

The Disowned, Volume 4.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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Title: The Disowned, Volume 4.

Author: Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Release Date: March 2005 [EBook #7634]
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]
[This file was first posted on March 4, 2004]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DISOWNED, LYTTON, V4 ***

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

What a charming character is a kind old man.--STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

"Cheer up, my dear boy," said Talbot, kindly, "we must never despair. What though Lady Westborough has forbidden you the boudoir, a boudoir is a very different thing from a daughter, and you have no right to suppose that the veto extends to both. But now that we are on this subject, do let me reason with you seriously. Have you not already tasted all the pleasures, and been sufficiently annoyed by some of the pains, of acting the 'Incognito'? Be ruled by me: resume your proper name; it is at least one which the proudest might acknowledge; and its discovery will remove the greatest obstacle to the success which you so ardently desire."

Clarence, who was labouring under strong excitement, paused for some moments, as if to collect himself, before he replied: "I have been thrust from my father's home; I have been made the victim of another's crime; I have been denied the rights and name of son; perhaps (and I say this bitterly) justly denied them, despite of my own innocence. What would you have me do? Resume a name never conceded to me,--perhaps not righteously mine,--thrust myself upon the unwilling and shrinking hands which disowned and rejected me; blazon my virtues by pretensions which I myself have promised to forego, and foist myself on the notice of strangers by the very claims which my nearest relations dispute? Never! never! never! With the simple name I have assumed; the friend I myself have won,--you, my generous benefactor, my real father, who never forsook nor insulted me for my misfortunes,--with these I have gained some steps in the ladder; with these, and those gifts of nature, a stout heart and a willing hand, of which none can rob me, I will either ascend the rest, even to the summit, or fall to the dust, unknown, but not contemned; unlamented, but not despised."

"Well, well," said Talbot, brushing away a tear which he could not deny to the feeling, even while he disputed the judgment, of the young adventurer,--"well, this is all very fine and very foolish; but you shall never want friend or father while I live, or when I have ceased to live; but come,--sit down, share my dinner, which is not very good, and my dessert, which is: help me to entertain two or three guests who are coming to me in the evening, to talk on literature, sup, and sleep; and to-morrow you shall return home, and see Lady Flora in the drawing-room if you cannot in the boudoir."

And Clarence was easily persuaded to accept the invitation. Talbot was not one of those men who are forced to exert themselves to be entertaining. He had the pleasant and easy way of imparting his great general and curious information, that a man, partly humourist, partly philosopher, who values himself on being a man of letters, and is in spite of himself a man of the world, always ought to possess. Clarence was soon beguiled from the remembrance of his mortifications, and, by little and little, entirely yielded to the airy and happy flow of Talbot's conversation.

In the evening, three or four men of literary eminence (as many as

Talbot's small Tusculum would accommodate with beds) arrived, and in a conversation, free alike from the jargon of pedants and the insipidities of fashion, the night fled away swiftly and happily, even to the lover.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

We are here (in the country) among the vast and noble scenes of Nature; we are there (in the town) among the pitiful shifts of policy. We walk here in the light and open ways of the divine bounty,--we grope therein the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice; our senses are here feasted with all the clear and genuine taste of their objects, which are all sophisticated there, and for the most part overwhelmed with their contraries: here pleasure, methinks, looks like a beautiful, constant, and modest wife; it is there an impudent, fickle, and painted harlot.--COWLEY.

Draw up the curtain! The scene is the Opera.

The pit is crowded; the connoisseurs in the front row are in a very ill humour. It must be confessed that extreme heat is a little trying to the temper of a critic.

The Opera then was not what it is now, nor even what it had been in a former time. It is somewhat amusing to find Goldsmith questioning, in one of his essays, whether the Opera could ever become popular in England. But on the night--on which the reader is summoned to that "theatre of sweet sounds" a celebrated singer from the Continent made his first appearance in London, and all the world thronged to "that odious Opera-house" to hear, or to say they had heard, the famous Sopraniello.

With a nervous step, Clarence proceeded to Lady Westborough's box; and it was many minutes that he lingered by the door before he summoned courage to obtain admission.

He entered; the box was crowded; but Lady Flora was not there. Lord Borodaile was sitting next to Lady Westborough. As Clarence entered, Lord Borodaile raised his eyebrows, and Lady Westborough her glass. However disposed a great person may be to drop a lesser one, no one of real birth or breeding ever cuts another. Lady Westborough, therefore, though much colder, was no less civil than usual; and Lord Borodaile bowed lower than ever to Mr. Linden, as he punctiliously called him. But Clarence's quick eye discovered instantly that he was no welcome intruder, and that his day with the beautiful marchioness was over. His visit, consequently, was short and embarrassed. When he left the box, he heard Lord Borodaile's short, slow, sneering laugh, followed by Lady Westborough's "hush" of reproof.

His blood boiled. He hurried along the passage, with his eyes fixed upon the ground and his hand clenched.

"What ho! Linden, my good fellow; why, you look as if all the ferocity of the great Figg were in your veins," cried a good-humoured voice. Clarence started, and saw the young and high-spirited Duke of Haverfield.

"Are you going behind the scenes?" said his grace. "I have just come thence; and you had much better drop into La Meronville's box with me. You sup with her to-night, do you not?"

"No, indeed!" replied Clarence; "I scarcely know her, except by sight."

"Well, and what think you of her?"

"That she is the prettiest Frenchwoman I ever saw."

"Commend me to secret sympathies!" cried the duke. "She has asked me three times who you were, and told me three times you were the handsomest man in London and had quite a foreign air; the latter recommendation being of course far greater than the former. So, after this, you cannot refuse to accompany me to her box and make her acquaintance."

"Nay," answered Clarence, "I shall be too happy to profit by the taste of so discerning a person; but it is cruel in you, Duke, not to feign a little jealousy,--a little reluctance to introduce so formidable a rival."

"Oh, as to me," said the duke, "I only like her for her mental, not her personal, attractions. She is very agreeable, and a little witty; sufficient attractions for one in her situation."

"But do tell me a little of her history," said Clarence, "for, in spite of her renown, I only know her as La belle Meronville. Is she not living en ami with some one of our acquaintance?"

"To be sure," replied the duke, "with Lord Borodaile. She is prodigiously extravagant; and Borodaile affects to be prodigiously fond: but as there is only a certain fund of affection in the human heart, and all Lord Borodaile's is centred in Lord Borodaile, that cannot really be the case."

"Is he jealous of her?" said Clarence.

"Not in the least! nor indeed, does she give him any cause. She is very gay, very talkative, gives excellent suppers, and always has her box at the Opera crowded with admirers; but that is all. She encourages many, and favours but one. Happy Borodaile! My lot is less fortunate! You know, I suppose, that Julia has deserted me?"

"You astonish me,--and for what?"

"Oh, she told me, with a vehement burst of tears, that she was convinced I did not love her, and that a hundred pounds a month was not sufficient to maintain a milliner's apprentice. I answered the first assertion by an assurance that I adored her: but I preserved a total silence with regard to the latter; and so I found Trevanion tete-a-tete with her the next day."

"What did you?" said Clarence.

"Sent my valet to Trevanion with an old coat of mine, my compliments, and my hopes that, as Mr. Trevanion was so fond of my cast-off

conveniences, he would honour me by accepting the accompanying trifle."

"He challenged you, without doubt?"

"Challenged me! No: he tells all his friends that I am the wittiest man in Europe."

"A fool can speak the truth, you see," said Clarence, laughing.

"Thank you, Linden; you shall have my good word with La Meronville for that: mais allons."

Mademoiselle de la Meronville, as she pointedly entitled herself, was one of those charming adventuresses, who, making the most of a good education and a prepossessing person, a delicate turn for letter-writing, and a lively vein of conversation, came to England for a year or two, as Spaniards were wont to go to Mexico, and who return to their native country with a profound contempt for the barbarians whom they have so egregiously despoiled. Mademoiselle de la Meronville was small, beautifully formed, had the prettiest hands and feet in the world, and laughed musically. By the by, how difficult it is to laugh, or even to smile, at once naturally and gracefully! It is one of Steele's finest touches of character, where he says of Will Honeycombe, "He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily."

In a word, the pretty Frenchwoman was precisely formed to turn the head of a man like Lord Borodaile, who loved to be courted and who required to be amused. Mademoiselle de la Meronville received Clarence with a great deal of grace, and a little reserve, the first chiefly natural, the last wholly artificial.

"Well," said the duke (in French), "you have not told me who are to be of your party this evening,--Borodaile, I suppose, of course?"

"No, he cannot come to-night."

"Ah, quel malheur! then the hock will not be iced enough: Borodaile's looks are the best wine-coolers in the world."

"Fie!" cried La Meronville, glancing towards Clarence, "I cannot endure your malevolence; wit makes you very bitter."

"And that is exactly the reason why La belle Meronville loves me so: nothing is so sweet to one person as bitterness upon another; it is human nature and French nature (which is a very different thing) into the bargain."

"Bah! my Lord Duke, you judge of others by yourself."

"To be sure I do," cried the duke; "and that is the best way of forming a right judgment. Ah! what a foot, that little figurante has; you don't admire her, Linden?"

"No, Duke; my admiration is like the bird in the cage,--chained here, and cannot fly away!" answered Clarence, with a smile at the frippery of his compliment.

"Ah, Monsieur," cried the pretty Frenchwoman, leaning back, "you have

been at Paris, I see: one does not learn those graces of language in England. I have been five months in your country; brought over the prettiest dresses imaginable, and have only received three compliments, and (pity me!) two out of the three were upon my pronunciation of 'How do you do?'"

"Well," said Clarence, "I should have imagined that in England, above all other countries, your vanity would have been gratified, for you know we pique ourselves on our sincerity, and say all we think."

"Yes? then you always think very unpleasantly. What an alternative! which is the best, to speak ill or to think ill of one?"

"Pour l'amour de Dieu," cried the duke, "don't ask such puzzling questions; you are always getting into those moral subtleties, which I suppose you learn from Borodaile. He is a wonderful metaphysician, I hear; I can answer for his chemical powers: the moment he enters a room the very walls grow damp; as for me, I dissolve; I should flow into a fountain, like Arethusa, if happily his lordship did not freeze one again into substance as fast as he dampens one into thaw."

"Fi donc!" cried La Meronville. "I should be very angry had you not taught me to be very indifferent-"

"To him!" said the duke, dryly. "I'm glad to hear it. He is not worth une grande passion, believe me; but tell me, ma belle, who else sups with you?"

"D'abord, Monsieur Linden, I trust," answered La Meronville, with a look of invitation, to which Clarence bowed and smiled his assent, "Milord D----, and Monsieur Trevanion, Mademoiselle Caumartin, and Le Prince Pietro del Ordino."

"Nothing can be better arranged," said the duke. "But see, they are just going to drop the curtain. Let me call your carriage."

"You are too good, milord," replied La Meronville, with a bow which said, "of course;" and the duke, who would not have stirred three paces for the first princess of the blood, hurried out of the box (despite of Clarence's offer to undertake the commission) to inquire after the carriage of the most notorious adventuress of the day.

Clarence was alone in the box with the beautiful Frenchwoman. To say truth, Linden was far too much in love with Lady Flora, and too occupied, as to his other thoughts, with the projects of ambition, to be easily led into any disreputable or criminal liaison; he therefore conversed with his usual ease, though with rather more than his usual gallantry, without feeling the least touched by the charms of La Meronville or the least desirous of supplanting Lord Borodaile in her favour.

The duke reappeared, and announced the carriage. As, with La Meronville leaning on his arm, Clarence hurried out, he accidentally looked up, and saw on the head of the stairs Lady Westborough with her party (Lord Borodaile among the rest) in waiting for her carriage. For almost the first time in his life, Clarence felt ashamed of himself; his cheek burned like fire, and he involuntarily let go the fair hand which was leaning upon his arm. However, the weaker our course the better face we should put upon it, and Clarence, recovering

straws of the maniac, purple and rags, the regalities and the loathsomeness of earth,--palace and lazar-house combined! Grave of the living, where, mingled and massed together, we couch, but rest not,--"for in that sleep of life what dreams do come,"--each vexed with a separate vision,--"shadows" which "grieve the heart," unreal in their substance, but faithful in their warnings, flitting from the eye, but graving unfleeting memories on the mind, which reproduce new dreams over and over, until the phantasm ceases, and the pall of a heavier torpor falls upon the brain, and all is still and dark and hushed! "From the stir of thy great Babel," and the fixed tinsel glare in which sits pleasure like a star, "which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays," we turn to thy deeper and more secret haunts. Thy wilderness is all before us--where to choose our place of rest; and, to our eyes, thy hidden recesses are revealed.

The clock of St. Paul's had tolled the second hour of morning. Within a small and humble apartment in the very heart of the city, there sat a writer, whose lucubrations, then obscure and unknown, were destined, years afterwards, to excite the vague admiration of the crowd and the deeper homage of the wise. They were of that nature which is slow in winning its way to popular esteem; the result of the hived and hoarded knowledge of years; the produce of deep thought and sublime aspirations, influencing, in its bearings, the interests of the many, yet only capable of analysis by the judgment of the few. But the stream broke forth at last from the cavern to the daylight, although the source was never traced; or, to change the image,--albeit none know the hand which executed and the head which designed, the monument of a mighty intellect has been at length dug up, as it were, from the envious earth, the brighter for its past obscurity, and the more certain of immortality from the temporary neglect it has sustained.

The room was, as we before said, very small, and meanly furnished; yet were there a few articles of costliness and luxury scattered about, which told that the tastes of its owner had not been quite humbled to the level of his fortunes. One side of the narrow chamber was covered with shelves, which supported books in various languages, and though chiefly on scientific subjects, not utterly confined to them. Among the doctrines of the philosopher, and the golden rules of the moralist, were also seen the pleasant dreams of poets, the legends of Spenser, the refining moralities of Pope, the lofty errors of Lucretius, and the sublime relics of our "dead kings of melody." [Shakspeare and Milton] And over the hearth was a picture, taken in more prosperous days, of one who had been and was yet to the tenant of that abode, better than fretted roofs and glittering banquets, the objects of ambition, or even the immortality of fame. It was the face of one very young and beautiful, and the deep, tender eyes looked down, as with a watchful fondness, upon the lucubator and his labours. While beneath the window, which was left unclosed, for it was scarcely June, were simple yet not inelegant vases, filled with flowers,--

"Those lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave." [Herrick]

The writer was alone, and had just paused from his employment; he was leaning his face upon one hand, in a thoughtful and earnest mood, and the air which came chill, but gentle, from the window, slightly stirred the locks from the broad and marked brow, over which they fell

in thin but graceful waves. Partly owing perhaps to the waning light of the single lamp and the lateness of the hour, his cheek seemed very pale, and the complete though contemplative rest of the features partook greatly of the quiet of habitual sadness, and a little of the languor of shaken health; yet the expression, despite the proud cast of the brow and profile, was rather benevolent than stern or dark in its pensiveness, and the lines spoke more of the wear and harrow of deep thought than the inroads of ill-regulated passion.

There was a slight tap at the door; the latch was raised, and the original of the picture I have described entered the apartment.

Time had not been idle with her since that portrait had been taken: the round elastic figure had lost much of its youth and freshness; the step, though light, was languid, and in the centre of the fair, smooth cheek, which was a little sunken, burned one deep bright spot,—fatal sign to those who have watched the progress of the most deadly and deceitful of our national maladies; yet still the form and countenance were eminently interesting and lovely; and though the bloom was gone forever, the beauty, which not even death could wholly have despoiled, remained to triumph over debility, misfortune, and disease.

She approached the student, and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"Dearest!" said he, tenderly yet reproachfully, "yet up, and the hour so late and yourself so weak? Fie, I must learn to scold you."

"And how," answered the intruder, "how could I sleep or rest while you are consuming your very life in those thankless labours?"

"By which," interrupted the writer, with a faint smile, "we glean our scanty subsistence."

"Yes," said the wife (for she held that relation to the student), and the tears stood in her eyes, "I know well that every morsel of bread, every drop of water, is wrung from your very heart's blood, and I—I am the cause of all; but surely you exert yourself too much, more than can be requisite? These night damps, this sickly and chilling air, heavy with the rank vapours of the coming morning, are not suited to thoughts and toils which are alone sufficient to sear your mind and exhaust your strength. Come, my own love, to bed; and yet first come and look upon our child, how sound she sleeps! I have leaned over her for the last hour, and tried to fancy it was you whom I watched, for she has learned already your smile and has it even when she sleeps."

"She has cause to smile," said the husband, bitterly.

"She has, for she is yours! and even in poetry and humble hopes, that is an inheritance which may well teach her pride and joy. Come, love, the air is keen, and the damp rises to your forehead,—yet stay, till I have kissed it away."

"Mine own love," said the student, as he rose and wound his arm round the slender waist of his wife, "wrap your shawl closer over your bosom, and let us look for one instant upon the night. I cannot sleep till I have slaked the fever of my blood: the air has nothing of coldness in its breath for me."

And they walked to the window and looked forth. All was hushed and

still in the narrow street; the cold gray clouds were hurrying fast along the sky; and the stars, weak and waning in their light, gleamed forth at rare intervals upon the mute city, like expiring watch-lamps of the dead.

They leaned out and spoke not; but when they looked above upon the melancholy heavens, they drew nearer to each other, as if it were their natural instinct to do so whenever the world without seemed discouraging and sad.

At length the student broke the silence; but his thoughts, which were wandering and disjointed, were breathed less to her than vaguely and unconsciously to himself. "Morn breaks,--another and another!--day upon day!--while we drag on our load like the blind beast which knows not when the burden shall be cast off and the hour of rest be come."

The woman pressed her hand to her bosom, but made no rejoinder--she knew his mood--and the student continued,--"And so life frets itself away! Four years have passed over our seclusion--four years! a great segment in the little circle of our mortality; and of those years what day has pleasure won from labour, or what night has sleep snatched wholly from the lamp? Weaker than the miser, the insatiable and restless mind traverses from east to west; and from the nooks, and corners, and crevices of earth collects, fragment by fragment, grain by grain, atom by atom, the riches which it gathers to its coffers--for what?--to starve amidst the plenty! The fantasies of the imagination bring a ready and substantial return: not so the treasures of thought. Better that I had renounced the soul's labour for that of its hardier frame--better that I had 'sweated in the eye of Phoebus,' than 'eat my heart with crosses and with cares,'--seeking truth and wanting bread--adding to the indigence of poverty its humiliation; wroth with the arrogance of men, who weigh in the shallow scales of their meagre knowledge the product of lavish thought, and of the hard hours for which health, and sleep, and spirit have been exchanged;--sharing the lot of those who would enchant the old serpent of evil, which refuses the voice of the charmer!--struggling against the prejudice and bigoted delusion of the bandaged and fettered herd to whom, in our fond hopes and aspirations, we trusted to give light and freedom; seeing the slavish judgments we would have redeemed from error clashing their chains at us in ire;--made criminal by our very benevolence;--the martyrs whose zeal is rewarded with persecution, whose prophecies are crowned with contempt!--Better, oh, better that I had not listened to the vanity of a heated brain--better that I had made my home with the lark and the wild bee, among the fields and the quiet hills, where life, if obscurer, is less debased, and hope, if less eagerly indulged, is less bitterly disappointed. The frame, it is true, might have been bowed to a harsher labour, but the heart would at least have had its rest from anxiety, and the mind its relaxation from thought."

The wife's tears fell upon the hand she clasped. The student turned, and his heart smote him for the selfishness of his complaint. He drew her closer and closer to his bosom; and gazing fondly upon those eyes which years of indigence and care might have robbed of their young lustre, but not of their undying tenderness, he kissed away her tears, and addressed her in a voice which never failed to charm her grief into forgetfulness.

"Dearest and kindest," he said, "was I not to blame for accusing those

privations or regrets which have only made us love each other the more? Trust me, mine own treasure, that it is only in the peevishness of an inconstant and fretful humour that I have murmured against my fortune. For, in the midst of all, I look upon you, my angel, my comforter, my young dream of love, which God, in His mercy, breathed into waking life--I look upon you, and am blessed and grateful. Nor in my juster moments do I accuse even the nature of these studies, though they bring us so scanty a reward. Have I not hours of secret and overflowing delight, the triumphs of gratified research--flashes of sudden light, which reward the darkness of thought, and light up my solitude as a revel?--These feelings of rapture, which nought but Science can afford, amply repay her disciples for worse evils and severer handships than it has been my destiny to endure. Look along the sky, how the vapours struggle with the still yet feeble stars: even so have the mists of error been pierced, though not scattered, by the dim but holy lights of past wisdom, and now the morning is at hand, and in that hope we journey on, doubtful, but not utterly in darkness. Nor is this all my hope; there is a loftier and more steady comfort than that which mere philosophy can bestow. If the certainty of future fame bore Milton rejoicing through his blindness, or cheered Galileo in his dungeon, what stronger and holier support shall not be given to him who has loved mankind as his brothers, and devoted his labours to their cause?--who has not sought, but relinquished, his own renown?---who has braved the present censures of men for their future benefit, and trampled upon glory in the energy of benevolence? Will there not be for him something more powerful than fame to comfort his sufferings and to sustain his hopes? If the wish of mere posthumous honour be a feeling rather vain than exalted, the love of our race affords us a more rational and noble desire of remembrance. Come what will, that love, if it animates our toils and directs our studies, shall when we are dust make our relics of value, our efforts of avail, and consecrate the desire of fame, which were else a passion selfish and impure, by connecting it with the welfare of ages and the eternal interests of the world and its Creator! Come, we will to bed."

CHAPTER XL.

A man may be formed by nature for an admirable citizen, and yet, from the purest motives, be a dangerous one to the State in which the accident of birth has placed him.--STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

The night again closed., and the student once more resumed his labours. The spirit of his hope and comforter of his toils sat by him, ever and anon lifting her fond eyes from her work to gaze upon his countenance, to sigh, and to return sadly and quietly to her employment.

A heavy step ascended the stairs, the door opened, and the tall figure of Wolfe, the republican, presented itself. The female rose, pushed a chair towards him with a smile and grace suited to better fortunes, and, retiring from the table, reseated herself silent and apart.

"It is a fine night," said the student, when the mutual greetings were over. "Whence come you?"

"From contemplating human misery and worse than human degradation,"

replied Wolfe, slowly seating himself.

"Those words specify no place: they apply universally," said the student, with a sigh.

"Ay, Glendower, for misgovernment is universal," rejoined Wolfe.

Glendower made no answer.

"Oh!" said Wolfe, in the low, suppressed tone of intense passion which was customary to him, "it maddens me to look upon the willingness with which men hug their trappings of slavery,--bears, proud of the rags which deck and the monkeys which ride them. But it frets me yet more when some lordling sweeps along, lifting his dull eyes above the fools whose only crime and debasement are--what?--their subjection to him! Such a one I encountered a few nights since; and he will remember the meeting longer than I shall. I taught that 'god to tremble.'"

The female rose, glanced towards her husband, and silently withdrew.

Wolfe paused for a few moments, looked curiously and pryingly round, and then rising went forth into the passage to see that no loiterer or listener was near; returned, and drawing his chair close to Glendower, fixed his dark eye upon him, and said,--

"You are poor, and your spirit rises against your lot, you are just, and your heart swells against the general oppression you behold: can you not dare to remedy your ills and those of mankind?"

"I can dare," said Glendower, calmly, though haughtily, all things but crime."

"And which is crime?--the rising against, or the submission to, evil government? Which is crime, I ask you?"

"That which is the most imprudent," answered Glendower.

"We may sport in ordinary cases with our own safeties, but only in rare cases with the safety of others."

Wolfe rose, and paced the narrow room impatiently to and fro. He paused by the window and threw it open. "Come here," he cried,--"come and look out."

Glendower did so; all was still and quiet.

"Why did you call me?" said he; "I see nothing."

"Nothing!" exclaimed Wolfe; "look again; look on yon sordid and squalid huts; look at yon court, that from this wretched street leads to abodes to which these are as palaces; look at yon victims of vice and famine, plying beneath the midnight skies their filthy and infectious trade. Wherever you turn your eyes, what see you? Misery, loathsomeness, sin! Are you a man, and call you these nothing? And now lean forth still more; see afar off, by yonder lamp, the mansion of ill-gotten and griping wealth. He who owns those buildings, what did he that he should riot while we starve? He wrung from the negro's tears and bloody sweat the luxuries of a pampered and vitiated taste; he pandered to the excesses of the rich; he heaped their tables with

the product of a nation's groans. Lo!--his reward! He is rich, prosperous, honoured! He sits in the legislative assembly; he declaims against immorality; he contends for the safety of property and the equilibrium of ranks. Transport yourself from this spot for an instant; imagine that you survey the gorgeous homes of aristocracy and power, the palaces of the west. What see you there?--the few sucking, draining, exhausting the blood, the treasure, the very existence of the many. Are we, who are of the many, wise to suffer it?"

"Are we of the many?" said Glendower.

"We could be," said Wolfe, hastily.

"I doubt it;" replied Glendower.

"Listen," said the republican, laying his hand upon Glendower's shoulder, "listen to me. There are in this country men whose spirits not years of delayed hope, wearisome persecution, and, bitterer than all, misrepresentation from some and contempt from others, have yet quelled and tamed. We watch our opportunity; the growing distress of the country, the increasing severity and misrule of the administration, will soon afford it us. Your talents, your benevolence, render you worthy to join us. Do so, and--"

"Hush!" interrupted the student; "you know not what you say: you weigh not the folly, the madness of your design! I am a man more fallen, more sunken, more disappointed than you. I, too, have had at my heart the burning and lonely hope which, through years of misfortune and want, has comforted me with the thought of serving and enlightening mankind,--I, too, have devoted to the fulfilment of that hope, days and nights, in which the brain grew dizzy and the heart heavy and clogged with the intensity of my pursuits. Were the dungeon and the scaffold my reward Heaven knows that I would not flinch eye or hand or abate a jot of heart and hope in the thankless prosecution of my toils. Know me, then, as one of fortunes more desperate than your own; of an ambition more unquenchable; of a philanthropy no less ardent; and, I will add, of a courage no less firm: and behold the utter hopelessness of your projects with others, when to me they only appear the visions of an enthusiast."

Wolfe sank down in the chair.

"Is it even so?" said he, slowly and musingly. "Are my hopes but delusions? Has my life been but one idle, though convulsive dream? Is the goddess of our religion banished from this great and populous earth to the seared and barren hearts of a few solitary worshippers, whom all else despise as madmen or persecute as idolaters? And if so, shall we adore her the less?---No! though we perish in her cause, it is around her altar that our corpses shall be found!"

"My friend," said Glendower, kindly, for he was touched by the sincerity though opposed to the opinions of the republican, "the night is yet early: we will sit down to discuss our several doctrines calmly and in the spirit of truth and investigation."

"Away!" cried Wolfe, rising and slouching his hat over his bent and lowering brows; "away! I will not listen to you: I dread your reasonings; I would not have a particle of my faith shaken. If I err,

I have erred from my birth,--erred with Brutus and Tell, Hampden and Milton, and all whom the thousand tribes and parties of earth consecrate with their common gratitude and eternal reverence. In that error I will die! If our party can struggle not with hosts, there may yet arise some minister with the ambition of Caesar, if not his genius,--of whom a single dagger can rid the earth!"

"And if not?" said Glendower.

"I have the same dagger for myself!" replied Wolfe, as he closed the door.

CHAPTER XLI.

Bolingbroke has said that "Man is his own sharper and his own bubble;" and certainly he who is acutest in duping others is ever the most ingenious in outwitting himself. The criminal is always a sophist; and finds in his own reason a special pleader to twist laws human and divine into a sanction of his crime. The rogue is so much in the habit of cheating, that he packs the cards even when playing at Patience with himself.--STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

The only two acquaintances in this populous city whom Glendower possessed who were aware that in a former time he had known a better fortune were Wolfe and a person of far higher worldly estimation, of the name of Crauford. With the former the student had become acquainted by the favour of chance, which had for a short time made them lodgers in the same house. Of the particulars of Glendower's earliest history Wolfe was utterly ignorant; but the addresses upon some old letters, which he had accidentally seen, had informed him that Glendower had formerly borne another name; and it was easy to glean from the student's conversation that something of greater distinction and prosperity than he now enjoyed was coupled with the appellation he had renounced. Proud, melancholy, austere,--brooding upon thoughts whose very loftiness received somewhat of additional grandeur from the gloom which encircled it,--Glendower found, in the ruined hopes and the solitary lot of the republican, that congeniality which neither Wolfe's habits nor the excess of his political fervour might have afforded to a nature which philosophy had rendered moderate and early circumstances refined. Crauford was far better acquainted than Wolfe with the reverses Glendower had undergone. Many years ago he had known and indeed travelled with him upon the Continent; since then they had not met till about six months prior to the time in which Glendower is presented to the reader. It was in an obscure street of the city that Crauford had then encountered Glendower, whose haunts were so little frequented by the higher orders of society that Crauford was the first, and the only one of his former acquaintance with whom for years he had been brought into contact. That person recognized him at once, accosted him, followed him home, and three days afterwards surprised him with a visit. Of manners which, in their dissimulation, extended far beyond the ordinary ease and breeding of the world, Crauford readily appeared not to notice the altered circumstances of his old acquaintance; and, by a tone of conversation artfully respectful, he endeavoured to remove from Glendower's mind that soreness which his knowledge of human nature told him his visit was calculated to create.

There is a certain species of pride which contradicts the ordinary symptoms of the feeling, and appears most elevated when it would be reasonable to expect it should be most depressed. Of this sort was Glendower's. When he received the guest who had known him in his former prosperity, some natural sentiment of emotion called, it is true, to his pale cheek a momentary flush, as he looked round his humble apartment, and the evident signs of poverty it contained; but his address was calm and self-possessed, and whatever mortification he might have felt, no intonation of his voice, no tell-tale embarrassment of manner, revealed it. Encouraged by this air, even while he was secretly vexed by it, and perfectly unable to do justice to the dignity of mind which gave something of majesty rather than humiliation to misfortune, Crauford resolved to repeat his visit, and by intervals, gradually lessening, renewed it, till acquaintance seemed, though little tintured, at least on Glendower's side, by friendship, to assume the semblance of intimacy. It was true, however, that he had something to struggle against in Glendower's manner, which certainly grew colder in proportion to the repetition of the visits; and at length Glendower said, with an ease and quiet which abashed for a moment an effrontery of mind and manner which was almost parallel, "Believe me, Mr. Crauford, I feel fully sensible of your attentions; but as circumstances at present are such as to render an intercourse between us little congenial to the habits and sentiments of either, you will probably understand and forgive my motives in wishing no longer to receive civilities which, however I may feel them, I am unable to return."

Crauford coloured and hesitated before he replied. "Forgive me then," said he, "for my fault. I did venture to hope that no circumstances would break off an acquaintance to me so valuable. Forgive me if I did imagine that an intercourse between mind and mind could be equally carried on, whether the mere body were lodged in a palace or a hovel;" and then suddenly changing his tone into that of affectionate warmth, Crauford continued, "My dear Glendower, my dear friend, I would say, if I durst, is not your pride rather to blame here? Believe me, in my turn, I fully comprehend and bow to it; but it wounds me beyond expression. Were you in your proper station, a station much higher than my own, I would come to you at once, and proffer my friendship: as it is, I cannot; but your pride wrongs me, Glendower,—indeed it does."

And Crauford turned away, apparently in the bitterness of wounded feeling.

Glendower was touched: and his nature, as kind as it was proud, immediately smote him for conduct certainly ungracious and perhaps ungrateful. He held out his hand to Crauford; with the most respectful warmth that personage seized and pressed it: and from that time Crauford's visits appeared to receive a license which, if not perfectly welcome, was at least never again questioned.

"I shall have this man now," muttered Crauford, between his ground teeth, as he left the house, and took his way to his counting-house. There, cool, bland, fawning, and weaving in his close and dark mind various speculations of guilt and craft, he sat among his bills and gold, like the very gnome and personification of that Mammon of gain to which he was the most supple though concealed adherent.

Richard Crauford was of a new but not unimportant family. His father had entered into commerce, and left a flourishing firm and a name of great respectability in his profession to his son. That son was a man whom many and opposite qualities rendered a character of very singular and uncommon stamp. Fond of the laborious acquisition of money, he was equally attached to the ostentatious pageantries of expense. Profoundly skilled in the calculating business of his profession, he was devoted equally to the luxuries of pleasure; but the pleasure was suited well to the mind which pursued it. The divine intoxication of that love where the delicacies and purities of affection consecrate the humanity of passion was to him a thing of which not even his youngest imagination had ever dreamed. The social concomitants of the wine-cup (which have for the lenient an excuse, for the austere a temptation), the generous expanding of the heart, the increased yearning to kindly affection, the lavish spirit throwing off its exuberance in the thousand lights and emanations of wit,--these, which have rendered the molten grape, despite of its excesses, not unworthy of the praises of immortal hymns, and taken harshness from the judgment of those averse to its enjoyment,--these never presented an inducement to the stony temperament and dormant heart of Richard Crauford.

He looked upon the essences of things internal as the common eye upon outward nature, and loved the many shapes of evil as the latter does the varieties of earth, not for their graces, but their utility. His loves, coarse and low, fed their rank fires from an unmingled and gross depravity. His devotion to wine was either solitary and unseen--for he loved safety better than mirth--or in company with those whose station flattered his vanity, not whose fellowship ripened his crude and nipped affections. Even the recklessness of vice in him had the character of prudence; and in the most rapid and turbulent stream of his excesses, one might detect the rocky and unmoved heart of the calculator at the bottom.

Cool, sagacious, profound in dissimulation, and not only observant of, but deducing sage consequences from, those human inconsistencies and frailties by which it was his aim to profit, he cloaked his deeper vices with a masterly hypocrisy; and for those too dear to forego and too difficult to conceal he obtained pardon by the intercession of virtues it cost him nothing to assume. Regular in his attendance at worship; professing rigidness of faith beyond the tenets of the orthodox church; subscribing to the public charities, where the common eye knoweth what the private hand giveth; methodically constant to the forms of business; primitively scrupulous in the proprieties of speech; hospitable, at least to his superiors, and, being naturally smooth, both of temper and address, popular with his inferiors,--it was no marvel that one part of the world forgave to a man rich and young the irregularities of dissipation, that another forgot real immorality in favour of affected religion, or that the remainder allowed the most unexceptionable excellence of words to atone for the unobtrusive errors of a conduct which did not prejudice them.

"It is true," said his friends, "that he loves women too much: but he is young; he will marry and amend."

Mr. Crauford did marry; and, strange as it may seem, for love,--at least for that brute-like love, of which alone he was capable. After a few years of ill-usage on his side, and endurance on his wife's, they parted. Tired of her person, and profiting by her gentleness of

temper, he sent her to an obscure corner of the country, to starve upon the miserable pittance which was all he allowed her from his superfluities. Even then--such is the effect of the showy proprieties of form and word--Mr. Crauford sank not in the estimation of the world.

"It was easy to see," said the spectators of his domestic drama, "that a man in temper so mild, in his business so honourable, so civil of speech, so attentive to the stocks and the sermon, could not have been the party to blame. One never knew the rights of matrimonial disagreements, nor could sufficiently estimate the provoking disparities of temper. Certainly Mrs. Crauford never did look in good humour, and had not the open countenance of her husband; and certainly the very excesses of Mr. Crauford betokened a generous warmth of heart, which the sullenness of his conjugal partner might easily chill and revolt."

And thus, unquestioned and unblamed, Mr. Crauford walked onward in his beaten way; and, secretly laughing at the toleration of the crowd, continued at his luxurious villa the orgies of a passionless yet brutal sensuality.

So far might the character of Richard Crauford find parallels in hypocrisy and its success. Dive we now deeper into his soul. Possessed of talents which, though of a secondary rank, were in that rank consummate, Mr. Crauford could not be a villain by intuition or the irregular bias of his nature: he was a villain upon a grander scale; he was a villain upon system. Having little learning and less knowledge, out of his profession his reflection expended itself upon apparently obvious deductions from the great and mysterious book of life. He saw vice prosperous in externals, and from this sight his conclusion was drawn. "Vice," said he, "is not an obstacle to success; and if so, it is at least a pleasanter road to it than your narrow and thorny ways of virtue." But there are certain vices which require the mask of virtue, and Crauford thought it easier to wear the mask than to school his soul to the reality. So to the villain he added the hypocrite. He found the success equalled his hopes, for he had both craft and genius; nor was he naturally without the minor amiabilities, which to the ignorance of the herd seem more valuable than coin of a more important amount. Blinded as we are by prejudice, we not only mistake but prefer decencies to moralities; and, like the inhabitants of Cos, when offered the choice of two statues of the same goddess, we choose, not that which is the most beautiful, but that which is the most dressed.

Accustomed easily to dupe mankind, Crauford soon grew to despise them; and from justifying roguery by his own interest, he now justified it by the folly of others; and as no wretch is so unredeemed as to be without excuse to himself, Crauford actually persuaded his reason that he was vicious upon principle, and a rascal on a system of morality. But why the desire of this man, so consummately worldly and heartless, for an intimacy with the impoverished and powerless student? This question is easily answered. In the first place, during Crauford's acquaintance with Glendower abroad, the latter had often, though innocently, galled the vanity and self-pride of the parvenu affecting the aristocrat, and in poverty the parvenu was anxious to retaliate. But this desire would probably have passed away after he had satisfied his curiosity, or gloated his spite, by one or two insights into Glendower's home,--for Crauford, though at times a malicious, was not

a vindictive, man,--had it not been for a much more powerful object which afterwards occurred to him. In an extensive scheme of fraud, which for many years this man had carried on and which for secrecy and boldness was almost unequalled, it had of late become necessary to his safety to have a partner, or rather tool. A man of education, talent, and courage was indispensable, and Crauford had resolved that Glendower should be that man. With the supreme confidence in his own powers which long success had given him; with a sovereign contempt for, or rather disbelief in, human integrity; and with a thorough conviction that the bribe to him was the bribe with all, and that none would on any account be poor if they had the offer to be rich,--Crauford did not bestow a moment's consideration upon the difficulty of his task, or conceive that in the nature and mind of Glendower there could exist any obstacle to his design.

Men addicted to calculation are accustomed to suppose those employed in the same mental pursuit arrive, or ought to arrive, at the same final conclusion. Now, looking upon Glendower as a philosopher, Crauford looked upon him as a man who, however he might conceal his real opinions, secretly laughed, like Crauford's self, not only at the established customs, but at the established moralities of the world. Ill-acquainted with books, the worthy Richard was, like all men similarly situated, somewhat infected by the very prejudices he affected to despise; and he shared the vulgar disposition to doubt the hearts of those who cultivate the head. Glendower himself had confirmed this opinion by lauding, though he did not entirely subscribe to, those moralists who have made an enlightened self-interest the proper measure of all human conduct; and Crauford, utterly unable to comprehend this system in its grand, naturally interpreted it in a partial, sense. Espousing self-interest as his own code, he deemed that in reality Glendower's principles did not differ greatly from his; and, as there is no pleasure to a hypocrite like that of finding a fit opportunity to unburden some of his real sentiments, Crauford was occasionally wont to hold some conference and argument with the student, in which his opinions were not utterly cloaked in their usual disguise; but cautious even in his candour, he always forbore stating such opinions as his own: he merely mentioned them as those which a man beholding the villainies and follies of his kind, might be tempted to form; and thus Glendower, though not greatly esteeming his acquaintance, looked upon him as one ignorant in his opinions, but not likely to err in his conduct.

These conversations did, however, it is true, increase Crauford's estimate of Glendower's integrity, but they by no means diminished his confidence of subduing it. Honour, a deep and pure sense of the divinity of good, the steady desire of rectitude, and the supporting aid of a sincere religion,--these he did not deny to his intended tool: he rather rejoiced that he possessed them. With the profound arrogance, the sense of immeasurable superiority, which men of no principle invariably feel for those who have it, Crauford said to himself, "Those very virtues will be my best dupes; they cannot resist the temptations I shall offer; but they can resist any offer to betray me afterwards; for no man can resist hunger: but your fine feelings, your nice honour, your precise religion,--he! he! he!--these can teach a man very well to resist a common inducement; they cannot make him submit to be his own executioner; but they can prevent his turning king's evidence and being executioner to another. No, no: it is not to your common rogues that I may dare trust my secret,--my secret, which is my life! It is precisely of such a fine, Athenian, moral

rogue as I shall make my proud friend that I am in want. But he has some silly scruples; we must beat them away: we must not be too rash; and above all, we must leave the best argument to poverty. Want is your finest orator; a starving wife, a famished brat,--he! he!--these are your true tempters,--your true fathers of crime, and fillers of jails and gibbets. Let me see: he has no money, I know, but what he gets from that bookseller. What bookseller, by the by? Ah, rare thought! I'll find out, and cut off that supply. My lady wife's cheek will look somewhat thinner next month, I fancy--he! he! But 't is a pity, for she is a glorious creature! Who knows but I may serve two purposes? However, one at present! business first, and pleasure afterwards; and, faith, the business is damnably like that of life and death."

Muttering such thoughts as these, Crauford took his way one evening to Glendower's house.

CHAPTER XLII.

Iago.--Virtue; a fig!--'t is in ourselves that we are thus and thus.--
Othello.

"So, so, my little one, don't let me disturb you. Madam, dare I venture to hope your acceptance of this fruit? I chose it myself, and I am somewhat of a judge. Oh! Glendower, here is the pamphlet you wished to see."

With this salutation, Crauford drew his chair to the table by which Glendower sat, and entered into conversation with his purposed victim. A comely and a pleasing countenance had Richard Crauford! the lonely light of the room fell upon a face which, though forty years of guile had gone over it, was as fair and unwrinkled as a boy's. Small, well-cut features; a blooming complexion; eyes of the lightest blue; a forehead high, though narrow; and a mouth from which the smile was never absent,--these, joined to a manner at once soft and confident, and an elegant though unaffected study of dress, gave to Crauford a personal appearance well suited to aid the effect of his hypocritical and dissembling mind.

"Well, my friend," said he, "always at your books, eh? Ah! it is a happy taste; would that I had cultivated it more; but we who are condemned to business have little leisure to follow our own inclinations. It is only on Sundays that I have time to read; and then (to say truth) I am an old-fashioned man, whom the gayer part of the world laughs at, and then I am too occupied with the Book of Books to think of any less important study."

Not deeming that a peculiar reply was required to this pious speech, Glendower did not take that advantage of Crauford's pause which it was evidently intended that he should. With a glance towards the student's wife, our mercantile friend continued: "I did once--once in my young dreams--intend that whenever I married I would relinquish a profession for which, after all, I am but little calculated. I pictured to myself a country retreat, well stored with books; and having concentrated in one home all the attractions which would have tempted my thoughts abroad, I had designed to surrender myself solely

to those studies which, I lament to say, were but ill attended to in my earlier education. But--but" (here Mr. Crauford sighed deeply, and averted his face) "fate willed it otherwise!"

Whatever reply of sympathetic admiration or condolence Glendower might have made was interrupted by one of those sudden and overpowering attacks of faintness which had of late seized the delicate and declining health of his wife. He rose, and leaned over her with a fondness and alarm which curled the lip of his visitor.

"Thus it is," said Crauford to himself, "with weak minds, under the influence of habit. The love of lust becomes the love of custom, and the last is as strong as the first."

When--she had recovered, she rose, and (with her child) retired to rest, the only restorative she ever found effectual for her complaint. Glendower went with her, and, after having seen her eyes, which swam with tears of gratitude at his love, close in the seeming slumber she affected in order to release him from his watch, he returned to Crauford. He found that gentleman leaning against the chimney-piece with folded arms, and apparently immersed in thought. A very good opportunity had Glendower's absence afforded to a man whose boast it was never to lose one. Looking over the papers on the table, he had seen and possessed himself of the address of the bookseller the student dealt with. "So much for business, now for philanthropy," said Mr. Crauford, in his favorite antithetical phrase, throwing himself in his attitude against the chimney-piece.

As Glendower entered, Crauford started from his reverie, and with a melancholy air and pensive voice said,--

"Alas, my friend, when I look upon this humble apartment, the weak health of your unequalled wife, your obscurity, your misfortunes; when I look upon these, and contrast them with your mind, your talents, and all that you were born and fitted for, I cannot but feel tempted to believe with those who imagine the pursuit of virtue a chimera, and who justify their own worldly policy by the example of all their kind."

"Virtue," said Glendower, "would indeed be a chimera, did it require support from those whom you have cited."

"True,--most true," answered Crauford, somewhat disconcerted in reality, though not in appearance; "and yet, strange as it may seem, I have known some of those persons very good, admirably good men. They were extremely moral and religious: they only played the great game for worldly advantage upon the same terms as the other players; nay, they never made a move in it without most fervently and sincerely praying for divine assistance."

"I readily believe you," said Glendower, who always, if possible, avoided a controversy: "the easiest person to deceive is one's own self."

"Admirably said," answered Crauford, who thought it nevertheless one of the most foolish observations he had ever heard, "admirably said! and yet my heart does grieve bitterly for the trials and distresses it surveys. One must make excuses for poor human frailty; and one is often placed in such circumstances as to render it scarcely possible

without the grace of God" (here Crauford lifted up his eyes) "not to be urged, as it were, into the reasonings and actions of the world."

Not exactly comprehending this observation, and not very closely attending to it, Glendower merely bowed, as in assent, and Crauford continued,--

"I remember a remarkable instance of this truth. One of my partner's clerks had, through misfortune or imprudence, fallen into the greatest distress. His wife, his children (he had a numerous family), were on the literal and absolute verge of starvation. Another clerk, taking advantage of these circumstances, communicated to the distressed man a plan for defrauding his employer. The poor fellow yielded to the temptation, and was at last discovered. I spoke to him myself, for I was interested in his fate, and had always esteemed him. 'What,' said I, 'was your motive for this fraud?' 'My duty!' answered the man, fervently; 'my duty! Was I to suffer my wife, my children, to starve before my face, when I could save them at a little personal risk? No: my duty forbade it!' and in truth, Glendower, there was something very plausible in this manner of putting the question."

"You might, in answering it," said Glendower, "have put the point in a manner equally plausible and more true: was he to commit a great crime against the millions connected by social order, for the sake of serving a single family, and that his own?"

"Quite right," answered Crauford: "that was just the point of view in which I did put it; but the man, who was something of a reasoner, replied, 'Public law is instituted for public happiness. Now if mine and my children's happiness is infinitely and immeasurably more served by this comparatively petty fraud than my employer's is advanced by my abstaining from, or injured by my committing it, why, the origin of law itself allows me to do it.' What say you to that, Glendower? It is something in your Utilitarian, or, as you term it, Epicurean [See the article on Mr. Moore's "Epicurean" in the "Westminster Review." Though the strictures on that work are harsh and unjust, yet the part relating to the real philosophy of Epicurus is one of the most masterly things in criticism.] principle; is it not?" and Crauford, shading his eyes, as if from the light, watched narrowly Glendower's countenance, while he concealed his own.

"Poor fool!" said Glendower; "the man was ignorant of the first lesson in his moral primer. Did he not know that no rule is to be applied to a peculiar instance, but extended to its most general bearings? Is it necessary even to observe that the particular consequence of fraud in this man might, it is true, be but the ridding his employer of superfluities, scarcely missed, for the relief of most urgent want in two or three individuals; but the general consequences of fraud and treachery would be the disorganization of all society? Do not think, therefore, that this man was a disciple of my, or of any, system of morality."

"It is very just, very," said Mr. Crauford, with a benevolent sigh; "but you will own that want seldom allows great nicety in moral distinctions, and that when those whom you love most in the world are starving, you may be pitied, if not forgiven, for losing sight of the after laws of Nature and recurring to her first ordinance, self-preservation."

"We should be harsh, indeed," answered Glendower, "if we did not pity; or, even while the law condemned, if the individual did not forgive."

"So I said, so I said," cried Crauford; "and in interceding for the poor fellow, whose pardon I am happy to say I procured, I could not help declaring that, if I were placed in the same circumstances, I am not sure that my crime would not have been the same."

"No man could feel sure!" said Glendower, dejectedly. Delighted and surprised with this confession, Crauford continued: "I believe,--I fear not; thank God, our virtue can never be so tried: but even you, Glendower, even you, philosopher, moralist as you are,--just, good, wise, religious,--even you might be tempted, if you saw your angel wife dying for want of the aid, the very sustenance, necessary to existence, and your innocent and beautiful daughter stretch her little hands to you and cry in the accents of famine for bread."

The student made no reply for a few moments, but averted his countenance, and then in a slow tone said, "Let us drop this subject: none know their strength till they are tried; self-confidence should accompany virtue, but not precede it."

A momentary flash broke from the usually calm, cold eye of Richard Crauford. "He is mine," thought he: "the very name of want abases his pride: what will the reality do? O human nature, how I know and mock thee!"

"You are right," said Crauford, aloud; "let us talk of the pamphlet."

And after a short conversation upon indifferent subjects, the visitor departed. Early the next morning was Mr. Crauford seen on foot, taking his way to the bookseller whose address he had learnt. The bookseller was known as a man of a strongly evangelical bias. "We must insinuate a lie or two," said Crauford, inly, "about Glendower's principles. He! he! it will be a fine stroke of genius to make the upright tradesman suffer Glendower to starve out of a principle of religion. But who would have thought my prey had been so easily snared? why, if I had proposed the matter last night, I verily think he would have agreed to it."

Amusing himself with these thoughts, Crauford arrived at the bookseller's. There he found Fate had saved him from one crime at least. The whole house was in confusion: the bookseller had that morning died of an apoplectic fit.

"Good God! how shocking!" said Crauford to the foreman; but he was a most worthy man, and Providence could no longer spare him. The ways of Heaven are inscrutable! Oblige me with three copies of that precious tract termed the 'Divine Call.' I should like to be allowed permission to attend the funeral of so excellent a man. Good morning, sir. Alas! alas!" and, shaking his head piteously, Mr. Crauford left the shop.

"Hurra!" said he, almost audibly, when he was once more in the street, "hurra! my victim is made; my game is won: death or the devil fights for me. But, hold: there are other booksellers in this monstrous city!--ay, but not above two or three in our philosopher's way. I must forestall him there,--so, so,--that is soon settled. Now, then, I must leave him a little while, undisturbed, to his fate. Perhaps my

next visit may be to him in jail: your debtor's side of the Fleet is almost as good a pleader as an empty stomach,--he! he! He!--but the stroke must be made soon, for time presses, and this d--d business spreads so fast that if I don't have a speedy help, it will be too much for my hands, griping as they are. However, if it holds on a year longer, I will change my seat in the Lower House for one in the Upper; twenty thousand pounds to the minister may make a merchant a very pretty peer. O brave Richard Crauford, wise Richard Crauford, fortunate Richard Crauford, noble Richard Crauford! Why, if thou art ever hanged, it will be by a jury of peers. 'Gad, the rope would then have a dignity in it, instead of disgrace. But stay, here comes the Dean of ----; not orthodox, it is said,--rigid Calvinist! out with the 'Divine Call!'"

When Mr. Richard Crauford repaired next to Glendower, what was his astonishment and dismay at hearing he had left his home, none knew whither nor could give the inquirer the slightest clew.

"How long has he left?" said Crauford to the landlady.

"Five days, sir."

"And will he not return to settle any little debts he may have incurred?" said Crauford.

"Oh, no, sir: he paid them all before he went. Poor gentleman,--for though he was poor, he was the finest and most thorough gentleman I ever saw!--my heart bled for him. They parted with all their valuables to discharge their debts: the books and instruments and busts,--all went; and what I saw, though he spoke so indifferently about it, hurt him the most,--he sold even the lady's picture. 'Mrs. Croftson,' said he, 'Mr. ----, the painter, will send for that picture the day after I leave you. See that he has it, and that the greatest care is taken of it in delivery.'"

"And you cannot even guess where he has gone to?"

"No, sir; a single porter was sufficient to convey his remaining goods, and he took him from some distant part of the town."

"Ten thousand devils!" muttered Crauford, as he turned away; "I should have foreseen this! He is lost now. Of course he will again change his name; and in the d--d holes and corners of this gigantic puzzle of houses, how shall I ever find him out? and time presses too! Well, well, well! there is a fine prize for being cleverer, or, as fools would say, more rascally than others; but there is a world of trouble in winning it. But come; I will go home, lock myself up, and get drunk! I am as melancholy as a cat in love, and about as stupid; and, faith, one must get spirits in order to hit on a new invention. But if there be consistency in fortune, or success in perseverance, or wit in Richard Crauford, that man shall yet be my victim--and preserver!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

Revenge is now the cud
That I do chew.--I'll challenge him.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

We return to "the world of fashion," as the admirers of the polite novel would say. The noon-day sun broke hot and sultry through half-closed curtains of roseate silk, playing in broken beams upon rare and fragrant exotics, which cast the perfumes of southern summers over a chamber, moderate, indeed, as to its dimensions, but decorated with a splendour rather gaudy than graceful, and indicating much more a passion for luxury than a refinement of taste.

At a small writing-table sat the beautiful La Meronville. She had just finished a note, written (how Jean Jacques would have been enchanted) upon paper couleur de rose, with a mother-of-pearl pen, formed as one of Cupid's darts, dipped into an ink-stand of the same material, which was shaped as a quiver, and placed at the back of a little Love, exquisitely wrought. She was folding this billet when a page, fantastically dressed, entered, and, announcing Lord Borodaile, was immediately followed by that nobleman. Eagerly and almost blushing did La Meronville thrust the note into her bosom, and hasten to greet and to embrace her adorer. Lord Borodaile flung himself on one of the sofas with a listless and discontented air. The experienced Frenchwoman saw that there was a cloud on his brow.

"My dear friend," said she, in her own tongue, "you seem vexed: has anything annoyed you?"

"No, Cecile, no. By the by, who supped with you last night?"

"Oh! the Duke of Haverfield, your friend."

"My friend!" interrupted Borodaile, haughtily: "he's no friend of mine; a vulgar, talkative fellow; my friend, indeed!"

"Well, I beg your pardon: then there was Mademoiselle Caumartin, and the Prince Pietro del Orbino, and Mr. Trevanion, and Mr. Lin--Lin--Linten, or Linden."

"And pray, will you allow me to ask how you became acquainted with Mr. Lin--Lin--Linten, or Linden?"

"Assuredly; through the Duke of Haverfield."

"Humph! Cecile, my love, that young man is not fit to be the acquaintance of my friend: allow me to strike him from your list."

"Certainly, certainly!" said La Meronville, hastily; and stooping as if to pick up a fallen glove, though, in reality, to hide her face from Lord Borodaile's searching eye, the letter she had written fell from her bosom. Lord Borodaile's glance detected the superscription, and before La Meronville could regain the note he had possessed himself of it.

"A Monsieur, Monsieur Linden!" said he, coldly, reading the address; "and, pray, how long have you corresponded with that gentleman?"

Now La Meronville's situation at that moment was by no means agreeable. She saw at one glance that no falsehood or artifice could avail her; for Lord Borodaile might deem himself fully justified in reading the note, which would contradict any glossing statement she

might make. She saw this. She was a woman of independence; cared not a straw for Lord Borodaile at present, though she had had a caprice for him; knew that she might choose her bon ami out of all London, and replied,--

"That is the first letter I ever wrote to him; but I own that it will not be the last."

Lord Borodaile turned pale.

"And will you suffer me to read it?" said he; for even in these cases he was punctiliously honourable.

La Meronville hesitated. She did not know him. "If I do not consent," thought she, "he will do it without the consent: better submit with a good grace.--Certainly!" she answered, with an air of indifference.

Borodaile opened and read the note; it was as follows:--

You have inspired me with a feeling for you which astonishes myself. Ah, why should that love be the strongest which is the swiftest in its growth? I used to love Lord Borodaile: I now only esteem him; the love has flown to you. If I judge rightly from your words and your eyes, this avowal will not be unwelcome to you. Come and assure me, in person, of a persuasion so dear to my heart. C. L. M.

"A very pretty effusion!" said Lord Borodaile, sarcastically, and only showing his inward rage by the increasing paleness of his complexion and a slight compression of his lip. "I thank you for your confidence in me. All I ask is that you will not send this note till to-morrow. Allow me to take my leave of you first, and to find in Mr. Linden a successor rather than a rival."

"Your request, my friend," said La Meronville, adjusting her hair, "is but reasonable. I see that you understand these arrangements; and, for my part, I think that the end of love should always be the beginning of friendship: let it be so with us!"

"You do me too much honour," said Borodaile, bowing profoundly. "Meanwhile I depend upon your promise, and bid you, as a lover, farewell forever."

With his usual slow step Lord Borodaile descended the stairs, and walked towards the central quartier of town. His meditations were of no soothing nature. "To be seen by that man in a ridiculous and degrading situation; to be pestered with his d--d civility; to be rivalled by him with Lady Flora; to be duped and outdone by him with my mistress! Ay, all this have I been; but vengeance shall come yet. As for La Meronville, the loss is a gain; and, thank Heaven, I did not betray myself by venting my passion and making a scene. But it was I who ought to have discarded her, not the reverse; and--death and confusion--for that upstart, above all men! And she talked in her letter about his eyes and words. Insolent coxcomb, to dare to have eyes and words for one who belonged to me. Well, well, he shall smart for this. But let me consider: I must not play the jealous fool, must not fight for a ---, must not show the world that a man, nobody knows who, could really outwit and outdo me,--me,--Francis Borodaile! No, no: I must throw the insult upon him, must myself be the aggressor and

the challenged; then, too, I shall have the choice of weapons,-- pistols of course. Where shall I hit him, by the by? I wish I shot as well as I used to do at Naples. I was in full practice then. Cursed place, where there was nothing else to do but to practise!"

Immersed in these or somewhat similar reflections did Lord Borodaile enter Pall Mall.

"Ah, Borodaile!" said Lord St. George, suddenly emerging from a shop. "This is really fortunate: you are going my way exactly; allow me to join you."

Now Lord Borodaile, to say nothing of his happening at that time to be in a mood more than usually unsocial, could never at any time bear the thought of being made an instrument of convenience, pleasure, or good fortune to another. He therefore, with a little resentment at Lord St. George's familiarity, coldly replied, "I am sorry that I cannot avail myself of your offer. I am sure my way is not the same as yours."

"Then," replied Lord St. George, who was a good-natured, indolent man, who imagined everybody was as averse to walking alone as he was, "then I will make mine the same as yours."

Borodaile coloured: though always uncivil, he did not like to be excelled in good manners; and therefore replied, that nothing but extreme business at White's could have induced him to prefer his own way to that of Lord St. George.

The good-natured peer took Lord Borodaile's arm. It was a natural incident, but it vexed the punctilious viscount that any man should take, not offer, the support.

"So, they say," observed Lord St. George, "that young Linden is to marry Lady Flora Ardenne."

"Les on-dits font la gazette des fous," rejoined Borodaile with a sneer. "I believe that Lady Flora is little likely to contract such a misalliance."

"Misalliance!" replied Lord St. George. "I thought Linden was of a very old family; which you know the Westboroughs are not, and he has great expectations--"

"Which are never to be realized," interrupted Borodaile, laughing scornfully.

"Ah, indeed!" said Lord St. George, seriously. "Well, at all events he is a very agreeable, unaffected young man: and, by the by, Borodaile, you will meet him chez moi to-day; you know you dine with me?"

"Meet Mr. Linden! I shall be proud to have that honour," said Borodaile, with sparkling eyes; "will Lady Westborough be also of the party?"

"No, poor Lady St. George is very ill, and I have taken the opportunity to ask only men."

"You have done wisely, my lord," said Borodaile, *secum multa revolvens*; "and I assure you I wanted no hint to remind me of your invitation."

Here the Duke of Haverfield joined them. The duke never bowed to any one of the male sex; he therefore nodded to Borodaile, who, with a very supercilious formality, took off his hat in returning the salutation. The viscount had at least this merit in his pride,--that if it was reserved to the humble, it was contemptuous to the high: his inferiors he wished to remain where they were; his equals he longed to lower.

"So I dine with you, Lord St. George, to-day," said the duke; "whom shall I meet?"

"Lord Borodaile, for one," answered St. George; "my brother, Aspeden, Findlater, Orbino, and Linden."

"Linden!" cried the duke; "I'm very glad to hear it, *c'est un homme fait expres pour moi*. He is very clever, and not above playing the fool; has humour without setting up for a wit, and is a good fellow without being a bad man. I like him excessively."

"Lord St. George;" said Borodaile, who seemed that day to be the very martyr of the unconscious Clarence, "I wish you good morning. I have only just remembered an engagement which I must keep before I go to White's."

And with a bow to the duke, and a remonstrance from Lord St. George, Borodaile effected his escape. His complexion was, insensibly to himself, more raised than usual, his step more stately; his mind, for the first time for years, was fully excited and engrossed. Ah, what a delightful thing it is for an idle man, who has been dying of ennui, to find an enemy!

CHAPTER XLIV.

You must challenge him
There's no avoiding; one or both must drop.
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

"Ha! ha! ha! bravo, Linden!" cried Lord St. George, from the head of his splendid board, in approbation of some witticism of Clarence's; and ha! ha! ha! or he! he! he! according to the cachinnatory intonations of the guests rang around.

"Your lordship seems unwell," said Lord Aspeden to Borodaile; "allow me to take wine with you."

Lord Borodaile bowed his assent.

"Pray," said Mr. St. George to Clarence, "have you seen my friend Talbot lately?"

"This very morning," replied Linden: "indeed, I generally visit him three or four times a week; he often asks after you."

"Indeed!" said Mr. St. George, rather flattered; "he does me much honour; but he is a distant connection of mine, and I suppose I must attribute his recollection of me to that cause. He is a near relation of yours, too, I think: is he not?"

"I am related to him," answered Clarence, colouring.

Lord Borodaile leaned forward, and his lip curled. Though, in some respects, a very unamiable man, he had, as we have said, his good points. He hated a lie as much as Achilles did; and he believed in his heart of hearts that Clarence had just uttered one.

"Why," observed Lord Aspeden, "why, Lord Borodaile, the Talbots of Scarsdale are branches of your genealogical tree; therefore your lordship must be related to Linden; "you are two cherries on one stalk!"

"We are by no means related," said Lord Borodaile, with a distinct and clear voice, intended expressly for Clarence; "that is an honour which I must beg leave most positively to disclaim."

There was a dead silence; the eyes of all who heard a remark so intentionally rude were turned immediately towards Clarence. His cheek burned like fire; he hesitated a moment, and then said, in the same key, though with a little trembling in his intonation,--

"Lord Borodaile cannot be more anxious to disclaim it than I am."

"And yet," returned the viscount, stung to the soul, "they who advance false pretensions ought at least to support them!"

"I do not understand you, my lord," said Clarence.

"Possibly not," answered Borodaile, carelessly: "there is a maxim which says that people not accustomed to speak truth cannot comprehend it in others."

Unlike the generality of modern heroes, who are always in a passion,--off-hand, dashing fellows, in whom irascibility is a virtue,--Clarence was peculiarly sweet-tempered by nature, and had, by habit, acquired a command over all his passions to a degree very uncommon in so young a man. He made no reply to the inexcusable affront he had received. His lip quivered a little, and the flush of his countenance was succeeded by an extreme paleness; this was all: he did not even leave the room immediately, but waited till the silence was broken by some well-bred member of the party; and then, pleading an early engagement as an excuse for his retiring so soon, he rose and departed.

There was throughout the room a universal feeling of sympathy with the affront and indignation against the offender; for, to say nothing of Clarence's popularity and the extreme dislike in which Lord Borodaile was held, there could be no doubt as to the wantonness of the outrage or the moderation of the aggrieved party. Lord Borodaile already felt the punishment of his offence: his very pride, while it rendered him indifferent to the spirit, had hitherto kept him scrupulous as to the formalities of social politeness; and he could not but see the grossness with which he had suffered himself to violate them and the light in which his conduct was regarded. However, this internal

discomfort only rendered him the more embittered against Clarence and the more confirmed in his revenge. Resuming, by a strong effort, all the external indifference habitual to his manner, he attempted to enter into a conversation with those of the party who were next to him but his remarks produced answers brief and cold; even Lord Aspeden forgot his diplomacy and his smile; Lord St. George replied to his observations by a monosyllable; and the Duke of Haverfield, for the first time in his life, asserted the prerogative which his rank gave him of setting the example,--his grace did not reply to Lord Borodaile at all. In truth, every one present was seriously displeased. All civilized societies have a paramount interest in repressing the rude. Nevertheless, Lord Borodaile bore the brunt of his unpopularity with a steadiness and unembarrassed composure worthy of a better cause; and finding, at last, a companion disposed to be loquacious in the person of Sir Christopher Findlater (whose good heart, though its first impulse resented more violently than that of any heart present the discourtesy of the viscount, yet soon warmed to the desagremens of his situation, and hastened to adopt its favourite maxim of forgive and forget), Lord Borodaile sat the meeting out; and if he did not leave the latest, he was at least not the first to follow Clarence: "L'orgueil ou donne le courage, ou il y supplée." ["Pride either gives courage or supplies the place of it."]

Meanwhile Linden had returned to his solitary home. He hastened to his room, locked the door, flung himself on his sofa, and burst into a violent and almost feminine paroxysm of tears. This fit lasted for more than an hour; and when Clarence at length stilled the indignant swellings of his heart, and rose from his supine position, he started, as his eye fell upon the opposite mirror, so haggard and exhausted seemed the forced and fearful calmness of his countenance. With a hurried step; with arms now folded on his bosom, now wildly tossed from him; and the hand so firmly clenched that the very bones seemed working through the skin; with a brow now fierce, now only dejected; and a complexion which one while burnt as with the crimson flush of a fever, and at another was wan and colourless, like his whose cheek a spectre has blanched,--Clarence paced his apartment, the victim not only of shame,--the bitterest of tortures to a young and high mind,--but of other contending feelings, which alternately exasperated and palsied his wrath, and gave to his resolves at one moment an almost savage ferocity and at the next an almost cowardly vacillation.

The clock had just struck the hour of twelve when a knock at the door announced a visitor. Steps were heard on the stairs and presently a tap at Clarence's room-door. He unlocked it and the Duke of Haverfield entered. "I am charmed to find you at home," cried the duke, with his usual half kind, half careless address. "I was determined to call upon you, and be the first to offer my services in this unpleasant affair."

Clarence pressed the duke's hand, but made no answer.

"Nothing could be so unhandsome as Lord Borodaile's conduct," continued the duke. "I hope you both fence and shoot well. I shall never forgive you, if you do not put an end to that piece of rigidity."

Clarence continued to walk about the room in great agitation; the duke looked at him with some surprise. At last Linden paused by the window, and said, half unconsciously, "It must be so: I cannot avoid

fighting!"

"Avoid fighting!" cried his grace, in undisguised astonishment. "No, indeed: but that is the least part of the matter; you must kill as well as fight him."

"Kill him!" cried Clarence, wildly, "whom?" and then sinking into a chair, he covered his face with his hands for a few moments, and seemed to struggle with his emotions.

"Well," thought the duke, "I never was more mistaken in my life. I could have bet my black horse against Trevanion's Julia, which is certainly the most worthless thing I know, that Linden had been a brave fellow: but these English heroes almost go into fits at a duel; one manages such things, as Sterne says, better in France."

Clarence now rose, calm and collected. He sat down; wrote a brief note to Borodaile, demanding the fullest apology, or the earliest meeting; put it into the duke's hands, and said with a faint smile, "My dear duke, dare I ask you to be a second to a man who has been so grievously affronted and whose genealogy has been so disputed?"

"My dear Linden," said the duke, warmly, "I have always been grateful to my station in life for this advantage,--the freedom with which it has enabled me to select my own acquaintance and to follow my own pursuits. I am now more grateful to it than ever, because it has given me a better opportunity than I should otherwise have had of serving one whom I have always esteemed. In entering into your quarrel I shall at least show the world that there are some men not inferior in pretensions to Lord Borodaile who despise arrogance and resent overbearance even to others. Your cause I consider the common cause of society; but I shall take it up, if you will allow me, with the distinguishing zeal of a friend."

Clarence, who was much affected by the kindness of this speech, replied in a similar vein; and the duke, having read and approved the letter, rose. "There is, in my opinion," said he, "no time to be lost. I will go to Borodaile this very evening: adieu, mon cher! you shall kill the Argus, and then carry off the lo. I feel in a double passion with that ambulating poker, who is only malleable when he is red-hot, when I think how honourably scrupulous you were with La Meronville last night, notwithstanding all her advances; but I go to bury Caesar, not to scold him. Au revoir."

Chapter XLV.

Conon.--You're well met, Crates.

Crates.--If we part so, Conon.--Queen of Corinth.

It was as might be expected from the character of the aggressor. Lord Borodaile refused all apology, and agreed with avidity to a speedy rendezvous. He chose pistols (choice, then, was not merely nominal), and selected Mr. Percy Bobus for his second, a gentleman who was much fonder of acting in that capacity than in the more honourable one of a principal. The author of "Lacon" says "that if all seconds were as averse to duels as their principals, there would be very little blood

spilt in that way;" and it was certainly astonishing to compare the zeal with which Mr. Bobus busied himself about this "affair" with that testified by him on another occasion when he himself was more immediately concerned.

The morning came. Mr. Bobus breakfasted with his friend. "Damn it, Borodaile," said he, as the latter was receiving the ultimate polish of the hairdresser, "I never saw you look better in my life. It will be a great pity if that fellow shoots you."

"Shoots me!" said Lord Borodaile, very quietly,--"me! no! that is quite out of the question; but joking apart, Bobus, I will not kill the young man. Where shall I hit him?"

"In the cap of the knee," said Mr. Percy, breaking an egg.

"Nay, that will lame him for life," said Lord Borodaile, putting on his cravat with peculiar exactitude.

"Serve him right," said Mr. Bobus. "Hang him, I never got up so early in my life: it is quite impossible to eat at this hour. Oh!--a propos, Borodaile, have you left any little memoranda for me to execute?"

"Memoranda!--for what?" said Borodaile, who had now just finished his toilet.

"Oh!" rejoined Mr. Percy Bobus, "in case of accident, you know: the man may shoot well, though I never saw him in the gallery."

"Pray," said Lord Borodaile, in a great though suppressed passion, "pray, Mr. Bobus, how often have I to tell you that it is not by Mr. Linden that my days are to terminate: you are sure that Carabine saw to that trigger?"

"Certain," said Mr. Percy, with his mouth full, "certain. Bless me, here's the carriage, and breakfast not half done yet."

"Come, come," cried Borodaile, impatiently, "we must breakfast afterwards. Here, Roberts, see that we have fresh chocolate and some more cutlets when we return."

"I would rather have them now," said Mr. Bobus, foreseeing the possibility of the return being single: "Ibis! redibis?" etc.

"Come, we have not a moment to lose," exclaimed Borodaile, hastening down the stairs; and Mr. Percy Bobus followed, with a strange mixture of various regrets, partly for the breakfast that was lost and partly for the friend that might be.

When they arrived at the ground, Clarence and the duke were already there: the latter, who was a dead shot, had fully persuaded himself that Clarence was equally adroit, and had, in his providence for Borodaile, brought a surgeon. This was a circumstance of which the viscount, in the plenitude of his confidence for himself and indifference for his opponent, had never once dreamed.

The ground was measured; the parties were about to take the ground. All Linden's former agitation had vanished; his mien was firm, grave,

and determined: but he showed none of the careless and fierce hardihood which characterized his adversary; on the contrary, a close observer might have remarked something sad and dejected amidst all the tranquillity and steadiness of his brow and air.

"For Heaven's sake," whispered the duke, as he withdrew from the spot, "square your body a little more to your left and remember your exact level. Borodaile is much shorter than you."

There was a brief, dread pause: the signal was given; Borodaile fired; his ball pierced Clarence's side; the wounded man staggered one step, but fell not. He raised his pistol; the duke bent eagerly forward; an expression of disappointment and surprise passed his lips; Clarence had fired in the air. The next moment Linden felt a deadly sickness come over him; he fell into the arms of the surgeon. Borodaile, touched by a forbearance which he had so little right to expect, hastened to the spot. He leaned over his adversary in greater remorse and pity than he would have readily confessed to himself. Clarence unclosed his eyes; they dwelt for one moment upon the subdued and earnest countenance of Borodaile.

"Thank God," he said faintly, "that you were not the victim," and with those words he fell back insensible. They carried him to his lodgings. His wound was accurately examined. Though not mortal, it was of a dangerous nature; and the surgeons ended a very painful operation by promising a very lingering recovery.

What a charming satisfaction for being insulted!

CHAPTER XLVI.

Je me contente de ce qui peut s'écrire, et je reve tout ce qui peut se rever.--DE SEVIGNE.

["I content myself with writing what I am able, and I dream all I possibly can dream."]

About a week after his wound, and the second morning of his return to sense and consciousness, when Clarence opened his eyes, they fell upon a female form seated watchfully and anxiously by his bedside. He raised himself in mute surprise, and the figure, startled by the motion, rose, drew the curtain, and vanished. With great difficulty he rang his bell. His valet, Harrison, on whose mind, though it was of no very exalted order, the kindness and suavity of his master had made a great impression, instantly appeared.

"Who was that lady?" asked Linden. "How came she here?"

Harrison smiled: "Oh, sir, pray please to lie down, and make yourself easy: the lady knows you very well and would come here; she insists upon staying in the house, so we made up a bed in the drawing-room and she has watched by you night and day. She speaks very little English to be sure, but your honour knows, begging your pardon, how well I speak French."

"French?" said Clarence, faintly,--"French? In Heaven's name, who is she?"

"A Madame--Madame--La Melonveal, or some such name, sir," said the valet.

Clarence fell back. At that moment his hand was pressed. He turned, and saw Talbot by his side. The kind old man had not suffered La Meronville to be Linden's only nurse: notwithstanding his age and peculiarity of habits, he had fixed his abode all the day in Clarence's house, and at night, instead of returning to his own home, had taken up his lodgings at the nearest hotel.

With a jealous and anxious eye to the real interest and respectability of his adopted son, Talbot had exerted all his address, and even all his power, to induce La Meronville, who had made her settlement previous to Talbot's, to quit the house, but in vain. With that obstinacy which a Frenchwoman when she is sentimental mistakes for nobility of heart, the *ci-devant* amante of Lord Borodaile insisted upon watching and tending one of whose sufferings she said and believed she was the unhappy though innocent cause: and whenever more urgent means of removal were hinted at La Meronville flew to the chamber of her beloved, apostrophized him in a strain worthy of one of D'Arlincourt's heroines, and in short was so unreasonably outrageous that the doctors, trembling for the safety of their patient, obtained from Talbot a forced and reluctant acquiescence in the settlement she had obtained.

Ah! what a terrible creature a Frenchwoman is, when, instead of coquetting with a caprice, she insists upon conceiving a grande passion. Little, however, did Clarence, despite his vexation when he learned of the *bienveillance* of La Meronville, foresee the whole extent of the consequences it would entail upon him: still less did Talbot, who in his seclusion knew not the celebrity of the handsome adventuress, calculate upon the notoriety of her motions or the ill effect her ostentatious attachment would have upon Clarence's prosperity as a lover to Lady Flora. In order to explain these consequences the more fully, let us, for the present, leave our hero to the care of the surgeon, his friends, and his would-be mistress; and while he is more rapidly recovering than the doctors either hoped or presaged, let us renew our acquaintance with a certain fair correspondent.

LETTER FROM THE LADY FLORA ARDENNE TO MISS ELEANOR TREVANION.

My Dearest Eleanor,--I have been very ill, or you would sooner have received an answer to your kind, -too kind and consoling letter. Indeed I have only just left my bed: they say that I have been delirious, and I believe it; for you cannot conceive what terrible dreams I have had. But these are all over now, and everyone is so kind to me,--my poor mother above all! It is a pleasant thing to be ill when we have those who love us to watch our recovery.

I have only been in bed a few days; yet it seems to me as if a long portion of my existence were past,--as if I had stepped into a new era. You remember that my last letter attempted to express my feelings at Mamma's speech about Clarence, and at my seeing him so suddenly. Now, dearest, I cannot but look on that day, on these sensations, as on a distant dream. Every one is so kind to me, Mamma

caresses and soothes me so fondly, that I fancy I must have been under some illusion. I am sure they could not seriously have meant to forbid his addresses. No, no: I feel that all will yet be well,--so well, that even you, who are of so contented a temper, will own that if you were not Eleanor you would be Flora.

I wonder whether Clarence knows that I have been ill? I wish you knew him. Well, dearest, this letter--a very unhandsome return, I own, for yours--must content you at present, for they will not let me write more; though, so far as I am concerned, I am never so weak, in frame I mean, but what I could scribble to you about him.

Addio, carissima.

F. A.

I have prevailed on Mamma, who wished to sit by me and amuse me, to go to the Opera to-night, the only amusement of which she is particularly fond. Heaven forgive me for my insincerity, but he always comes into our box, and I long to hear some news of him.

LETTER II.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Eleanor, dearest Eleanor, I am again very ill, but not as I was before, ill from a foolish vexation of mind: no, I am now calm and even happy. It was from an increase of cold only that I have suffered a relapse. You may believe this, I assure you, in spite of your well meant but bitter jests upon my infatuation, as you very rightly call it, for Mr. Linden. You ask me what news from the Opera? Silly girl that I was, to lie awake hour after hour, and refuse even to take my draught, lest I should be surprised into sleep, till Mamma returned. I sent Jermyn down directly I heard her knock at the door (oh, how anxiously I had listened for it!) to say that I was still awake and longed to see her. So, of course, Mamma came up, and felt my pulse, and said it was very feverish, and wondered the draught had not composed me; with a great deal more to the same purpose, which I bore as patiently as I could, till it was my turn to talk; and then I admired her dress and her coiffure, and asked if it was a full house, and whether the prima donna was in voice, etc.: till, at last, I won my way to the inquiry of who were her visitors. "Lord Borodaile," said she, "and the Duke of ----, and Mr. St. George, and Captain Leslie, and Mr. De Retz, and many others." I felt so disappointed, Eleanor, but did not dare ask whether he was not of the list; till, at last, my mother observing me narrowly, said, "And by the by, Mr. Linden looked in for a few minutes. I am glad, my dearest Flora, that I spoke to you so decidedly about him the other day." "Why, Mamma?" said I, hiding my face under the clothes. "Because," said she, in rather a raised voice, "he is quite unworthy of you! but it is late now, and you should go to sleep; to-morrow I will tell you more." I would have given worlds to press the question then, but could not venture. Mamma kissed and left me. I tried to twist her words into a hundred meanings, but in each I only thought that they were dictated by some worldly information,--some new doubts as to his birth or fortune; and, though that supposition distressed me greatly, yet it could not alter my love or deprive me of hope; and so I cried and guessed, and guessed and cried, till at last I cried myself to sleep.

When I awoke, Mamma was already up, and sitting beside me: she talked to me for more than an hour upon ordinary subjects, till at last,

perceiving how absent or rather impatient I appeared, she dismissed Jermyn, and spoke to me thus:--

"You know, Flora, that I have always loved you, more perhaps than I ought to have done, more certainly than I have loved your brothers and sisters; but you were my eldest child, my first-born, and all the earliest associations of a mother are blent and entwined with you. You may be sure therefore that I have ever had only your happiness in view, and that it is only with a regard to that end that I now speak to you."

I was a little frightened, Eleanor, by this opening, but I was much more touched, so I took Mamma's hand and kissed and wept silently over it; she continued: "I observed Mr. Linden's attention to you, at ----; I knew nothing more of his rank and birth then than I do at present: but his situation in the embassy and his personal appearance naturally induced me to suppose him a gentleman of family, and, therefore, if not a great at least not an inferior match for you, so far as worldly distinctions are concerned. Added to this, he was uncommonly handsome, and had that general reputation for talent which is often better than actual wealth or hereditary titles. I therefore did not check, though I would not encourage any attachment you might form for him; and nothing being declared or decisive on either side when we left--, I imagined that if your flirtation with him did even amount to a momentary and girlish phantasy, absence and change of scene would easily and rapidly efface the impression. I believe that in a great measure it was effaced when Lord Aspeden returned to England, and with him Mr. Linden. You again met the latter in society almost as constantly as before; a caprice nearly conquered was once more renewed; and in my anxiety that you should marry, not for aggrandizement, but happiness, I own to my sorrow that I rather favoured than forbade his addresses. The young man--remember, Flora-- appeared in society as the nephew and heir of a gentleman of ancient family and considerable property; he was rising in diplomacy, popular in the world, and, so far as we could see, of irreproachable character; this must plead my excuse for tolerating his visits, without instituting further inquiries respecting him, and allowing your attachment to proceed without ascertaining how far it had yet extended. I was awakened to a sense of my indiscretion by an inquiry which Mr. Linden's popularity rendered general; namely, if Mr. Talbot was his uncle, who was his father? who his more immediate relations? and at that time Lord Borodaile informed us of the falsehood he had either asserted or allowed to be spread in claiming Mr. Talbot as his relation. This you will observe entirely altered the situation of Mr. Linden with respect to you. Not only his rank in life became uncertain, but suspicious. Nor was this all: his very personal respectability was no longer unimpeachable. Was this dubious and intrusive person, without a name and with a sullied honour, to be your suitor? No, Flora; and it was from this indignant conviction that I spoke to you some days since. Forgive me, my child, if I was less cautious, less confidential than I am now. I did not imagine the wound was so deep, and thought that I should best cure you by seeming unconscious of your danger. The case is now changed; your illness has convinced me of my fault, and the extent of your unhappy attachment: but will my own dear child pardon me if I still continue, if I even confirm, my disapproval of her choice? Last night at the Opera Mr. Linden entered my box. I own that I was cooler to him than usual. He soon left us, and after the Opera I saw him with the Duke of Haverfield, one of the most incorrigible rouses of the day, leading out

a woman of notoriously bad character and of the most ostentatious profligacy. He might have had some propriety, some decency, some concealment at least, but he passed just before me,--before the mother of the woman to whom his vows of honourable attachment were due and who at that very instant was suffering from her infatuation for him. Now, Flora, for this man, an obscure and possibly a plebeian adventurer, whose only claim to notice has been founded on falsehood, whose only merit, a love of you, has been, if not utterly destroyed, at least polluted and debased,--for this man, poor alike in fortune, character, and honour, can you any longer profess affection or esteem?"

"Never, never, never!" cried I, springing from the bed, and throwing myself upon my mother's neck. "Never: I am your own Flora once more. I will never suffer any one again to make me forget you," and then I sobbed so violently that Mamma was frightened, and bade me lie down and left me to sleep. Several hours have passed since then, and I could not sleep nor think, and I would not cry, for he is no longer worthy of my tears; so I have written to you.

Oh, how I despise and hate myself for having so utterly, in my vanity and folly, forgotten my mother, that dear, kind, constant friend, who never cost me a single tear, but for my own ingratitude! Think, Eleanor, what an affront to me,--to me, who, he so often said, had made all other women worthless in his eyes. Do I hate him? No, I cannot hate. Do I despise? No, I will not despise, but I will forget him, and keep my contempt and hatred for myself.

God bless you! I am worn out. Write soon, or rather come, if possible, to your affectionate but unworthy friend, F. A.

Good Heavens! Eleanor, he is wounded. He has fought with Lord Borodaile. I have just heard it; Jermyn told me. Can it, can it be true? What,--what have I said against him? Hate? forget? No, no: I never loved him till now.

LETTER III.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

(After an interval of several weeks.)

Time has flown, my Eleanor, since you left me, after your short but kind visit, with a heavy but healing wing. I do not think I shall ever again be the giddy girl I have been; but my head will change, not my heart; that was never giddy, and that shall still be as much yours as ever. You are wrong in thinking I have not forgotten, at least renounced all affection for Mr. Linden. I have, though with a long and bitter effort. The woman for whom he fought went, you know, to his house, immediately on hearing of his wound. She has continued with him ever since. He had the audacity to write to me once; my mother brought me the note, and said nothing. She read my heart aright. I returned it unopened. He has even called since his convalescence. Mamma was not at home to him. I hear that he looks pale and altered. I hope not,--at least I cannot resist praying for his recovery. I stay within entirely; the season is over now, and there are no parties: but I tremble at the thought of meeting him even in the Park or the Gardens. Papa talks of going into the country next week. I cannot tell you how eagerly I look forward to it: and you

will then come and see me; will you not, dearest Eleanor?

Ah! what happy days we will have yet: we will read Italian together, as we used to do; you shall teach me your songs, and I will instruct you in mine; we will keep birds as we did, let me see, eight years ago. You will never talk to me of my folly: let that be as if it had never been; but I will wonder with you about your future choice, and grow happy in anticipating your happiness. Oh, how selfish I was some weeks ago! then I could only overwhelm you with my egotisms: now, Eleanor, it is your turn; and you shall see how patiently I will listen to yours. Never fear that you can be too prolix: the diffuser you are, the easier I shall forgive myself.

Are you fond of poetry, Eleanor? I used to say so, but I never felt that I was till lately. I will show you my favourite passages in my favourite poets when you come to see me. You shall see if yours correspond with mine. I am so impatient to leave this horrid town, where everything seems dull, yet feverish,--insipid, yet false. Shall we not be happy when we meet? If your dear aunt will come with you, she shall see how I (that is my mind) am improved.

Farewell.

Ever your most affectionate,

F. A.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Brave Talbot, we will follow thee.--Henry the Sixth.

"My letter insultingly returned--myself refused admittance; not a single inquiry made during my illness; indifference joined to positive contempt. By Heaven, it is insupportable!"

"My dear Clarence," said Talbot to his young friend, who, fretful from pain and writhing beneath his mortification, walked to and fro his chamber with an impatient stride; "my dear Clarence, do sit down, and not irritate your wound by such violent exercise. I am as much enraged as yourself at the treatment you have received, and no less at a loss to account for it. Your duel, however unfortunate the event, must have done you credit, and obtained you a reputation both for generosity and spirit; so that it cannot be to that occurrence that you are to attribute the change. Let us rather suppose that Lady Flora's attachment to you has become evident to her father and mother; that they naturally think it would be very undesirable to marry their daughter to a man whose family nobody knows, and whose respectability he is forced into fighting in order to support. Suffer me then to call upon Lady Westborough, whom I knew many years ago, and explain your origin, as well as your relationship to me."

Linden paused irresolutely.

"Were I sure that Lady Flora was not utterly influenced by her mother's worldly views, I would gladly consent to your proposal, but--"

"Forgive me, Clarence," cried Talbot; "but you really argue much more

like a very young man than I ever heard you do before,--even four years ago. To be sure Lady Flora is influenced by her mother's views. Would you have her otherwise? Would you have her, in defiance of all propriety, modesty, obedience to her parents, and right feeling for herself, encourage an attachment to a person not only unknown, but who does not even condescend to throw off the incognito to the woman he addresses? Come, Clarence, give me your instructions, and let me act as your ambassador to-morrow."

Clarence was silent.

"I may consider it settled then," replied Talbot: "meanwhile you shall come home and stay with me; the pure air of the country, even so near town, will do you more good than all the doctors in London; and, besides, you will thus be enabled to escape from that persecuting Frenchwoman."

"In what manner?" said Clarence.

"Why, when you are in my house, she cannot well take up her abode with you; and you shall, while I am forwarding your suit with Lady Flora, write a very flattering, very grateful letter of excuses to Madame la Meronville. But leave me alone to draw it up for you: meanwhile, let Harrison pack up your clothes and medicines; and we will effect our escape while Madame la Meronville yet sleeps."

Clarence rang the bell; the orders were given, executed, and in less than an hour he and his friends were on their road to Talbot's villa.

As they drove slowly through the grounds to the house, Clarence was sensibly struck with the quiet and stillness which breathed around. On either side of the road the honeysuckle and rose cast their sweet scents to the summer wind, which, though it was scarcely noon, stirred freshly among the trees, and waved as if it breathed a second youth over the wan cheek of the convalescent. The old servant's ear had caught the sound of wheels, and he came to the door, with an expression of quiet delight on his dry countenance, to welcome in his master. They had lived together for so many years that they were grown like one another. Indeed, the veteran valet prided himself on his happy adoption of his master's dress and manner. A proud man, ween, was that domestic, whenever he had time and listeners for the indulgence of his honest loquacity; many an ancient tale of his master's former glories was then poured from his unburdening remembrance. With what a glow, with what a racy enjoyment, did he expand upon the triumphs of the past; how eloquently did he particularize the exact grace with which young Mr. Talbot was wont to enter the room, in which he instantly became the cynosure of ladies' eyes; how faithfully did he minute the courtly dress, the exquisite choice of colour, the costly splendour of material, which were the envy of gentles, and the despairing wonder of their valets; and then the zest with which the good old man would cry, "I dressed the boy!" Even still, this modern Scipio (Le Sage's Scipio, not Rome's) would not believe that his master's sun was utterly set: he was only in a temporary retirement, and would, one day or other, reappear and reastonish the London world. "I would give my right arm," Jasper was wont to say, "to see Master at court. How fond the King would be of him! Ah! well, well; I wish he was not so melancholy-like with his books, but would go out like other people!"

Poor Jasper! Time is, in general, a harsh wizard in his transformations; but the change which thou didst lament so bitterly was happier for thy master than all his former "palmy state" of admiration and homage. "Nous avons recherche le plaisir," says Rousseau, in one of his own inimitable antitheses, "et le bonheur a fui loin de nous." ["We have pursued pleasure, and happiness has fled far from our reach."] But in the pursuit of Pleasure we sometimes chance on Wisdom, and Wisdom leads us to the right track, which, if it take us not so far as Happiness, is sure at least of the shelter of Content.

Talbot leaned kindly upon Jasper's arm as he descended from the carriage, and inquired into his servant's rheumatism with the anxiety of a friend. The old housekeeper, waiting in the hall, next received his attention; and in entering the drawing-room, with that consideration, even to animals, which his worldly benevolence had taught him, he paused to notice and caress a large gray cat which rubbed herself against his legs. Doubtless there is some pleasure in making even a gray cat happy!

Clarence having patiently undergone all the shrugs, and sighs, and exclamations of compassion at his reduced and wan appearance, which are the especial prerogatives of ancient domestics, followed the old man into the room. Papers and books, though carefully dusted, were left scrupulously in the places in which Talbot had last deposited them (incomparable good fortune! what would we not give for such chamber handmaidens!); fresh flowers were in all the stands and vases; the large library chair was jealously set in its accustomed place, and all wore, to Talbot's eyes, that cheerful yet sober look of welcome and familiarity which makes a friend of our house. The old man was in high spirits.

"I know not how it is," said he, "but I feel younger than ever! You have often expressed a wish to see my family seat at Scarsdale: it is certainly a great distance hence; but as you will be my travelling companion, I think I will try and crawl there before the summer is over; or, what say you, Clarence, shall I lend it to you and Lady Flora for the honeymoon? You blush! A diplomatist blush! Ah, how the world has changed since my time! But come, Clarence, suppose you write to La Meronville?"

"Not to-day, sir, if you please," said Linden: "I feel so very weak."

"As you please, Clarence; but some years hence you will learn the value of the present. Youth is always a procrastinator, and, consequently, always a penitent." And thus Talbot ran on into a strain of conversation, half serious, half gay, which lasted till Clarence went upstairs to lie down and muse on Lady Flora Ardenne.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

La vie eat un sommeil. Les vieillards sont ceux dont le sommeil a ete plus long: ils ne commencent a se reveiller que quand il faut mourir.
--LA BRUYERE.

["Life is a sleep. The aged are those whose sleep has been the

longest they begin to awaken themselves just as they are obliged to die."]

"You wonder why I have never turned author, with my constant love of literature and my former desire of fame," said Talbot, as he and Clarence sat alone after dinner, discussing many things: "the fact is, that I have often intended it, and as often been frightened from my design. Those terrible feuds; those vehement disputes; those recriminations of abuse, so inseparable from literary life,--appear to me too dreadful for a man not utterly hardened or malevolent voluntarily to encounter. Good Heavens! what acerbity sours the blood of an author! The manifestoes of opposing generals, advancing to pillage, to burn, to destroy, contain not a tithe of the ferocity which animates the pages of literary oontroversialists! No term of reproach is too severe, no vituperation too excessive! the blackest passions, the bitterest, the meanest malice, pour caustic and poison upon every page! It seems as if the greatest talents, the most elaborate knowledge, only sprang from the weakest and worst-regulated mind, as exotics from dung. The private records, the public works of men of letters, teem with an immitigable fury! Their histories might all be reduced into these sentences: they were born; they quarrelled; they died!"

"But," said Clarence, "it would matter little to the world if these quarrels were confined merely to poets and men of imaginative literature, in whom irritability is perhaps almost necessarily allied to the keen and quick susceptibilities which constitute their genius. These are more to be lamented and wondered at among philosophers, theologians, and men of science; the coolness, the patience, the benevolence, which ought to characterize their works, should at least moderate their jealousy and soften their disputes."

"Ah!" said Talbot, "but the vanity of discovery is no less acute than that of creation: the self-love of a philosopher is no less self-love than that of a poet. Besides, those sects the most sure of their opinions, whether in religion or science, are always the most bigoted and persecuting. Moreover, nearly all men deceive themselves in disputes, and imagine that they are intolerant, not through private jealousy, but public benevolence: they never declaim against the injustice done to themselves; no, it is the terrible injury done to society which grieves and inflames them. It is not the bitter expressions against their dogmas which give them pain; by no means: it is the atrocious doctrines (so prejudicial to the country, if in politics; so pernicious to the world, if in philosophy), which their duty, not their vanity, induces them to denounce and anathematize."

"There seems," said Clarence, "to be a sort of reaction in sophistry and hypocrisy: there has, perhaps, never been a deceiver who was not, by his own passions, himself the deceived."

"Very true," said Talbot; "and it is a pity that historians have not kept that fact in view: we should then have had a better notion of the Cromwells and Mohammeds of the past than we have now, nor judged those as utter impostors who were probably half dupes. But to return to myself. I think you will already be able to answer your own question, why I did not turn author, now that we have given a momentary consideration to the penalties consequent on such a profession. But in truth, as I near the close of my life, I often regret that I had

not more courage, for there is in us all a certain restlessness in the persuasion, whether true or false, of superior knowledge or intellect, and this urges us on to the proof; or, if we resist its impulse; renders us discontented with our idleness and disappointed with the past. I have everything now in my possession which it has been the desire of my later years to enjoy: health, retirement, successful study, and the affection of one in whose breast, when I am gone, my memory will not utterly pass away. With these advantages, added to the gifts of fortune, and an habitual elasticity of spirit, I confess that my happiness is not free from a biting and frequent regret: I would fain have been a better citizen; I would fain have died in the consciousness not only that I had improved my mind to the utmost, but that I had turned that improvement to the benefit of my fellow-creatures. As it is, in living wholly for myself, I feel that my philosophy has wanted generosity; and my indifference to glory has proceeded from a weakness, not, as I once persuaded myself, from a virtue but the fruitlessness of my existence has been the consequence of the arduous frivolities and the petty objects in which my early years were consumed; and my mind, in losing the enjoyments which it formerly possessed, had no longer the vigour to create for itself a new soil, from which labour it could only hope for more valuable fruits. It is no contradiction to see those who most eagerly courted society in their youth shrink from it the most sensitively in their age; for they who possess certain advantages, and are morbidly vain of them, will naturally be disposed to seek that sphere for which those advantages are best calculated: and when youth and its concomitants depart, the vanity so long fed still remains, and perpetually mortifies them by recalling not so much the qualities they have lost, as the esteem which those qualities conferred; and by contrasting not so much their own present alteration, as the change they experience in the respect and consideration of others. What wonder, then, that they eagerly fly from the world, which has only mortification for their self-love, or that we find, in biography, how often the most assiduous votaries of pleasure have become the most rigid of recluses? For my part, I think that that love of solitude which the ancients so eminently possessed, and which, to this day, is considered by some as the sign of a great mind, nearly always arises from a tenderness of vanity, easily wounded in the commerce of the rough world; and that it is under the shadow of Disappointment that we must look for the hermitage. Diderot did well, even at the risk of offending Rousseau, to write against solitude. The more a moralist binds man to man, and forbids us to divorce our interests from our kind, the more effectually is the end of morality obtained. They only are justifiable in seclusion who, like the Greek philosophers, make that very seclusion the means of serving and enlightening their race; who from their retreats send forth their oracles of wisdom, and render the desert which surrounds them eloquent with the voice of truth. But remember, Clarence (and let my life, useless in itself, have at least this moral), that for him who in no wise cultivates his talent for the benefit of others; who is contented with being a good hermit at the expense of being a bad citizen; who looks from his retreat upon a life wasted in the *difficiles nugae* of the most frivolous part of the world, nor redeems in the closet the time he has misspent in the saloon,--remember that for him seclusion loses its dignity, philosophy its comfort, benevolence its hope, and even religion its balm. Knowledge unemployed may preserve us from vice; but knowledge beneficently employed is virtue. Perfect happiness, in our present state, is impossible; for Hobbes says justly that our nature is inseparable from desires, and that the very word desire (the craving

for something not possessed) implies that our present felicity is not complete. But there is one way of attaining what we may term, if not utter, at least mortal, happiness; it is this,--a sincere and unrelaxing activity for the happiness of others. In that one maxim is concentrated whatever is noble in morality, sublime in religion, or unanswerable in truth. In that pursuit we have all scope for whatever is excellent in our hearts, and none for the petty passions which our nature is heir to. Thus engaged, whatever be our errors, there will be nobility, not weakness, in our remorse; whatever our failure, virtue, not selfishness, in our regret; and, in success, vanity itself will become holy and triumph eternal. As astrologers were wont to receive upon metals 'the benign aspect of the stars, so as to detain and fix, as it were, the felicity of that hour which would otherwise be volatile and fugitive,' [Bacon] even so will that success leave imprinted upon our memory a blessing which cannot pass away; preserve forever upon our names, as on a signet, the hallowed influence of the hour in which our great end was effected, and treasure up 'the relics of heaven' in the sanctuary of a human fane."

As the old man ceased, there was a faint and hectic flush over his face, an enthusiasm on his features, which age made almost holy, and which Clarence had never observed there before. In truth, his young listener was deeply affected, and the advice of his adopted parent was afterwards impressed with a more awful solemnity upon his remembrance. Already he had acquired much worldly lore from Talbot's precepts and conversation. He had obtained even something better than worldly lore,--a kindly and indulgent disposition to his fellow-creatures; for he had seen that foibles were not inconsistent with generous and great qualities, and that we judge wrongly of human nature when we ridicule its littleness. The very circumstances which make the shallow misanthropical incline the wise to be benevolent. Fools discover that frailty is not incompatible with great men; they wonder and despise: but the discerning find that greatness is not incompatible with frailty; and they admire and indulge.

But a still greater benefit than this of toleration did Clarence derive from the commune of that night. He became strengthened in his honourable ambition and nerved to unrelaxing exertion. The recollection of Talbot's last words, on that night, occurred to him often and often, when sick at heart and languid with baffled hope, it roused him from that gloom and despondency which are always unfavourable to virtue, and incited him once more to that labour in the vineyard which, whether our hour be late or early, will if earnest obtain a blessing and reward.

The hour was now waxing late; and Talbot, mindful of his companion's health, rose to retire. As he pressed Clarence's hand and bade him farewell for the night, Linden thought there was something more than usually impressive in his manner and affectionate in his words. Perhaps this was the natural result of their conversation.

The next morning, Clarence was awakened by a noise. He listened, and heard distinctly an alarmed cry proceeding from the room in which Talbot slept, and which was opposite to his own. He rose hastily and hurried to the chamber. The door was open; the old servant was bending over the bed: Clarence approached, and saw that he supported his master in his arms.

"Good God!" he cried, "what is the matter?" The faithful old man

lifted up his face to Clarence, and the big tears rolled fast from eyes in which the sources of such emotion were well-nigh dried up.

"He loved you well, sir!" he said, and could say no more. He dropped the body gently, and throwing himself on the floor sobbed aloud. With a foreboding and chilled heart, Clarence bent forward; the face of his benefactor lay directly before him, and the hand of death was upon it. The soul had passed to its account hours since, in the hush of night, --passed, apparently, without a struggle or a pang, like the wind, which animates the harp one moment, and the next is gone.

Linden seized his hand; it was heavy and cold: his eye rested upon the miniature of the unfortunate Lady Merton, which, since the night of the attempted robbery, Talbot had worn constantly round his neck. Strange and powerful was the contrast of the pictured face--in which not a colour had yet faded, and where the hues and fulness and prime of youth dwelt, unconscious of the lapse of years--with the aged and shrunken countenance of the deceased.

In that contrast was a sad and mighty moral: it wrought, as it were, a contract between youth and age, and conveyed a rapid but full history of our passions and our life.

The servant looked up once more on the countenance; he pointed towards it, and muttered, "See, see how awfully it is changed!"

"But there is a smile upon it!" said Clarence, as he flung himself beside the body and burst into tears.

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