, and I had not waited long before I saw the dim form of the stranger walk slowly by the house. He passed it three or four times, and each time I thought--though the darkness might deceive me--that he looked up to the windows. He made, however, no attempt at admission, and appeared as if he had no other object than that of watching by the house. Wearied and impatient at last, I came from my concealment. "I may /confirm/ my suspicions," I repeated, recurring to my oath, and I walked straight towards the stranger.

"Sir," I said very calmly, "I am the last person in the world to interfere with the amusements of any other gentleman; but I humbly opine that no man can parade by this house upon so very cold a night, without giving just ground for suspicion to the friends of its inhabitants. I happen to be among that happy number; and I therefore, with all due humility and respect, venture to request you to seek some other spot for your nocturnal perambulations."

I made this speech purposely prolix, in order to have time fully to reconnoitre the person of the one I addressed. The dusk of the night, and the loose garb of the stranger, certainly forbade any decided success to this scrutiny; but methought the figure seemed, despite of my prepossessions, to want the stately height and grand proportions of Gerald Devereux. I must own, however, that the necessary inexactitude of my survey rendered this idea without just foundation, and did not by any means diminish my firm impression that it was Gerald whom I beheld. While I spoke, he retreated with a quick step, but made no answer. I pressed upon him: he backed with a still quicker step; and when I had ended, he fairly turned round, and made at full speed along the dark

street in which I had fixed my previous post of watch. I fled after him, with a step as fleet as his own: his cloak encumbered his flight; I gained upon him sensibly; he turned a sharp corner, threw me out, and entered into a broad thoroughfare. As I sped after him, Bacchanalian voices burst upon my ear, and presently a large band of those young men who, under the name of Mohawks, were wont to scour the town nightly, and, sword in hand, to exercise their love of riot under the disguise of party zeal, became visible in the middle of the street. Through them my fugitive dashed headlong, and, profiting by their surprise, escaped unmolested. I attempted to follow with equal speed, but was less successful. "Hallo!" cried the foremost of the group, placing himself in my way.

"No such haste! Art Whig or Tory? Under which king, Bezonian? speak or die!"

"Have a care, Sir," said I, fiercely, drawing my sword.

"Treason, treason!" cried the speaker, confronting me with equal readiness. "Have a care, indeed! have /at thee/."

"Ha!" cried another, "'tis a Tory; 'tis the Secretary's popish friend, Devereux: pike him, pike him."

I had already run my opponent through the sword arm, and was in hopes that this act would intimidate the rest, and allow my escape; but at the sound of my name and political bias, coupled with the drawn blood of their confederate, the patriots rushed upon me with that amiable fury generally characteristic of all true lovers of their country. Two swords passed through my body simultaneously, and I fell bleeding and insensible to the ground. When I recovered I was in my own apartments, whither two of the gentler Mohawks had conveyed me: the surgeons were by my bedside; I groaned audibly when I saw them. If there is a thing in the world I hate, it is in any shape the disciples of Hermes; they always remind me of that Indian people (the Padaei, I think) mentioned by Herodotus, who sustained themselves by devouring the sick. "All is well," said one, when my groan was heard. "He will not die," said another. "At least not till we have had more fees," said a third, more candid than the rest. And thereupon they seized me and began torturing my wounds anew, till I fainted away with the pain. However, the next day I was declared out of immediate danger; and the first proof I gave of my convalescence was to make Desmarais discharge four surgeons out of five: the remaining one I thought my youth and constitution might enable me to endure.

That very evening, as I was turning restlessly in my bed, and muttering with parched lips the name of "Isora," I saw by my side a figure covered from head to foot in a long veil, and a voice, low, soft, but thrilling through my heart like a new existence, murmured, "She is here!"

I forgot my wounds; I forgot my pain and my debility; I sprang upwards: the stranger drew aside the veil from her countenance, and I beheld Isora!

"Yes!" said she, in her own liquid and honeyed accents, which fell like balm upon my wound and my spirit, "yes, she whom /you/ have hitherto tended is come, in her turn, to render some slight but woman's services to you. She has come to nurse, and to soothe, and to pray for you, and to be, till you yourself discard her, your hand-maid and your slave!"

I would have answered, but raising her finger to her lips, she arose and vanished; but from that hour my wound healed, my fever slaked, and whenever I beheld her flitting round my bed, or watching over me, or felt her cool fingers wiping the dew from my brow, or took from her hand my medicine or my food, in those moments, the blood seemed to make a new struggle through my veins, and I felt palpably within me a fresh and delicious life--a life full of youth and passion and hope--replace the vaguer and duller being which I had hitherto borne.

There are some extraordinary incongruities in that very mysterious thing /sympathy/. One would imagine that, in a description of things most generally interesting to all men, the most general interest would be found; nevertheless, I believe few persons would hang breathless over the progressive history of a sick-bed. Yet those gradual stages from danger to recovery, how delightfully interesting they are to all who have crawled from one to the other! and who, at some time or other in his journey through that land of diseases--civilized life--has not taken that gentle excursion? "I would be ill any day for the pleasure of getting well," said Fontenelle to me one morning with his usual /naivete/; but who would not be ill for the more pleasure of being ill, if he could be tended by her whom he most loves?

I shall not therefore dwell upon that most delicious period of my life,--my sick bed, and my recovery from it. I pass on to a certain evening in which I heard from Isora's lips the whole of her history, save what related to her knowledge of the real name of one whose persecution constituted the little of romance which had yet mingled with her innocent and pure life. That evening--how well I remember it!--we were alone; still weak and reduced, I lay upon the sofa beside the window, which was partially open, and the still air of an evening in the first infancy of spring came fresh, and fraught as it were with a prediction of the glowing woods and the reviving verdure, to my cheek. The stars, one by one, kindled, as if born of Heaven and Twilight, into their nightly being; and, through the vapour and thick ether of the dense city, streamed their most silent light, holy and pure, and resembling that which the Divine Mercy sheds upon the gross nature of mankind. But, shadowy and calm, their rays fell full upon the face of Isora, as she lay on the ground beside my couch, and with one hand surrendered to my clasp, looked upward till, as she felt my gaze, she turned her cheek blushing away. There was quiet around and above us; but beneath the window we heard at times the sounds of the common earth, and then insensibly our hands knit into a closer clasp, and we felt them thrill more palpably to our hearts; for those sounds reminded us both of our existence and of our separation from the great herd of our race!

What is love but a division from the world, and a blending of two souls, two immortalities divested of clay and ashes, into one? it is a severing of a thousand ties from whatever is harsh and selfish, in order to knit them into a single and sacred bond! Who loves hath attained the anchorite's secret; and the hermitage has become dearer than the world. O respite from the toil and the curse of our social and banded state, a little interval art thou, suspended between two eternities,--the Past and the Future,--a star that hovers between the morning and the night, sending through the vast abyss one solitary ray from heaven, but too far and faint to illumine, while it hallows the earth!

There was nothing in Isora's tale which the reader has not already learned or conjectured. She had left her Andalusian home in her early

childhood, but she remembered it well, and lingeringly dwelt over it in description. It was evident that little, in our colder and less genial isle, had attracted her sympathy, or wound itself into her affection. Nevertheless, I conceive that her naturally dreamy and abstracted character had received from her residence and her trials here much of the vigour and the heroism which it now possessed. Brought up alone, music, and books--few, though not ill-chosen, for Shakspeare was one, and the one which had made upon her the most permanent impression, and perhaps had coloured her temperament with its latent but rich hues of poetry--constituted her amusement and her studies.

But who knows not that a woman's heart finds its fullest occupation within itself? There lies its real study, and within that narrow orbit, the mirror of enchanted thought reflects the whole range of earth. Loneliness and meditation nursed the mood which afterwards, with Isora, became love itself. But I do not wish now so much to describe her character as to abridge her brief history. The first English stranger of the male sex whom her father admitted to her acquaintance was Barnard. This man was, as I had surmised, connected with him in certain political intrigues, the exact nature of which she did not know. I continue to call him by a name which Isora acknowledged was fictitious. He had not, at first, by actual declaration, betrayed to her his affections: though, accompanied by a sort of fierceness which early revolted her, they soon became visible. On the evening in which I had found her stretched insensible in the garden, and had myself made my first confession of love, I learned that he had divulged to her his passion and real name; that her rejection had thrown him into a fierce despair; that he had accompanied his disclosure with the most terrible threats against me, for whom he supposed himself rejected, and against the safety of her father, whom he said a word of his could betray; and her knowledge of his power to injure us--/us/--yes, Isora then loved me, and then trembled for my safety! had terrified and overcome her; and that in the very moment in which my horse's hoofs were heard, and as the alternative of her non-compliance, the rude suitor swore deadly and sore vengeance against Alvarez and myself, she yielded to the oath he prescribed to her,--an oath that she would never reveal the secret he had betrayed to her, or suffer me to know who was my real rival.

This was all that I could gather from her guarded confidence; he heard the oath and vanished, and she felt no more till she was in my arms; then it was that she saw in the love and vengeance of my rival a barrier against our union; and then it was that her generous fear for me conquered her attachment, and she renounced me. Their departure from the cottage so shortly afterwards was at her father's choice and at the instigation of Barnard, for the furtherance of their political projects; and it was from Barnard that the money came which repaid my loan to Alvarez. The same person, no doubt, poisoned her father against me, for henceforth Alvarez never spoke of me with that partiality he had previously felt. They repaired to London: her father was often absent, and often engaged with men whom she had never seen before; he was absorbed and uncommunicative, and she was still ignorant of the nature of his schemings and designs.

At length, after an absence of several weeks, Barnard reappeared, and his visits became constant; he renewed his suit to her father as well as herself. Then commenced that domestic persecution, so common in this very tyrannical world, which makes us sicken to bear, and which, had Isora been wholly a Spanish girl, she, in all probability, would never have resisted: so much of custom is there in the very air of a climate.

But she did resist it, partly because she loved me,--and loved me more and more for our separation,--and partly because she dreaded and abhorred the ferocious and malignant passions of my rival, far beyond any other misery with which fortune could threaten her. "Your father then shall hang or starve!" said Barnard, one day in uncontrollable frenzy, and left her. He did not appear again at the house. The Spaniard's resources, fed, probably, alone by Barnard, failed. From house to house they removed, till they were reduced to that humble one in which I had found them. There, Barnard again sought them; there, backed by the powerful advocate of want, he again pressed his suit, and at that exact moment her father was struck with the numbing curse of his disease. "There and then," said Isora, candidly, "I might have yielded at last, for my poor father's sake, if you had not saved me."

Once only (I have before recorded the time) did Barnard visit her in the new abode I had provided for her, and the day after our conversation on that event Isora watched and watched for me, and I did not come. From the woman of the house she at last learned the cause. "I forgot," she said timidly,--and in conclusion, "I forgot womanhood, and modesty, and reserve; I forgot the customs of your country, the decencies of my own; I forgot everything in this world, but you,--you suffering and in danger; my very sense of existence seemed to pass from me, and to be supplied by a breathless, confused, and overwhelming sense of impatient agony, which ceased not till I was in your chamber, and by your side! And--now, Morton, do not despise me for not having considered more, and loved you less."

"Despise you!" I murmured, and I threw my arms around her, and drew her to my breast. I felt her heart beat against my own: those hearts spoke, though our lips were silent, and in their language seemed to say, "We are united now, and we will not part."

The starlight, shining with a mellow and deep stillness, was the only light by which we beheld each other: it shone, the witness and the sanction of that internal voice, which we owned, but heard not. Our lips drew closer and closer together, till they met! and in that kiss was the type and promise of the after ritual which knit two spirits into one. Silence fell around us like a curtain, and the eternal Night, with her fresh dews and unclouded stars, looked alone upon the compact of our hearts,--an emblem of the eternity, the freshness, and the unearthly though awful brightness of the love which it hallowed and beheld!

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