

Paul Clifford, Volume 2.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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PAUL CLIFFORD, Volume 2.

By Edward Bulwer Lytton

CHAPTER VII.

Begirt with many a gallant slave,
Apparelled as becomes the brave,
Old Giaffir sat in his divan:

.
Much I misdoubt this wayward boy
Will one day work me more annoy.
Bride of Abydos.

The learned and ingenious John Schweighaeuser (a name facile to spell and mellifluous to pronounce) hath been pleased, in that *Appendix continens particulam doctrinae de mente humana*, which closeth the volume of his "Opuscula Academica," to observe (we translate from memory) that, "in the infinite variety of things which in the theatre of the world occur to a man's survey, or in some manner or another affect his body or his mind, by far the greater part are so contrived as to bring to him rather some sense of pleasure than of pain or discomfort." Assuming that this holds generally good in well-constituted frames, we point out a notable example in the case of the incarcerated Paul; for although that youth was in no agreeable situation at the time present, and although nothing very encouraging smiled upon him from the prospects of the future, yet, as soon as he had recovered his consciousness, and given himself a rousing shake, he found an immediate source of pleasure in discovering, first, that several ladies and gentlemen bore him company in his imprisonment; and, secondly, in perceiving a huge jug of water within his reach, which, as his awaking sensation was that of burning thirst, he delightedly emptied at a draught. He then, stretching himself, looked around with a wistful earnestness, and discovered a back turned towards him, and recumbent on the floor, which at the very first glance appeared to him familiar. "Surely," thought he, "I know that frieze coat, and the peculiar turn of those narrow shoulders." Thus soliloquizing, he raised himself, and putting out his leg, he gently kicked the reclining form. "Muttering strange oaths," the form turned round, and raising itself upon that inhospitable part of the body in which the introduction of foreign feet is considered anything but an honour, it fixed its dull blue eyes upon the face of the disturber of its slumbers, gradually opening them wider and wider, until they seemed to have enlarged themselves into proportions fit for the swallowing of the important truth that burst upon them, and then from the mouth of the creature issued,--

"Queer my glims, if that be n't little Paul!"

"Ay, Dummie, here I am! Not been long without being laid by the heels, you see! Life is short; we must make the best use of our time!"

Upon this, Mr. Dunnaker (it was no less respectable a person) scrambled up from the floor, and seating himself on the bench beside Paul, said in a pitying tone,--

"Vy, laus-a-me! if you be n't knocked o' the head! Your poll's as bloody as Murphy's face ven his throat's cut!"

[*"Murphy's face," unlearned reader, appeareth, in Irish phrase, to mean "pig's head."*]

"T is only the fortune of war, Dummie, and a mere trifle; the heads manufactured at Thames Court are not easily put out of order. But tell me, how come you here?"

"Vy, I had been lushing heavy vet--"

'Till you grew light in the head, eh,--and fell into the kennel?"

"Yes."

"Mine is a worse business than that, I fear;" and therewith Paul, in a lower voice, related to the trusty Dummie the train of accidents which had conducted him to his present asylum. Dummie's face elongated as he listened; however, when the narrative was over, he endeavoured such consolatory palliatives as occurred to him. He represented, first, the possibility that the gentleman might not take the trouble to appear; secondly, the certainty that no watch was found about Paul's person; thirdly, the fact that, even by the gentleman's confession, Paul had not been the actual offender; fourthly, if the worst came to the worst, what were a few weeks' or even months' imprisonment?

"Blow me tight!" said Dummie, "if it be n't as good a vay of passing the time as a cove as is fond of snuggery need desire!"

This observation had no comfort for Paul, who recoiled, with all the maiden coyness of one to whom such unions are unfamiliar, from a matrimonial alliance with the *_snuggery_* of the House of Correction. He rather trusted to another source for consolation. In a word, he encouraged the flattering belief that Long Ned, finding that Paul had been caught instead of himself, would have the generosity to come forward and exculpate him from the charge. On hinting this idea to Dummie, that accomplished "man about town" could not for some time believe that any simpleton could be so thoroughly unacquainted with the world as seriously to entertain so ridiculous a notion; and, indeed, it is somewhat remarkable that such a hope should ever have told its flattering tale to one brought up in the house of Mrs. Margaret Lobkins. But Paul, we have seen, had formed many of his notions from books; and he had the same fine theories of your "moral rogue" that possess the minds of young patriots when they first leave college for the House of Commons, and think integrity a prettier thing than office.

Mr. Dunnaker urged Paul, seriously, to dismiss so vague and childish a fancy from his breast, and rather to think of what line of defence it would be best for him to pursue. This subject being at length exhausted, Paul recurred to Mrs. Lobkins, and inquired whether Dummie had lately honoured that lady with a visit.

Mr. Dunnaker replied that he had, though with much difficulty, appeased her anger against him for his supposed abetment of Paul's excesses, and that of late she had held sundry conversations with Dummie respecting our hero himself. Upon questioning Dummie further, Paul learned the good matron's reasons for not evincing that solicitude for his return which

our hero had reasonably anticipated. The fact was, that she, having no confidence whatsoever in his own resources independent of her, had not been sorry of an opportunity effectually, as she hoped, to humble that pride which had so revolted her; and she pleased her vanity by anticipating the time when Paul, starved into submission, would gladly and penitently re-seek the shelter of her roof, and, tamed as it were by experience, would never again kick against the yoke which her matronly prudence thought it fitting to impose upon him. She contented herself, then, with obtaining from Dummie the intelligence that our hero was under MacGrawler's roof, and therefore out of all positive danger to life and limb; and as she could not foresee the ingenious exertions of intellect by which Paul had converted himself into the "Nobilitas" of "The Asinaeum," and thereby saved himself from utter penury, she was perfectly convinced, from her knowledge of character, that the illustrious MacGrawler would not long continue that protection to the rebellious _protege_ which in her opinion was his only preservative from picking pockets or famishing. To the former decent alternative she knew Paul's great and jejune aversion; and she consequently had little fear for his morals or his safety, in thus abandoning him for a while to chance. Any anxiety, too, that she might otherwise have keenly experienced was deadened by the habitual intoxication now increasing upon the good lady with age, and which, though at times she could be excited to all her characteristic vehemence, kept her senses for the most part plunged into a Lethean stupor, or, to speak more courteously, into a poetical abstraction from the things of the external world.

"But," said Dummie, as by degrees he imparted the solution of the dame's conduct to the listening ear of his companion,--"but I hopes as how ven you be out of this 'ere scrape, leetle Paul, you vill take varning, and drop Meester Pepper's acquaintance (vich, I must say, I vas always a sorry to see you hencourage), and go home to the Mug, and fam grasp the old mort, for she has not been like the same cretur ever since you vent. She's a delicate-'arted 'oman, that Piggy Lob!"

So appropriate a panegyric on Mrs. Margaret Lobkins might at another time have excited Paul's risible muscles; but at that moment he really felt compunction for the unceremonious manner in which he had left her, and the softness of regretful affection imbued in its hallowing colours even the image of Piggy Lob.

In conversation of this intellectual and domestic description, the night and ensuing morning passed away, till Paul found himself in the awful presence of Justice Burnflat. Several cases were disposed of before his own; and among others Mr. Duminie Dunnaker obtained his release, though not without a severe reprimand for his sin of inebriety, which no doubt sensibly affected the ingenuous spirit of that noble character. At length Paul's turn came. He heard, as he took his station, a general buzz. At first he imagined it was at his own interesting appearance; but raising his eyes, he perceived that it was at the entrance of the gentleman who was to become his accuser.

"Hush," said some one near him, "'t is Lawyer Brandon. Ah, he's a 'cute fellow! it will go hard with the person he complains of."

There was a happy fund of elasticity of spirit about our hero; and though he had not the good fortune to have "a blighted heart,"--a circumstance which, by the poets and philosophers of the present day, is supposed to inspire a man with wonderful courage, and make him impervious to all misfortunes,--yet he bore himself up with wonderful courage under his

present trying situation, and was far from overwhelmed, though he was certainly a little damped, by the observation he had just heard.

Mr. Brandon was, indeed, a barrister of considerable reputation, and in high esteem in the world, not only for talent, but also for a great austerity of manners, which, though a little mingled with sternness and acerbity for the errors of other men, was naturally thought the more praiseworthy on that account; there being, as persons of experience are doubtless aware, two divisions in the first class of morality,--
imprimis, a great hatred for the vices of one's neighbour; secondly, the possession of virtues in one's self.

Mr. Brandon was received with great courtesy by Justice Burnflat; and as he came, watch in hand (a borrowed watch), saying that his time was worth five guineas a moment, the justice proceeded immediately to business.

Nothing could be clearer, shorter, or more satisfactory than the evidence of Mr. Brandon. The corroborative testimony of the watchman followed; and then Paul was called upon for his defence. This was equally brief with the charge; but, alas! it was not equally satisfactory. It consisted in a firm declaration of his innocence. His comrade, he confessed, might have stolen the watch; but he humbly suggested that that was exactly the very reason why he had not stolen it.

"How long, fellow," asked Justice Burnflat, "have you known your companion?"

"About half a year."

"And what is his name and calling?" Paul hesitated, and declined to answer.

"A sad piece of business!" said the justice, in a melancholy tone, and shaking his head portentously.

The lawyer acquiesced in the aphorism, but with great magnanimity observed that he did not wish to be hard upon the young man. His youth was in his favour, and his offence was probably the consequence of evil company. He suggested, therefore, that as he must be perfectly aware of the address of his friend, he should receive a full pardon if he would immediately favour the magistrate with that information. He concluded by remarking, with singular philanthropy, that it was not the punishment of the youth, but the recovery of his watch, that he desired.

Justice Burnflat, having duly impressed upon our hero's mind the disinterested and Christian mercy of the complainant, and the everlasting obligation Paul was under to him for its display, now repeated, with double solemnity, those queries respecting the habitation and name of Long Ned which our hero had before declined to answer.

Grieved are we to confess that Paul, ungrateful for and wholly untouched by the beautiful benignity of Lawyer Brandon, continued firm in his stubborn denial to betray his comrade; and with equal obduracy he continued to insist upon his own innocence and unblemished respectability of character.

"Your name, young man?" quoth the justice. "Your name, you say, is Paul,--Paul what? You have many an alias, I'll be bound."

Here the young gentleman again hesitated; at length he replied,--

"Paul Lobkins, your worship."

"Lobkins!" repeated the judge,--"Lobkins! Come hither, Saunders; have not we that name down in our black books?"

"So, please your worship," quoth a little stout man, very useful in many respects to the Festus of the police, "there is one Peggy Lobkins, who keeps a public-house, a sort of flash ken, called the Mug, in Thames Court,--not exactly in our beat, your worship."

"Ho, ho!" said Justice Burnflat; winking at Mr. Brandon, "we must sift this a little. Pray, Mr. Paul Lobkins, what relation is the good landlady of the Mug, in Thames Court, to yourself?"

"None at all, sir," said Paul, hastily; "she's only a friend!"

Upon this there was a laugh in the court.

"Silence!" cried the justice. "And I dare say, Mr. Paul Lobkins, that this friend of yours will vouch for the respectability of your character, upon which you are pleased to value yourself?"

"I have not a doubt of it, sir," answered Paul; and there was another laugh.

"And is there any other equally weighty and praiseworthy friend of yours who will do you the like kindness?"

Paul hesitated; and at that moment, to the surprise of the court, but above all to the utter and astounding surprise of himself, two gentlemen, dressed in the height of the fashion, pushed forward, and bowing to the justice, declared themselves ready to vouch for the thorough respectability and unimpeachable character of Mr. Paul Lobkins, whom they had known, they said, for many years, and for whom they had the greatest respect. While Paul was surveying the persons of these kind friends, whom he never remembered to have seen before in the course of his life, the lawyer, who was a very sharp fellow, whispered to the magistrate; and that dignitary nodding as in assent, and eying the new-comers, inquired the names of Mr. Lobkins's witnesses.

"Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert" and "Mr. William Howard Russell," were the several replies.

Names so aristocratic produced a general sensation. But the impenetrable justice, calling the same Mr. Saunders he had addressed before, asked him to examine well the countenances of Mr. Lobkins's friends.

As the alguazil eyed the features of the memorable Don Raphael and the illustrious Manuel Morales, when the former of those accomplished personages thought it convenient to assume the travelling dignity of an Italian prince, son of the sovereign of the valleys which lie between Switzerland, the Milanese, and Savoy, while the latter was contented with being servant to Monseigneur le Prince; even so, with far more earnestness than respect; did Mr. Saunders eye the features of those high-born gentlemen, Messrs. Eustace Fitzherbert and William Howard Russell; but after a long survey he withdrew his eyes, made an unsatisfactory and unrecognizing gesture to the magistrate, and said,--

"Please your worship, they are none of my flock; but Bill Troutling knows more of this sort of genteel chaps than I does."

"Bid Bill Troutling appear!" was the laconic order.

At that name a certain modest confusion might have been visible in the faces of Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert and Mr. William Howard Russell, had not the attention of the court been immediately directed to another case. A poor woman had been committed for seven days to the House of Correction on a charge of disrespectability. Her husband, the person most interested in the matter, now came forward to disprove the charge; and by help of his neighbours he succeeded.

"It is all very true," said Justice Burnflat; "but as your wife, my good fellow, will be out in five days, it will be scarcely worth while to release her now."

[A fact, occurring in the month of January, 1830. Vide
"The Morning Herald."]

So judicious a decision could not fail of satisfying the husband; and the audience became from that moment enlightened as to a very remarkable truth,--namely, that five days out of seven bear a peculiarly small proportion to the remaining two; and that people in England have so prodigious a love for punishment that though it is not worth while to release an innocent woman from prison five days sooner than one would otherwise have done, it is exceedingly well worth while to commit her to prison for seven!

When the husband, passing his rough hand across his eyes, and muttering some vulgar impertinence or another had withdrawn, Mr. Saunders said,--

"Here be Bill Troutling, your worship!"

"Oh, well," quoth the justice; "and now, Mr. Eustace Fitz--- Hallo, how's this! Where are Mr. William Howard Russell and his friend Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert?"

"Echo answered,--where?"

Those noble gentlemen, having a natural dislike to be confronted with so low a person as Mr. Bill Troutling, had, the instant public interest was directed from them, silently disappeared from a scene where their rank in life seemed so little regarded. If, reader, you should be anxious to learn from what part of the world the transitory visitants appeared, know that they were spirits sent by that inimitable magician, Long Ned, partly to report how matters fared in the court; for Mr. Pepper, in pursuance of that old policy which teaches that the nearer the fox is to the hunters, the more chance he has of being overlooked, had, immediately on his abrupt departure from Paul, dived into a house in the very street where his ingenuity had displayed itself, and in which oysters and ale nightly allured and regaled an assembly that, to speak impartially, was more numerous than select. There had he learned how a pickpocket had been seized for unlawful affection to another man's watch; and there, while he quietly seasoned his oysters, had he, with his characteristic acuteness, satisfied his mind by the conviction that that arrested unfortunate was no other than Paul. Partly, therefore, as a precaution for his own safety, that he might receive early intelligence should Paul's defence

make a change of residence expedient, and partly (out of the friendliness of fellowship) to back his companion with such aid as the favourable testimony of two well-dressed persons, little known "about town," might confer, he had despatched those celestial beings who had appeared under the mortal names of Eustace Fitzherbert and William Howard Russell to the imperial court of Justice Burnflat. Having thus accounted for the apparition (the _disapparition_ requires no commentary) of Paul's "friends," we return to Paul himself.

Despite the perils with which he was girt, our young hero fought out to the last; but the justice was not by any means willing to displease Mr. Brandon, and observing that an incredulous and biting sneer remained stationary on that gentleman's lip during the whole of Paul's defence, he could not but shape his decision according to the well-known acuteness of the celebrated lawyer. Paul was sentenced to retire for three months to that country-house situated at Bridewell, to which the ungrateful functionaries of justice often banish their most active citizens.

As soon as the sentence was passed, Brandon, whose keen eyes saw no hope of recovering his lost treasure, declared that the rascal had perfectly the Old Bailey cut of countenance, and that he did not doubt but, if ever he lived to be a judge, he should also live to pass a very different description of sentence on the offender.

So saying, he resolved to lose no more time, and very abruptly left the office, without any other comfort than the remembrance that, at all events, he had sent the boy to a place where, let him be ever so innocent at present, he was certain to come out as much inclined to be guilty as his friends could desire; joined to such moral reflection as the tragedy of Bombastes Furioso might have afforded to himself in that sententious and terse line,--

"Thy watch is gone,--watches are made _to go_."

Meanwhile Paul was conducted in state to his retreat, in company with two other offenders,--one a middle-aged man, though a very old "file," who was sentenced for getting money under false pretences, and the other a little boy who had been found guilty of sleeping under a colonnade; it being the especial beauty of the English law to make no fine-drawn and nonsensical shades of difference between vice and misfortune, and its peculiar method of protecting the honest being to make as many rogues as possible in as short a space of time.

CHAPTER VIII.

Common Sense. What is the end of punishment as regards the individual punished?

Custom. To make him better!

Common Sense. How do you punish young offenders who are (from their youth) peculiarly alive to example, and whom it is therefore more easy either to ruin or reform than the matured?

Custom. We send them to the House of Correction, to associate with the d--dest rascals in the country!

Dialogue between Common Sense and Custom.--Very scarce.

As it was rather late in the day when Paul made his first entree at Bridewell, he passed that night in the "receiving-room." The next morning, as soon as he had been examined by the surgeon and clothed in the customary uniform, he was ushered, according to his classification, among the good company who had been considered guilty of that compendious offence, "a misdemeanour." Here a tall gentleman marched up to him, and addressed him in a certain language, which might be called the freemasonry of flash, and which Paul, though he did not comprehend verbatim, rightly understood to be an inquiry whether he was a thorough rogue and an entire rascal. He answered half in confusion, half in anger; and his reply was so detrimental to any favourable influence he might otherwise have exercised over the interrogator, that the latter personage, giving him a pinch in the ear, shouted out, "Ramp, ramp!" and at that significant and awful word, Paul found himself surrounded in a trice by a whole host of ingenious tormentors. One pulled this member, another pinched that; one cuffed him before, and another thrashed him behind. By way of interlude to this pleasing occupation, they stripped him of the very few things that in his change of dress he had retained. One carried off his handkerchief, a second his neckcloth, and a third, luckier than either, possessed himself of a pair of carnelian shirt-buttons, given to Paul as a gage d'amour by a young lady who sold oranges near the Tower. Happily, before this initiatory process--technically termed "ramping," and exercised upon all new-comers who seem to have a spark of decency in them--had reduced the bones of Paul, who fought tooth and nail in his defence, to the state of magnesia, a man of a grave aspect, who had hitherto plucked his oakum in quiet, suddenly rose, thrust himself between the victim and the assailants, and desired the latter, like one having authority, to leave the lad alone, and go and be d--d.

This proposal to resort to another place for amusement, though uttered in a very grave and tranquil manner, produced that instantaneous effect which admonitions from great rogues generally work upon little. Messieurs the ravmpers ceased from their amusements; and the ringleader of the gang, thumping Paul heartily on the back, declared he was a capital fellow, and it was only a bit of a spree like, which he hoped had not given any offence.

Paul, still clenching his fist, was about to answer in no pacific mood, when a turnkey, who did not care in the least how many men he locked up for an offence, but who did not at all like the trouble of looking after any one of his flock to see that the offence was not committed, now suddenly appeared among the set; and after scolding them for the excessive plague they were to him, carried off two of the poorest of the mob to solitary confinement. It happened, of course, that these two had not taken the smallest share in the disturbance. This scene over, the company returned to picking oakum; the tread-mill, that admirably just invention by which a strong man suffers no fatigue and a weak one loses his health for life, not having been then introduced into our excellent establishments for correcting crime. Bitterly and with many dark and wrathful feelings, in which the sense of injustice at punishment alone bore him up against the humiliations to which he was subjected,--bitterly and with a swelling heart, in which the thoughts that lead to crime were already forcing their way through a soil suddenly warmed for their growth, did Paul bend over his employment. He felt himself touched on

the arm; he turned, and saw that the gentleman who had so kindly delivered him from his tormentors was now sitting next to him. Paul gazed long and earnestly upon his neighbour, struggling with the thought that he had beheld that sagacious countenance in happier times, although now, alas! it was altered not only by time and vicissitudes but by that air of gravity which the cares of manhood spread gradually over the face of the most thoughtless,--until all doubt melted away, and he exclaimed,--

"Is that you, Mr. Tomlinson? How glad I am to see you here!"

"And I," returned the quondam murderer for the newspapers, with a nasal twang, "should be very glad to see myself anywhere else."

Paul made no answer; and Augustus continued,--

"To a wise man all places are the same,'--so it has been said. I don't believe it, Paul,--I don't believe it. But a truce to reflection! I remembered you the moment I saw you, though you are surprisingly grown. How is my friend MacGrawler?--still hard at work for 'The Asinaeum'?"

"I believe so," said Paul, sullenly, and hastening to change the conversation; "but tell me, Mr. Tomlinson, how came you hither? I heard you had gone down to the North of England to fulfil a lucrative employment."

"Possibly! The world always misrepresents the actions of those who are constantly before it."

"It is very true," said Paul; "and I have said the same thing myself a hundred times in 'The Asinaeum,' for we were never too lavish of our truths in that magnificent journal. 'T is astonishing what a way we made three ideas go."

"You remind me of myself and my newspaper labours," rejoined Augustus Tomlinson. "I am not quite sure that I had so many as three ideas to spare; for, as you say, it is astonishing how far that number may go, properly managed. It is with writers as with strolling players,--the same three ideas that did for Turks in one scene do for Highlanders in the next; but you must tell me your history one of these days, and you shall hear mine."

"I should be excessively obliged to you for your confidence," said Paul, "and I doubt not but your life must be excessively entertaining. Mine, as yet, has been but insipid. The lives of literary men are not fraught with adventure; and I question whether every writer in 'The Asinaeum' has not led pretty nearly the same existence as that which I have sustained myself."

In conversation of this sort our newly restored friends passed the remainder of the day, until the hour of half-past four, when the prisoners are to suppose night has begun, and be locked up in their bedrooms. Tomlinson then, who was glad to re-find a person who had known him in his *_beaux jours_*, spoke privately to the turnkey; and the result of the conversation was the coupling Paul and Augustus in the same chamber, which was a sort of stone box, that generally accommodated three, and was--for we have measured it, as we would have measured the cell of the prisoner of Chillon--just eight feet by six.

We do not intend, reader, to indicate, by broad colours and in long detail, the moral deterioration of our hero; because we have found, by experience, that such pains on our part do little more than make thee blame our stupidity instead of lauding our intention. We shall therefore only work out our moral by subtle hints and brief comments; and we shall now content ourselves with reminding thee that hitherto thou hast seen Paul honest in the teeth of circumstances. Despite the contagion of the Mug, despite his associates in Fish Lane, despite his intimacy with Long Ned, thou hast seen him brave temptation, and look forward to some other career than that of robbery or fraud. Nay, even in his destitution, when driven from the abode of his childhood, thou hast observed how, instead of resorting to some more pleasurable or libertine road of life, he betook himself at once to the dull roof and insipid employments of MacGrawler, and preferred honestly earning his subsistence by the sweat of his brain to recurring to any of the numerous ways of living on others with which his experience among the worst part of society must have teemed, and which, to say the least of them, are more alluring to the young and the adventurous than the barren paths of literary labour. Indeed, to let thee into a secret, it had been Paul's daring ambition to raise himself into a worthy member of the community. His present circumstances, it may hereafter be seen, made the cause of a great change in his desires; and the conversation he held that night with the ingenious and skilful Augustus went more towards fitting him for the hero of this work than all the habits of his childhood or the scenes of his earlier youth. Young people are apt, erroneously, to believe that it is a bad thing to be exceedingly wicked. The House of Correction is so called, because it is a place where so ridiculous a notion is invariably corrected. The next day Paul was surprised by a visit from Mrs. Lobkins, who had heard of his situation and its causes from the friendly Dummie, and who had managed to obtain from Justice Burnflat an order of admission. They met, Pyramus and Thisbe like, with a wall, or rather an iron gate, between them; and Mrs. Lobkins, after an ejaculation of despair at the obstacle, burst weepingly into the pathetic reproach,--

"O Paul, thou hast brought thy pigs to a fine market!"

"'T is a market proper for pigs, dear dame," said Paul, who, though with a tear in his eye, did not refuse a joke as bitter as it was inelegant; "for, of all others, it is the spot where a man learns to take care of his bacon."

"Hold your tongue!" cried the dame, angrily. "What business has you to gabble on so while you are in limbo?"

"Ah, dear dame," said Paul, "we can't help these rubs and stumbles on our road to preferment!"

"Road to the scragging-post!" cried the dame. "I tells you, child, you'll live to be hanged in spite of all my care and 'tention to you, though I hedicated you as a scholar, and always hoped as how you would grow up to be an honour to your--"

"King and country," interrupted Paul. "We always say, honour to king and country, which means getting rich and paying taxes. 'The more taxes a man pays, the greater honour he is to both,' as Augustus says. Well, dear dame, all in good time."

"What! you is merry, is you? Why does not you weep?"

Your heart is as hard as a brickbat. It looks quite unnatural and hyena-like to be so _devil-me-careish!" So saying, the good dame's tears gushed forth with the bitterness of a despairing Parisina.

"Nay, nay," said Paul, who, though he suffered far more intensely, bore the suffering far more easily than his patroness, "we cannot mend the matter by crying. Suppose you see what can be done for me. I dare say you may manage to soften the justice's sentence by a little 'oil of palms;' and if you can get me out before I am quite corrupted,--a day or two longer in this infernal place will do the business,--I promise you that I will not only live honestly myself, but with people who live in the same manner."

"Buss me, Paul," said the tender Mrs. Lobkins, "buss me--Oh! but I forgits the gate. I'll see what can be done. And here, my lad, here's summat for you in the mean while,--a drop o' the cretur, to preach comfort to your poor stomach. Hush! smuggle it through, or they'll see you."

Here the dame endeavoured to push a stone bottle through the bars of the gate; but, alas! though the neck passed through, the body refused, and the dame was forced to retract the "cretur." Upon this, the kind-hearted woman renewed her sobbings; and so absorbed was she in her grief that seemingly quite forgetting for what purpose she had brought the bottle, she applied it to her own mouth, and consoled herself with that elixir vitae which she had originally designed for Paul.

This somewhat restored her; and after a most affecting scene the dame reeled off with the vacillating steps natural to woe, promising, as she went, that if love or money could shorten Paul's confinement, neither should be wanting. We are rather at a loss to conjecture the exact influence which the former of these arguments, urged by the lovely Margaret, might have had upon Justice Burnflat.

When the good dame had departed, Paul hastened to repick his oakum and rejoin his friend. He found the worthy Augustus privately selling little elegant luxuries, such as tobacco, gin, and rations of daintier viands than the prison allowed; for Augustus, having more money than the rest of his companions, managed, through the friendship of the turnkey, to purchase secretly, and to resell at about four hundred per cent, such comforts as the prisoners especially coveted.

[A very common practice at the Bridewell. The Governor at the Coldbath-Fields, apparently a very intelligent and active man, every way fitted for a most arduous undertaking, informed us, in the only conversation we have had the honour to hold with him, that he thought he had nearly or quite destroyed in his jurisdiction this illegal method of commerce.]

"A proof," said Augustus, dryly, to Paul, "that by prudence and exertion even in those places where a man cannot turn himself he may manage to turn a penny."

CHAPTER IX.

"Relate at large, my godlike guest," she said,
"The Grecian stratagems,--the town betrayed!"
DRYDEN: Virgil, Aeneid, book ii.

Descending thence, they 'scaped!--Ibid.

A great improvement had taken place in the character of Augustus Tomlinson since Paul had last encountered that illustrious man. Then Augustus had affected the man of pleasure, the learned loungeur about town, the all-accomplished Pericles of the papers, gayly quoting Horace, gravely flanking a fly from the leader of Lord Dunshunner. Now a more serious yet not a less supercilious air had settled upon his features; the pretence of fashion had given way to the pretence of wisdom; and from the man of pleasure Augustus Tomlinson had grown to the philosopher. With this elevation alone, too, he was not content: he united the philosopher with the politician; and the ingenious rascal was pleased especially to pique himself upon being "a moderate Whig"!

"Paul," he was wont to observe, "believe me, moderate Whiggism is a most excellent creed. It adapts itself to every possible change, to every conceivable variety of circumstance. It is the only politics for us who are the aristocrats of that free body who rebel against tyrannical laws; for, hang it, I am none of your democrats. Let there be dungeons and turnkeys for the low rascals who whip clothes from the hedge where they hang to dry, or steal down an area in quest of a silver spoon; but houses of correction are not made for men who have received an enlightened education,--who abhor your petty thefts as much as a justice of peace can do,--who ought never to be termed dishonest in their dealings, but, if they are found out, 'unlucky in their speculations'! A pretty thing, indeed, that there should be distinctions of rank among other members of the community, and none among us! Where's your boasted British Constitution, I should like to know, where are your privileges of aristocracy, if I, who am a gentleman born, know Latin, and have lived in the best society, should be thrust into this abominable place with a dirty fellow who was born in a cellar, and could never earn more at a time than would purchase a sausage? No, no! none of your levelling principles for me! I am liberal, Paul, and love liberty; but, thank Heaven, I despise your democracies!"

Thus, half in earnest, half veiling a natural turn to sarcasm, would this moderate Whig run on for the hour together during those long nights, commencing at half-past four, in which he and Paul bore each other company.

One evening, when Tomlinson was so bitterly disposed to be prolix that Paul felt himself somewhat wearied by his eloquence, our hero, desirous of a change in the conversation, reminded Augustus of his promise to communicate his history; and the philosophical Whig, nothing loath to speak of himself, cleared his throat, and began.

"Never mind who was my father, nor what was my native place! My first ancestor was Tommy Linn (his heir became Tom Linn's son),--you have heard the ballad made in his praise,

"Tommy Linn is a Scotchman born,
His head is bald and his beard is shorn;
He had a cap made of a hare skin,
An elder man is Tommy Linn!"

"There was a sort of prophecy respecting my ancestor's descendants darkly insinuated in the concluding stanza of this ballad:--

"Tommy Linn, and his wife, and his wife's mother,
They all fell into the fire together;
They that lay undermost got a hot skin,--

"We are not enough!" said Tommy Linn."

"You see the prophecy: it is applicable both to gentlemen rogues and to moderate Whigs; for both are undermost in the world, and both are perpetually bawling out, 'We are not enough!'

"I shall begin my own history by saying, I went to a North Country school, where I was noted for my aptness in learning; and my skill at 'prisoner's base,'--upon my word I purposed no pun! I was intended for the Church. Wishing, betimes, to instruct myself in its ceremonies, I persuaded my schoolmaster's maidservant to assist me towards promoting a christening. My father did not like this premature love for the sacred rites. He took me home; and wishing to give my clerical ardour a different turn, prepared me for writing sermons by reading me a dozen a day. I grew tired of this, strange as it may seem to you. 'Father,' said I, one morning, 'it is no use talking; I will not go into the Church,--that's positive. Give me your blessing and a hundred pounds, and I'll go up to London and get a living instead of a curacy.' My father stormed; but I got the better at last. I talked of becoming a private tutor; swore I had heard nothing was so easy,--the only things wanted were pupils; and the only way to get them was to go to London and let my learning be known. My poor father,--well, he's gone, and I am glad of it now!" The speaker's voice faltered. "I got the better, I say, and I came to town, where I had a relation a bookseller. Through his interest, I wrote a book of Travels in Ethiopia for an earl's son, who wanted to become a lion; and a Treatise on the Greek Particle, dedicated to the prime minister, for a dean, who wanted to become a bishop,--Greek being, next to interest, the best road to the mitre. These two achievements were liberally paid; so I took a lodging in a first floor, and resolved to make a bold stroke for a wife. What do you think I did?--nay, never guess; it would be hopeless. First, I went to the best tailor, and had my clothes sewn on my back; secondly, I got the peerage and its genealogies by heart; thirdly, I marched one night, with the coolest deliberation possible, into the house of a duchess, who was giving an immense rout! The newspapers had inspired me with this idea. I had read of the vast crowds which a lady 'at home' sought to win to her house. I had read of staircases impassable, and ladies carried out in a fit; and common-sense told me how impossible it was that the fair receiver should be acquainted with the legality of every importation. I therefore resolved to try my chance, and--entered the body of Augustus Tomlinson, as a piece of stolen goods. Faith! the first night I was shy,--I stuck to the staircase, and ogled an old maid of quality, whom I had heard announced as Lady Margaret Sinclair. Doubtless she had never been ogled before; and she was evidently enraptured with my glances. The next night I read of a ball at the Countess of -----'s. My heart beat as if I were going to be whipped; but I plucked up courage, and repaired to her ladyship's. There I again beheld the divine Lady Margaret; and observing that she turned yellow, by way of a blush, when she saw me, I profited by the port I had drunk as an encouragement to my entree, and lounging up in the most modish way possible, I reminded her ladyship of an introduction with which I said I had once been honoured at the Duke of Dashwell's, and requested her hand for the next cotillion. Oh, Paul,

fancy my triumph! The old damsel said, with a sigh, she remembered me very well, ha, ha, ha!--and I carried her off to the cotillion like another Theseus bearing away a second Ariadne. Not to be prolix on this part of my life, I went night after night to balls and routs, for admission to which half the fine gentlemen in London would have given their ears. And I improved my time so well with Lady Margaret, who was her own mistress and had L5,000,--a devilish bad portion for some, but not to be laughed at by me,--that I began to think when the happy day should be fixed. Meanwhile, as Lady Margaret introduced me to some of her friends, and my lodgings were in a good situation, I had been honoured with some real invitations. The only two questions I ever was asked were (carelessly), "Was I the only son?" and on my veritable answer 'Yes!' 'What' (this was more warmly put),--'what was my county?' Luckily my county was a wide one,--Yorkshire; and any of its inhabitants whom the fair interrogators might have questioned about me could only have answered, I was not in their part of it.

"Well, Paul, I grew so bold by success that the devil one day put it into my head to go to a great dinner-party at the Duke of Dashwell's. I went, dined,--nothing happened; I came away, and the next morning I read in the papers,--

"'Mysterious affair--person lately going about--first bouses--most fashionable parties--nobody knows--Duke of Dashwell's yesterday. Duke not like to make disturbance--as royalty present."

"The journal dropped from my hands. At that moment the girl of the house gave me a note from Lady Margaret,--alluded to the paragraph; wondered who was 'The Stranger;' hoped to see me that night at Lord A-----'s, to whose party I said I had been asked; speak then more fully on those matters I had touched on!--in short, dear Paul, a tender epistle! All great men are fatalists,--I am one now; fate made me a madman. In the very face of this ominous paragraph I mustered up courage, and went that night to Lord A-----'s. The fact is, my affairs were in confusion,--I was greatly in debt. I knew it was necessary to finish my conquest over Lady Margaret as soon as possible; and Lord A-----'s seemed the best place for the purpose. Nay, I thought delay so dangerous, after the cursed paragraph, that a day might unmask me, and it would be better therefore not to lose an hour in finishing the play of 'The Stranger' with the farce of 'The Honey Moon.' Behold me then at Lord A-----'s, leading off Lady Margaret to the dance. Behold me whispering the sweetest of things in her ear. Imagine her approving my suit, and gently chiding me for talking of Gretna Green. Conceive all this, my dear fellow, and just at the height of my triumph, dilate the eyes of your imagination, and behold the stately form of Lord A-----, my noble host, marching up to me, while a voice that, though low and quiet as an evening breeze, made my heart sink into my shoes, said, 'I believe, sir, you have received no invitation from Lady A-----?'

"Not a word could I utter, Paul,--not a word. Had it been the highroad instead of a ballroom, I could have talked loudly enough; but I was under a spell. 'Ehem!' I faltered at last,--'e-h-e-m! Some mis-take, I-- I--' There I stopped.

"'Sir,' said the earl, regarding me with a grave sternness, 'you had better withdraw.'

"'Bless me! what's all this?' cried Lady Margaret, dropping my palsied arm, and gazing on me as if she expected me to talk like a hero.

"'Oh,' said I, 'eh-e-m, eh-e-m,--I will exp--lain to-morrow,--ehem, e-h-e-m.' I made to the door; all the eyes in the room seemed turned into burning-glasses, and blistered the very skin on my face. I heard a gentle shriek, as I left the apartment,--Lady Margaret fainting, I suppose! There ended my courtship and my adventures in 'the best society.'

"I felt melancholy at the ill-success of my scheme. You must allow it was a magnificent project. What moral courage! I admire myself when I think of it. Without an introduction, without knowing a soul, to become, all by my own resolution, free of the finest houses in London, dancing with earls' daughters, and all but carrying off an earl's daughter myself as my wife. If I had, the friends must have done something for me; and Lady Margaret Tomlinson might perhaps have introduced the youthful genius of her Augustus to parliament or the ministry. Oh, what a fall was there! Yet, faith, ha, ha, ha! I could not help laughing, despite of my chagrin, when I remembered that for three months I had imposed on these 'delicate exclusives,' and been literally invited by many of them, who would not have asked the younger sons of their own cousins, merely because I lived in a good street, avowed myself an only child, and talked of my property in Yorkshire! Ha, ha! how bitter the mercenary dupes must have felt when the discovery was made! What a pill for the good matrons who had coupled my image with that of some filial Mary or Jane,--ha, ha, ha! The triumph was almost worth the mortification. However, as I said before, I fell melancholy on it, especially as my duns became menacing. So I went to consult with my cousin the bookseller. He recommended me to compose for the journals, and obtained me an offer. I went to work very patiently for a short time, and contracted some agreeable friendships with gentlemen whom I met at an ordinary in St. James's. Still, my duns, though I paid them by driblets, were the plague of my life. I confessed as much to one of my new friends. 'Come to Bath with me,' quoth he, 'for a week, and you shall return as rich as a Jew.' I accepted the offer, and went to Bath in my friend's chariot. He took the name of Lord Dunshunner, an Irish peer who had never been out of Tipperary, and was not therefore likely to be known at Bath. He took also a house for a year; filled it with wines, books, and a sideboard of plate. As he talked vaguely of setting up his younger brother to stand for the town at the next parliament, he bought these goods of the townspeople, in order to encourage their trade. I managed secretly to transport them to London and sell them; and as we disposed of them fifty per cent under cost price, our customers, the pawnbrokers, were not very inquisitive. We lived a jolly life at Bath for a couple of months, and departed one night, leaving our housekeeper to answer all interrogatories. We had taken the precaution to wear disguises, stuffed ourselves out, and changed the hues of our hair. My noble friend was an adept in these transformations; and though the police did not sleep on the business, they never stumbled on us. I am especially glad we were not discovered, for I liked Bath excessively; and I intend to return there some of these days, and retire from the world--on an heiress!

"Well, Paul, shortly after this adventure I made your acquaintance. I continued ostensibly my literary profession, but only as a mask for the labours I did not profess. A circumstance obliged me to leave London rather precipitately. Lord Dunshunner joined me in Edinburgh. D---it, instead of doing anything there, we were done! The veriest urchin that ever crept through the High Street is more than a match for the most scientific of Englishmen. With us it is art; with the Scotch it is nature. They pick your pockets without using their fingers for it; and

they prevent reprisal by having nothing for you to pick.

"We left Edinburgh with very long faces, and at Carlisle we found it necessary to separate. For my part, I went as a valet to a nobleman who had just lost his last servant at Carlisle by a fever; my friend gave me the best of characters! My new master was a very clever man. He astonished people at dinner by the impromptus he prepared at breakfast; in a word, he was a wit. He soon saw, for he was learned himself, that I had received a classical education, and he employed me in the confidential capacity of finding quotations for him. I classed these alphabetically and under three heads,--'Parliamentary, Literary, Dining-out.' These were again subdivided into 'Fine,' 'Learned,' and 'Jocular;' so that my master knew at once where to refer for genius, wisdom, and wit. He was delighted with my management of his intellects. In compliment to him, I paid more attention to politics than I had done before; for he was a 'great Whig,' and uncommonly liberal in everything--but money! Hence, Paul, the origin of my political principles; and I thank Heaven there is not now a rogue in England who is a better--that is to say, more of a moderate-Whig than your humble servant! I continued with him nearly a year. He discharged me for a fault worthy of my genius: other servants may lose the watch or the coat of their master; I went at nobler game, and lost him--his private character!"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, I was enamoured of a lady who would not have looked at me as Mr. Tomlinson; so I took my master's clothes and occasionally his carriage, and made love to my nymph as Lord. Her vanity made her indiscreet. The Tory papers got hold of it; and my master, in a change of ministers, was declared by George the Third to be 'too gay for a Chancellor of the Exchequer.' An old gentleman who had had fifteen children by a wife like a Gorgon, was chosen instead of my master; and although the new minister was a fool in his public capacity, the moral public were perfectly content with him, because of his private virtues!

"My master was furious, made the strictest inquiry, found me out, and turned me out too!

"A Whig not in place has an excuse for disliking the Constitution. My distress almost made me a republican; but, true to my creed, I must confess that I would only have levelled upwards. I especially disaffected the inequality of riches; I looked moodily on every carriage that passed; I even frowned like a second Catiline at the steam of a gentle man's kitchen! My last situation had not been lucrative; I had neglected my perquisites, in my ardour for politics. My master, too, refused to give me a character: who would take me without one?"

"I was asking myself this melancholy question one morning, when I suddenly encountered one of the fine friends I had picked up at my old haunt, the ordinary, in St. James's. His name was Pepper."

"Pepper!" cried Paul.

Without heeding the exclamation, Tomlinson continued:--"We went to a tavern and drank a bottle together. Wine made me communicative; it also opened my comrade's heart. He asked me to take a ride with him that night towards Hounslow. I did so, and found a purse."

"How fortunate! Where?"

"In a gentleman's pocket. I was so pleased with my luck that I went the same road twice a week, in order to see if I could pick up any more purses. Fate favoured me, and I lived for a long time the life of the blessed. Oh, Paul, you know not--you know not what a glorious life is that of a highwayman; but you shall taste it one of these days,--you shall, on my honour.

"I now lived with a club of honest fellows. We called ourselves 'The Exclusives,'--for we were mightily reserved in our associates, and only those who did business on a grand scale were admitted into our set. For my part, with all my love for my profession, I liked ingenuity still better than force, and preferred what the vulgar call swindling, even to the highroad. On an expedition of this sort, I rode once into a country town, and saw a crowd assembled in one corner; I joined it, and my feelings!--beheld my poor friend Viscount Dunshunner just about to be hanged! I rode off as fast as I could,--I thought I saw Jack Ketch at my heels. My horse threw me at a hedge, and I broke my collar-bone. In the confinement that ensued gloomy ideas floated before me. I did not like to be hanged; so I reasoned against my errors, and repented. I recovered slowly, returned to town, and repaired to my cousin the bookseller. To say truth, I had played him a little trick: collected some debts of his by a mistake,--very natural in the confusion incident on my distresses. However, he was extremely unkind about it; and the mistake, natural as it was, had cost me his acquaintance.

"I went now to him with the penitential aspect of the prodigal son; and, faith, he would have not made a bad representation of the fatted calf about to be killed on my return,--so corpulent looked he, and so dejected! 'Graceless reprobate!' he began, 'your poor father is dead!' I was exceedingly shocked; but--never fear, Paul, I am not about to be pathetic. My father had divided his fortune among all his children; my share was L500. The possession of this soon made my penitence seem much more sincere in the eyes of my good cousin; and after a very pathetic scene, he took me once more into favour. I now consulted with him as to the best method of laying out my capital and recovering my character. We could not devise any scheme at the first conference; but the second time I saw him, my cousin said with a cheerful countenance: 'Cheer up, Augustus, I have got thee a situation. Mr. Asgrave the banker will take thee as a clerk. He is a most worthy man; and having a vast deal of learning, he will respect thee for thy acquirements.' The same day I was introduced to Mr. Asgrave, who was a little man with a fine, bald, benevolent head; and after a long conversation which he was pleased to hold with me, I became one of his quill-drivers. I don't know how it was, but by little and little I rose in my master's good graces. I propitiated him, I fancy, by disposing of my L500 according to his advice; he laid it out for me, on what he said was famous security, on a landed estate. Mr. Asgrave was of social habits,--he had a capital house and excellent wines. As he was not very particular in his company, nor ambitious of visiting the great, he often suffered me to make one of his table, and was pleased to hold long arguments with me about the ancients. I soon found out that my master was a great moral philosopher; and being myself in weak health, sated with the ordinary pursuits of the world, in which my experience had forestalled my years, and naturally of a contemplative temperament, I turned my attention to the moral studies which so fascinated my employer. I read through nine shelves full of metaphysicians, and knew exactly the points in which those illustrious thinkers quarrelled with each other, to the great advance of the science. My master and I used to hold many a long discussion about the nature of

good and evil; as, by help of his benevolent forehead and a clear dogged voice, he always seemed to our audience to be the wiser and better man of the two, he was very well pleased with our disputes. This gentleman had an only daughter,--an awful shrew, with a face like a hatchet but philosophers overcome personal defects; and thinking only of the good her wealth might enable me to do to my fellow-creatures, I secretly made love to her. You will say that was playing my master but a scurvy trick for his kindness. Not at all; my master himself had convinced me that there was no such virtue as gratitude. It was an error of vulgar moralists. I yielded to his arguments, and at length privately espoused his daughter. The day after this took place, he summoned me to his study. 'So, Augustus,' said he, very mildly, 'you have married my daughter: nay, never look confused; I saw a long time ago that you were resolved to do so, and I was very glad of it.'

"I attempted to falter out something like thanks. 'Never interrupt me!' said he. 'I had two reasons for being glad,--first, because my daughter was the plague of my life, and I wanted some one to take her off my hands; secondly, because I required your assistance on a particular point, and I could not venture to ask it of any one but my son-in-law. In fine, I wish to take you into partnership!'

"'Partnership!' cried I, falling on my knees. 'Noble, generous man!'

"'Stay a bit,' continued my father-in-law. 'What funds do you think requisite for carrying on a bank? You look puzzled! Not a shilling! You will put in just as much as I do. You will put in rather more; for you once put in L500, which has been spent long ago. I don't put in a shilling of my own. I live on my clients, and I very willingly offer you half of them!'

"Imagine, dear Paul, my astonishment, my dismay! I saw myself married to a hideous shrew,--son-in-law to a penniless scoundrel, and cheated out of my whole fortune! Compare this view of the question with that which had blazed on me when I contemplated being son-in-law to the rich Mr. Asgrave. I stormed at first. Mr. Asgrave took up Bacon 'On the Advancement of Learning,' and made no reply till I was cooled by explosion. You will perceive that when passion subsided, I necessarily saw that nothing was left for me but adopting my father-in-law's proposal. Thus, by the fatality which attended me at the very time I meant to reform, I was forced into scoundrelism, and I was driven into defrauding a vast number of persons by the accident of being son-in-law to a great moralist. As Mr. Asgrave was an indolent man, who passed his mornings in speculations on virtue, I was made the active partner. I spent the day at the counting-house; and when I came home for recreation, my wife scratched my eyes out."

"But were you never recognized as 'the stranger' or 'the adventurer' in your new capacity?"

"No; for of course I assumed, in all my changes, both aliases and disguises. And, to tell you the truth, my marriage so altered me that, what with a snuff-coloured coat and a brown scratch wig, with a pen in my right ear, I looked the very picture of staid respectability. My face grew an inch longer every day. Nothing is so respectable as a long face; and a subdued expression of countenance is the surest sign of commercial prosperity. Well, we went on splendidly enough for about a year. Meanwhile I was wonderfully improved in philosophy. You have no idea how a scolding wife sublimes and rarefies one's intellect. Thunder clears

the air, you know! At length, unhappily for my fame (for I contemplated a magnificent moral history of man, which, had she lived a year longer, I should have completed), my wife died in child-bed. My father-in-law and I were talking over the event, and finding fault with civilization for the enervating habits by which women die of their children instead of bringing them forth without being even conscious of the circumstance, when a bit of paper, sealed awry, was given to my partner. He looked over it, finished the discussion, and then told me our bank had stopped payment. 'Now, Augustus,' said he, lighting his pipe with the bit of paper, 'you see the good of having nothing to lose.'

"We did not pay quite sixpence in the pound; but my partner was thought so unfortunate that the British public raised a subscription for him, and he retired on an annuity, greatly respected and very much compassionated. As I had not been so well known as a moralist, and had not the prepossessing advantage of a bald, benevolent head, nothing was done for me, and I was turned once more on the wide world, to moralize on the vicissitudes of fortune. My cousin the bookseller was no more, and his son cut me. I took a garret in Warwick Court, and with a few books, my only consolation, I endeavoured to nerve my mind to the future. It was at this time, Paul, that my studies really availed me. I meditated much, and I became a true philosopher, namely, a practical one. My actions were henceforth regulated by principle; and at some time or other, I will convince you that the road of true morals never avoids the pockets of your neighbour. So soon as my mind had made the grand discovery which Mr. Asgrave had made before me, that one should live according to a system,--for if you do wrong, it is then your system that errs, not you, --I took to the road, without any of those stings of conscience which had hitherto annoyed me in such adventures. I formed one of a capital knot of 'Free Agents,' whom I will introduce to you some day or other, and I soon rose to distinction among them. But about six weeks ago, not less than formerly preferring byways to highways, I attempted to possess myself of a carriage, and sell it at discount. I was acquitted on the felony, but sent hither by Justice Burnflat on the misdemeanour. Thus far, my young friend, hath as yet proceeded the life of Augustus Tomlinson." The history of this gentleman made a deep impression on Paul. The impression was strengthened by the conversations subsequently holden with Augustus. That worthy was a dangerous and subtle persuader. He had really read a good deal of history, and something of morals; and he had an ingenious way of defending his rascally practices by syllogisms from the latter, and examples from the former. These theories he clenched, as it were, by a reference to the existing politics of the day. Cheaters of the public, on false pretences, he was pleased to term "moderate Whigs;" bullying demanders of your purse were "high Tories;" and thieving in gangs was "the effect of the spirit of party." There was this difference between Augustus Tomlinson and Long Ned,--Ned was the acting knave, Augustus the reasoning one; and we may see therefore, by a little reflection, that Tomlinson was a far more perilous companion than Pepper,--for showy theories are always more seductive to the young and clever than suasive examples, and the vanity of the youthful makes them better pleased by being convinced of a thing than by being enticed to it.

A day or two after the narrative of Mr. Tomlinson, Paul was again visited by Mrs. Lobkins,--for the regulations against frequent visitors were not then so strictly enforced as we understand them to be now; and the good dame came to deplore the ill-success of her interview with Justice Burnflat.

We spare the tender-hearted reader a detail of the affecting interview

that ensued. Indeed, it was but a repetition of the one we have before narrated. We shall only say, as a proof of Paul's tenderness of heart, that when he took leave of the good matron, and bade "God bless her," his voice faltered, and the tears stood in his eyes,--just as they were wont to do in the eyes of George the Third, when that excellent monarch was pleased graciously to encore "God save the King!"

"I'll be hanged," soliloquized our hero, as he slowly bent his course towards the subtle Augustus,--"I'll be hanged (humph! the denunciation is prophetic), if I don't feel as grateful to the old lady for her care of me as if she had never ill-used me. As for my parents, I believe I have little to be grateful for or proud of in that quarter. My poor mother, by all accounts, seems scarcely to have had even the brute virtue of maternal tenderness; and in all human likelihood I shall never know whether I had one father or fifty. But what matters it? I rather like the better to be independent; and, after all, what do nine tenths of us ever get from our parents but an ugly name, and advice which, if we follow, we are wretched, and if we neglect, we are disinherited?"

Comforting himself with these thoughts, which perhaps took their philosophical complexion from the conversations he had lately held with Augustus, and which broke off into the muttered air of--

"Why should we quarrel for riches?"

Paul repaired to his customary avocations.

In the third week of our hero's captivity Tomlinson communicated to him a plan of escape that had occurred to his sagacious brain. In the yard appropriated to the amusements of the gentlemen "misdemeaning," there was a water-pipe that, skirting the wall, passed over the door through which every morning the pious captives passed in their way to the chapel. By this Tomlinson proposed to escape; for to the pipe which reached from the door to the wall, in a slanting and easy direction, there was a sort of skirting-board; and a dexterous and nimble man might readily, by the help of this board, convey himself along the pipe, until the progress of that useful conductor (which was happily very brief) was stopped by the summit of the wall, where it found a sequel in another pipe, that descended to the ground on the opposite side of the wall. Now, on this opposite side was the garden of the prison; in this garden was a watchman, and this watchman was the hobgoblin of Tomlinson's scheme,--"For suppose us safe in the garden," said he, "what shall we do with this confounded fellow?"

"But that is not all," added Paul; "for even were there no watchman, there is a terrible wall, which I noted especially last week, when we were set to work in the garden, and which has no pipe, save a perpendicular one, that a man must have the legs of a fly to be able to climb!"

"Nonsense!" returned Tomlinson; "I will show you how to climb the stubbornest wall in Christendom, if one has but the coast clear. It is the watchman, the watchman, we must--"

"What?" asked Paul, observing his comrade did not conclude the sentence.

It was some time before the sage Augustus replied; he then said in a musing tone,--

"I have been thinking, Paul, whether it would be consistent with virtue,

and that strict code of morals by which all my actions are regulated, to--slay the watchman!"

"Good heavens!" cried Paul, horror-stricken.

"And I have decided," continued Augustus, solemnly, without regard to the exclamation, "that the action would be perfectly justifiable!"

"Villain!" exclaimed Paul, recoiling to the other end of the stone box-- for it was night--in which they were cooped.

"But," pursued Augustus, who seemed soliloquizing, and whose voice, sounding calm and thoughtful, like Young's in the famous monologue in "Hamlet," denoted that he heeded not the uncourteous interruption,--"but opinion does not always influence conduct; and although it may be virtuous to murder the watchman, I have not the heart to do it. I trust in my future history I shall not by discerning moralists be too severely censured for a weakness for which my physical temperament is alone to blame!"

Despite the turn of the soliloquy, it was a long time before Paul could be reconciled to further conversation with Augustus; and it was only from the belief that the moralist had leaned to the jesting vein that he at length resumed the consultation.

The conspirators did not, however, bring their scheme that night to any ultimate decision. The next day Augustus, Paul, and some others of the company were set to work in the garden; and Paul then observed that his friend, wheeling a barrow close by the spot where the watchman stood, overturned its contents. The watchman was good-natured enough to assist him in refilling the barrow; and Tomlinson profited so well by the occasion that that night he informed Paul that they would have nothing to dread from the watchman's vigilance. "He has promised," said Augustus, "for certain consi-de-ra-tions, to allow me to knock him down; he has also promised to be so much hurt as not to be able to move until we are over the wall. Our main difficulty now, then, is the first step,-- namely, to climb the pipe unperceived!"

"As to that," said Paul, who developed, through the whole of the scheme, organs of sagacity, boldness, and invention which charmed his friend, and certainly promised well for his future career,--"as to that, I think we may manage the first ascent with less danger than you imagine. The mornings of late have been very foggy; they are almost dark at the hour we go to chapel. Let you and I close the file: the pipe passes just above the door; our hands, as we have tried, can reach it; and a spring of no great agility will enable us to raise ourselves up to a footing on the pipe and the skirting-board.

"The climbing then is easy; and what with the dense fog and our own quickness, I think we shall have little difficulty in gaining the garden. The only precautions we need use are, to wait for a very dark morning, and to be sure that we are the last of the file, so that no one behind may give the alarm--"

"Or attempt to follow our example, and spoil the pie by a superfluous plum!" added Augustus. "You counsel admirably; and one of these days, if you are not hung in the mean while, will, I venture to auger, be a great logician."

The next morning was clear and frosty; but the day after was, to use Tomlinson's simile, "as dark as if all the negroes of Africa had been stewed down into air." "You might have cut the fog with a knife," as the proverb says. Paul and Augustus could not even see how significantly each looked at the other.

It was a remarkable trait of the daring temperament of the former, that, young as he was, it was fixed that he should lead the attempt. At the hour, then, for chapel the prisoners passed as usual through the door. When it came to Paul's turn he drew himself by his hands to the pipe, and then creeping along its sinuous course, gained the wall before he had even fetched his breath. Rather more clumsily, Augustus followed his friend's example. Once his foot slipped, and he was all but over. He extended his hands involuntarily, and caught Paul by the leg. Happily our hero had then gained the wall, to which he was clinging; and for once in a way, one rogue raised himself without throwing over another. Behold Tomlinson and Paul now seated for an instant on the wall to recover breath; the latter then,--the descent to the ground was not very great,--letting his body down by his hands, dropped into the garden.

"Hurt?" asked the prudent Augustus, in a hoarse whisper, before he descended from his "bad eminence," being even willing--

"To bear those ills he had,
Than fly to others that he knew not of"

"No!" without taking every previous precaution in his power, was the answer in the same voice, and Augustus dropped.

So soon as this latter worthy had recovered the shock of his fall, he lost not a moment in running to the other end of the garden. Paul followed. By the way Tomlinson stopped at a heap of rubbish, and picked up an immense stone. When they came to the part of the wall they had agreed to scale, they found the watchman,--about whom they needed not, by the by, to have concerned themselves; for had it not been arranged that he was to have met them, the deep fog would have effectually prevented him from seeing them. This faithful guardian Augustus knocked down, not with a stone, but with ten guineas; he then drew forth from his dress a thickish cord, which he procured some days before from the turnkey, and fastening the stone firmly to one end, threw that end over the wall. Now the wall had (as walls of great strength mostly have) an overhanging sort of battlement on either side; and the stone, when flung over and drawn to the tether of the cord to which it was attached, necessarily hitched against this projection; and thus the cord was as it were fastened to the wall, and Tomlinson was enabled by it to draw himself up to the top of the barrier. He performed this feat with gymnastic address, like one who had often practised it; albeit the discreet adventurer had not mentioned in his narrative to Paul any previous occasion for the practice. As soon as he had gained the top of the wall, he threw down the cord to his companion, and, in consideration of Paul's inexperience in that manner of climbing, gave the fastening of the rope an additional security by holding it himself. With slowness and labour Paul hoisted himself up; and then, by transferring the stone to the other side of the wall, where it made of course a similar hitch, our two adventurers were enabled successively to slide down, and consummate their escape from the House of Correction.

"Follow me now!" said Augustus, as he took to his heels; and Paul pursued him through a labyrinth of alleys and lanes, through which he shot and

dodged with a variable and shifting celerity that, had not Paul kept close upon him, would very soon, combined with the fog, have snatched him from the eyes of his young ally. Happily the immaturity of the morning, the obscurity of the streets passed through, and above all, the extreme darkness of the atmosphere, prevented that detection and arrest which their prisoner's garb would otherwise have insured them. At length they found themselves in the fields; and skulking along hedges, and diligently avoiding the highroad, they continued to fly onward, until they had advanced several miles into "the bowels of the land." At that time "the bowels" of Augustus Tomlinson began to remind him of their demands; and he accordingly suggested the desirability of their seizing the first peasant they encountered, and causing him to exchange clothes with one of the fugitives, who would thus be enabled to enter a public-house and provide for their mutual necessities. Paul agreed to this proposition, and accordingly they watched their opportunity and caught a ploughman. Augustus stripped him of his frock, hat, and worsted stockings; and Paul, hardened by necessity and companionship, helped to tie the poor ploughman to a tree. They then continued their progress for about an hour, and, as the shades of evening fell around them, they discovered a public-house. Augustus entered, and returned in a few minutes laden with bread and cheese, and a bottle of beer. Prison fare cures a man of daintiness, and the two fugitives dined on these homely viands with considerable complacency. They then resumed their journey, and at length, wearied with exertion, they arrived at a lonely haystack, where they resolved to repose for an hour or two.

CHAPTER X.

Unlike the ribald, whose licentious jest
Pollutes his banquet, and insults his guest,
From wealth and grandeur easy to descend,
Thou joy'st to lose the master in the friend.
We round thy board the cheerful menials see, Gay--
with the smile of bland equality;
No social care the gracious lord disdains;
Love prompts to love, and reverence reverence gains.

Translation of LUCAN to Paso,
Prefixed to the Twelfth Paper of "The Rambler."

Coyly shone down the bashful stars upon our adventurers, as, after a short nap behind the haystack, they stretched themselves, and looking at each other, burst into an involuntary and hilarious laugh at the prosperous termination of their exploit.

Hitherto they had been too occupied, first by their flight, then by hunger, then by fatigue, for self-gratulation; now they rubbed their hands, and joked like runaway schoolboys at their escape.

By degrees their thoughts turned from the past to the future; and "Tell me, my dear fellow," said Augustus, "what you intend to do. I trust I have long ago convinced you that it is no sin 'to serve our friends' and to 'be true to our party;' and therefore, I suppose, you will decide upon taking to the road."

"It is very odd," answered Paul, "that I should have any scruples left

after your lectures on the subject; but I own to you frankly that, somehow or other, I have doubts whether thieving be really the honestest profession I could follow."

"Listen to me, Paul," answered Augustus; and his reply is not unworthy of notice. "All crime and all excellence depend upon a good choice of words. I see you look puzzled; I will explain. If you take money from the public, and say you have robbed, you have indubitably committed a great crime; but if you do the same, and say you have been relieving the necessities of the poor, you have done an excellent action. If, in afterwards dividing this money with your companions, you say you have been sharing booty, you have committed an offence against the laws of your country; but if you observe that you have been sharing with your friends the gains of your industry, you have been performing one of the noblest actions of humanity. To knock a man on the head is neither virtuous nor guilty, but it depends upon the language applied to the action to make it murder or glory. Why not say, then, that you have testified the courage of a hero, rather than the atrocity of a ruffian? This is perfectly clear, is it not?"

[We observe in a paragraph from an American paper, copied without comment into the "Morning Chronicle," a singular proof of the truth of Tomlinson's philosophy! "Mr. Rowland Stephenson," so runs the extract, "the celebrated English banker, has just purchased a considerable tract of land," etc. Most philosophical of paragraphists! "Celebrated English banker!"--that sentence is a better illustration of verbal fallacies than all Ben tham's treatises put together. "Celebrated!" O Mercury, what a dexterous epithet!]

"It seems so," answered Paul.

"It is so self-evident that it is the way all governments are carried on. Wherefore, my good Paul, we only do what all other legislators do. We are never rogues so long as we call ourselves honest fellows, and we never commit a crime so long as we can term it a virtue. What say you now?"

Paul smiled, and was silent a few moments before he replied: "There is very little doubt but that you are wrong; yet if you are, so are all the rest of the world. It is of no use to be the only white sheep of the flock. Wherefore, my dear Tomlinson, I will in future be an excellent citizen, relieve the necessities of the poor, and share the gains of my industry with my friends."

"Bravo!" cried Tomlinson. "And now that that is settled, the sooner you are inaugurated the better. Since the starlight has shone forth, I see that I am in a place I ought to be very well acquainted with; or, if you like to be suspicious, you may believe that I have brought you purposely in this direction. But first let me ask if you feel any great desire to pass the night by this haystack, or whether you would like a song and the punchbowl almost as much as the open air, with the chance of being eaten up in a pinch of hay by some strolling cow."

"You may conceive my choice," answered Paul.

"Well, then, there is an excellent fellow near here, who keeps a public-house, and is a firm ally and generous patron of the lads of the cross. At certain periods they hold weekly meetings at his house: this is one of

the nights. What say you? Shall I introduce you to the club?"

"I shall be very glad if they will admit me," returned Paul, whom many and conflicting thoughts rendered laconic.

"Oh! no fear of that, under my auspices. To tell you the truth, though we are a tolerant set, we welcome every new proselyte with enthusiasm. But are you tired?"

"A little; the house is not far, you say?"

"About a mile off," answered Tomlinson. "Lean on me."

Our wanderers now, leaving the haystack, struck across part of Finchley Common; for the abode of the worthy publican was felicitously situated, and the scene in which his guests celebrated their festivities was close by that on which they often performed their exploits.

As they proceeded, Paul questioned his friend touching the name and character of "mine host;" and the all-knowing Augustus Tomlinson answered him, Quaker-like, by a question,--

"Have you never heard of Gentleman George?"

"What! the noted head of a flash public-house in the country? To be sure I have, often; my poor nurse, Dame Lobkins, used to say he was the best-spoken man in the trade!"

"Ay, so he is still. In his youth, George was a very handsome fellow, but a little too fond of his lass and his bottle to please his father,--a very staid old gentleman, who walked about on Sundays in a bob-wig and a gold-headed cane, and was a much better farmer on week-days than he was head of a public-house. George used to be a remarkably smart-dressed fellow, and so he is to this day. He has a great deal of wit, is a very good whist-player, has a capital cellar, and is so fond of seeing his friends drunk, that he bought some time ago a large pewter measure in which six men can stand upright. The girls, or rather the old women, to which last he used to be much more civil of the two, always liked him; they say nothing is so fine as his fine speeches, and they give him the title of 'Gentleman George.' He is a nice, kind-hearted man in many things. Pray Heaven we shall have no cause to miss him when he departs! But, to tell you the truth, he takes more than his share of our common purse."

"What! is he avaricious?"

"Quite the reverse; but he's so cursedly fond of building, he invests all his money (and wants us to invest all ours) in houses; and there's one confounded dog of a bricklayer who runs him up terrible bills,--a fellow called 'Cunning Nat,' who is equally adroit in spoiling ground and improving ground rent."

"What do you mean?"

"Ah! thereby hangs a tale. But we are near the place now; you will see a curious set."

As Tomlinson said this, the pair approached a house standing alone, and seemingly without any other abode in the vicinity. It was of curious and

grotesque shape, painted white, with a Gothic chimney, a Chinese sign-post (on which was depicted a gentleman fishing, with the words "The Jolly Angler" written beneath), and a porch that would have been Grecian if it had not been Dutch. It stood in a little field, with a hedge behind it, and the common in front. Augustus stopped at the door; and while he paused, bursts of laughter rang cheerily within.

"Ah, the merry boys!" he muttered; "I long to be with them;" and then with his clenched fist he knocked four times on the door. There was a sudden silence which lasted about a minute, and was broken by a voice within, asking who was there. Tomlinson answered by some cabalistic word; the door was opened, and a little boy presented himself.

"Well, my lad," said Augustus, "and how is your master? Stout and hearty, if I may judge by his voice."

"Ay, Master Tommy, ay, he's boosing away at a fine rate, in the back-parlour, with Mr. Pepper and Fighting Attie, and half-a-score more of them. He'll be woundy glad to see you, I'll be bound."

"Show this gentleman into the bar," rejoined Augustus, "while I go and pay my respects to honest Geordie."

The boy made a sort of a bow, and leading our hero into the bar, consigned him to the care of Sal, a buxom barmaid, who reflected credit on the taste of the landlord, and who received Paul with marked distinction and a gill of brandy.

Paul had not long to play the amiable, before Tomlinson rejoined him with the information that Gentleman George would be most happy to see him in the back-parlour, and that he would there find an old friend in the person of Mr. Pepper.

"What! is he here?" cried Paul. "The sorry knave, to let me be caged in his stead!"

"Gently, gently; no misapplication of terms!" said Augustus. "That was not knavery; that was prudence, the greatest of all virtues, and the rarest. But come along, and Pepper shall explain to-morrow."

Threading a gallery or passage, Augustus preceded our hero, opened a door, and introduced him into a long low apartment, where sat, round a table spread with pipes and liquor, some ten or a dozen men, while at the top of the table, in an armchair, presided Gentleman George. That dignitary was a portly and comely gentleman, with a knowing look, and a Welsh wig, worn, as the "Morning Chronicle" says of his Majesty's hat, "in a degage manner, on one side." Being afflicted with the gout, his left foot reclined on a stool; and the attitude developed, despite of a lamb's-wool stocking, the remains of an exceedingly good leg.

As Gentleman George was a person of majestic dignity among the Knights of the Cross, we trust we shall not be thought irreverent in applying a few of the words by which the aforesaid "Morning Chronicle" depicted his Majesty on the day he laid the first stone of his father's monument to the description of Gentleman George.

"He had on a handsome blue coat and a white waistcoat;" moreover, "he laughed most good-humouredly," as, turning to Augustus Tomlinson, he saluted him with,--

"So this is the youngster you present to us? Welcome to the Jolly Angler! Give us thy hand, young sir; I shall be happy to blow a cloud with thee."

"With all due submission," said Mr. Tomlinson, "I think it may first be as well to introduce my pupil and friend to his future companions."

"You speak like a leary cove," cried Gentleman George, still squeezing our hero's hand; and turning round in his elbow-chair, he pointed to each member, as he severally introduced his guests to Paul.

"Here," said he,--"here's a fine chap at my right hand" (the person thus designated was a thin military-looking figure, in a shabby riding-frock, and with a commanding, bold, aquiline countenance, a little the worse for wear),--"here's a fine chap for you! Fighting Attie we calls him; he's a devil on the road. 'Halt,--deliver,--must and shall,--can't and sha' n't,--do as I bid you, or go to the devil!' That's all Fighting Attie's palaver; and, 'Sdeath, it has a wonderful way of coming to the point! A famous cull is my friend Attie,--an old soldier,--has seen the world, and knows what is what; has lots of gumption, and devil a bit of blarney. Howsomever, the highflyers does n't like him; and when he takes people's money, he need not be quite so cross about it. Attie, let me introduce a new pal to you." Paul made his bow.

"Stand at ease, man!" quoth the veteran, without taking the pipe from his mouth.

Gentleman George then continued; and after pointing out four or five of the company (among whom our hero discovered, to his surprise, his old friends Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert and Mr. William Howard Russell), came, at length, to one with a very red face and a lusty frame of body. "That gentleman," said he, "is Scarlet Jem; a dangerous fellow for a press, though he says he likes robbing alone now, for a general press is not half such a good thing as it used to be formerly. You have no idea what a hand at disguising himself Scarlet Jem is. He has an old wig which he generally does business in; and you would not go for to know him again when he conceals himself under the wig. Oh, he's a precious rogue, is Scarlet Jem! As for the cove on t' other side," continued the host of the Jolly Angler, pointing to Long Ned, "all I can say of him, good, bad, or indifferent, is that he has an unkimmon fine head of hair; and now, youngster, as you knows him, s'pose you goes and sits by him, and he'll introduce you to the rest; for, split my wig!" (Gentleman George was a bit of a swearer) "if I be n't tired; and so here's to your health; and if so be as your name's Paul, may you always rob Peter [a portmanteau] in order to pay Paul!"

This witticism of mine host's being exceedingly well received, Paul went, amidst the general laughter, to take possession of the vacant seat beside Long Ned. That tall gentleman, who had hitherto been cloud-compelling (as Homer calls Jupiter) in profound silence, now turned to Paul with the warmest cordiality, declared himself overjoyed to meet his old friend once more, and congratulated him alike on his escape from Bridewell and his admission to the councils of Gentleman George. But Paul, mindful of that exertion of "prudence" on the part of Mr. Pepper by which he had been left to his fate and the mercy of Justice Burnflat, received his advances very sullenly. This coolness so incensed Ned, who was naturally choleric, that he turned his back on our hero, and being of an aristocratic spirit, muttered something about "upstart, and vulgar

clyfakers being admitted to the company of swell tobymen." This murmur called all Paul's blood into his cheek; for though he had been punished as a clyfaker (or pickpocket), nobody knew better than Long Ned whether or not he was innocent; and a reproach from him came therefore with double injustice and severity. In his wrath he seized Mr. Pepper by the ear, and telling him he was a shabby scoundrel, challenged him to fight.

So pleasing an invitation not being announced sotto voce, but in a tone suited to the importance of the proposition, every one around heard it; and before Long Ned could answer, the full voice of Gentleman George thundered forth,--

"Keep the peace there, you youngster! What! are you just admitted into our merry-makings, and must you be wrangling already? Harkye, gemmen, I have been plagued enough with your quarrels before now; and the first cove as breaks the present quiet of the Jolly Angler shall be turned out neck and crop,--sha' n't he, Attie?"

"Right about, march!" said the hero.

"Ay, that's the word, Attie," said Gentleman George. "And now, Mr. Pepper, if there be any ill blood 'twixt you and the lad there, wash it away in a bumper of bingo, and let's hear no more whatsoever about it."

"I'm willing," cried Long Ned, with the deferential air of a courtier, and holding out his hand to Paul. Our hero, being somewhat abashed by the novelty of his situation and the rebuke of Gentleman George, accepted, though with some reluctance, the proffered courtesy.

Order being thus restored, the conversation of the convivialists began to assume a most fascinating bias. They talked with infinite gout of the sums they had levied on the public, and the peculations they had committed for what one called the good of the community, and another, the established order,--meaning themselves. It was easy to see in what school the discerning Augustus Tomlinson had learned the value of words.

There was something edifying in hearing the rascals! So nice was their language, and so honest their enthusiasm for their own interests, you might have imagined you were listening to a coterie of cabinet ministers conferring on taxes or debating on perquisites.

"Long may the Commons flourish!" cried punning Georgie, filling his glass; "it is by the commons we're fed, and may they never know cultivation!"

"Three times three!" shouted Long Ned; and the toast was drunk as Mr. Pepper proposed.

"A little moderate cultivation of the commons, to speak frankly," said Augustus Tomlinson, modestly, "might not be amiss; for it would decoy people into the belief that they might travel safely; and, after all, a hedge or a barley-field is as good for us as a barren heath, where we have no shelter if once pursued!"

"You talks nonsense, you spooney!" cried a robber of note, called Bagshot; who, being aged and having been a lawyer's footboy, was sometimes denominated "Old Bags." "You talks nonsense; these innowating ploughs are the ruin of us. Every blade of corn in a common is an encroachment on the constitution and rights of the gemmen highwaymen.

I'm old, and may n't live to see these things; but, mark my words, a time will come when a man may go from Lunnun to Johnny Groat's without losing a penny by one of us; when Hounslow will be safe, and Finchley secure. My eyes, what a sad thing for us that'll be!"

The venerable old man became suddenly silent, and the tears started to his eyes. Gentleman George had a great horror of blue devils, and particularly disliked all disagreeable subjects.

"Thunder and oons, Old Bags!" quoth mine host of the Jolly Angler, "this will never do; we're all met here to be merry, and not to listen to your mullancolly taratarantarums. I says, Ned Pepper, s'pose you tips us a song, and I'll beat time with my knuckles."

Long Ned, taking the pipe from his mouth, attempted, like Walter Scott's Lady Heron, one or two pretty excuses; these being drowned by a universal shout, the handsome purloiner gave the following song, to the tune of "Time has not thinned my flowing hair."

LONG NED'S SONG.

Oh, if my hands adhere to cash,
My gloves at least are clean,
And rarely have the gentry flash
In sprucer clothes been seen.

Sweet Public, since your coffers must
Afford our wants relief,
Oh! soothes it not to yield the dust
To such a charming thief?

"And John may laugh at mine, '--excellent!" cried Gentleman George, lighting his pipe, and winking at Attie; "I hears as how you be a famous fellow with the lasses."

Ned smiled and answered, "No man should boast; but--" Pepper paused significantly, and then glancing at Attie, said, "Talking of lasses, it is my turn to knock down a gentleman for a song, and I knock down Fighting Attie."

"I never sing," said the warrior.

"Treason, treason!" cried Pepper. "It is the law, and you must obey the law; so begin."

"It is true, Attie," said Gentleman George.

There was no appeal from the honest publican's fiat; so, in a quick and laconic manner, it being Attie's favourite dogma that the least said is the soonest mended, the warrior sung as follows:--

FIGHTING ATTIE'S SONG.

Air: "He was famed for deeds of arms."

I never robbed a single coach
But with a lover's air;
And though you might my course reproach,
You never could my hair.

Rise at six, dine at two,
Rob your man without ado,
Such my maxims; if you doubt
Their wisdom, to the right-about!

(Signing to a sallow gentleman on the same side of the table to send up
the brandy bowl.)

Pass round the bingo,--of a gun,
You musty, dusky, husky son! 1
John Bull, who loves a harmless joke,
Is apt at me to grin;
But why be cross with laughing folk,
Unless they laugh and win?
John Bull has money in his box;
And though his wit's divine,
Yet let me laugh at Johnny's locks,
And John may laugh at mine

[Much of whatever amusement might be occasioned by the not (we trust) ill-natured travesties of certain eminent characters in this part of our work when first published, like all political allusions, loses point and becomes obscure as the applications cease to be familiar. It is already necessary, perhaps, to say that Fighting Attie herein typifies or illustrates the Duke of Wellington's abrupt dismissal of Mr. Huskisson.]

THE SALLOW GENTLEMAN (in a hoarse voice).

Attie, the bingo's now with me;
I can't resign it yet, d' ye see!

ATTIE (seizing the bowl).

Resign, resign it,--cease your dust!
(Wresting it away and fiercely regarding the sallow gentleman.)
You have resigned it, and you must.

CHORUS.

You have resigned it, and you must.

While the chorus, laughing at the discomfited tippler, yelled forth the emphatic words of the heroic Attie, that personage emptied the brandy at a draught, resumed his pipe, and in as few words as possible called on Bagshot for a song. The excellent old highwayman, with great diffidence, obeyed the request, cleared his throat, and struck off with a ditty somewhat to the tune of "The Old Woman."

OLD BAGS'S SONG.

Are the days then gone, when on Hounslow Heath
We flashed our nags,
When the stoutest bosoms quailed beneath
The voice of Bags?
Ne'er was my work half undone, lest I should be nabbed
Slow was old Bags, but he never ceased

Till the whole was grabbed.

CHORUS. Till the whole was grabbed.

When the slow coach paused, and the gemmen stormed,
I bore the brunt;
And the only sound which my grave lips formed
Was "blunt,"--still "blunt"!

Oh, those jovial days are ne'er forgot!
But the tape lags--
When I be's dead, you'll drink one pot
To poor old Bags!

CHORUS. To poor old Bags!

"Ay, that we will, my dear Bagshot," cried Gentleman George, affectionately; but observing a tear in the fine old fellow's eye, he added: "Cheer up! What, ho! cheer up! Times will improve, and Providence may yet send us one good year, when you shall be as well off as ever. You shakes your poll. Well, don't be humdurgeoned, but knock down a gemman."

Dashing away the drop of sensibility, the veteran knocked down Gentleman George himself.

"Oh, dang it!" said George, with an air of dignity, "I ought to skip, since I finds the lush; but howsomever here goes."

GENTLEMAN GEORGE'S SONG.

Air: "Old King Cole."

I be's the cove, the merry old cove,
Of whose max all the rufflers sing;

And a lushing cove, I thinks, by Jove,
Is as great as a sober king!

CHORUS. Is as great as a sober king!

Whatever the noise as is made by the boys
At the bar as they lush away,
The devil a noise my peace alloys
As long as the rascals pay!

CHORUS. As long as the rascals pay!

What if I sticks my stones and my bricks
With mortar I takes from the snobbish?
All who can feel for the public weal
Likes the public-house to be bobbish.

CHORUS. Likes the public-house to be bobbish.

"There, gemmen!" said the publican, stopping short, "that's the pith of the matter, and split my wig but I'm short of breath now. So send round the brandy, Augustus; you sly dog, you keeps it all to yourself."

By this time the whole conclave were more than half-seas over, or, as Augustus Tomlinson expressed it, "their more austere qualities were relaxed by a pleasing and innocent indulgence." Paul's eyes reeled, and his tongue ran loose. By degrees the room swam round, the faces of his comrades altered, the countenance of Old Bags assumed an awful and menacing air. He thought Long Ned insulted him, and that Old Bags took the part of the assailant, doubled his fist, and threatened to put the plaintiff's nob into chancery if he disturbed the peace of the meeting. Various other imaginary evils beset him. He thought he had robbed a mail-coach in company with Pepper; that Tomlinson informed against him, and that Gentleman George ordered him to be hanged; in short, he laboured under a temporary delirium, occasioned by a sudden reverse of fortune,-- from water to brandy; and the last thing of which he retained any recollection, before he sank under the table, in company with Long Ned, Scarlet Jem, and Old Bags, was the bearing his part in the burden of what appeared to him a chorus of last dying speeches and confessions, but what in reality was a song made in honour of Gentleman George, and sung by his grateful guests as a finale of the festivities. It ran thus:--

THE ROBBER'S GRAND TOAST.

A tumbler of blue ruin, fill, fill for me!
Red tape those as likes it may drain;
But whatever the lush, it a bumper must be,
If we ne'er drinks a bumper again!
Now--now in the crib, where a ruffler may lie,
Without fear that the traps should distress him,
With a drop in the mouth, and a drop in the eye,
Here's to Gentleman George,--God bless him!
God bless him, God bless him!
Here's to Gentleman George,--God bless him!

'Mong the pals of the prince I have heard it's the go,
Before they have tippled enough,
To smarten their punch with the best curagoa,
More conish to render the stuff.
I boast not such lush; but whoever his glass
Does not like, I'll be hanged if I press him!
Upstanding, my kiddies,--round, round let it pass!
Here's to Gentleman George,--God bless him!
God bless him, God bless him!
Here's to Gentleman George,--God bless him!

See, see, the fine fellow grows weak on his stumps;
Assist him, ye rascals, to stand!
Why, ye stir not a peg! Are you all in the dumps?
Fighting Attie, go, lend him a hand!

(The robbers crowd around Gentleman George, each, under pretence of supporting him, pulling him first one way and then another.)

Come, lean upon me,--at your service I am!
Get away from his elbow, you whelp! him
You'll only upset,--them 'ere fellows but sham!
Here's to Gentleman George,--God help him!
God help him, God help him!
Here's to Gentleman George, God help him!

CHAPTER XI.

I boast no song in magic wonders rife;
But yet, O Nature! is there nought to prize,
Familiar in thy bosom scenes of life?
And dwells in daylight truth's salubrious skies
No form with which the soul may sympathize?
Young, innocent, on whose sweet forehead mild
The parted ringlet shone in simplest guise,
An inmate in the home of Albert smiled,
Or blessed his noonday walk,--she was his only child.

Gertrude of Wyoming.

O time, thou hast played strange tricks with us; and we bless the stars that made us a novelist, and permit us now to retaliate. Leaving Paul to the instructions of Augustus Tomlinson and the festivities of the Jolly Angler, and suffering him, by slow but sure degrees, to acquire the graces and the reputation of the accomplished and perfect appropriator of other men's possessions, we shall pass over the lapse of years with the same heedless rapidity with which they have glided over us, and summon our reader to a very different scene from those which would be likely to greet his eyes, were he following the adventures of our new Telemachus. Nor wilt thou, dear reader, whom we make the umpire between ourself and those who never read,--the critics; thou who hast, in the true spirit of gentle breeding, gone with us among places where the novelty of the scene has, we fear, scarcely atoned for the coarseness, not giving thyself the airs of a dainty abigail,--not prating, lacquey-like, on the low company thou has met,--nor wilt thou, dear and friendly reader, have cause to dread that we shall weary thy patience by a "damnable iteration" of the same localities. Pausing for a moment to glance over the divisions of our story, which lies before us like a map, we feel that we may promise in future to conduct thee among aspects of society more familiar to thy habits; where events flow to their allotted gulf through landscapes of more pleasing variety and among tribes of a more luxurious civilization.

Upon the banks of one of fair England's fairest rivers, and about fifty miles distant from London, still stands an old-fashioned abode, which we shall here term Warlock Manorhouse. It is a building of brick, varied by stone copings, and covered in great part with ivy and jasmine. Around it lie the ruins of the elder part of the fabric; and these are sufficiently numerous in extent and important in appearance to testify that the mansion was once not without pretensions to the magnificent. These remains of power, some of which bear date as far back as the reign of Henry the Third, are sanctioned by the character of the country immediately in the vicinity of the old manor-house. A vast tract of waste land, interspersed with groves of antique pollards, and here and there irregular and sinuous ridges of green mound, betoken to the experienced eye the evidence of a dismantled chase or park, which must originally have been of no common dimensions. On one side of the house the lawn slopes towards the river, divided from a terrace, which forms the most important embellishment of the pleasure-grounds, by that fence to which has been given the ingenious and significant name of "ha-ha!" A few scattered trees of giant growth are the sole obstacles that break the view of the river, which has often seemed to us, at that particular passage of its course, to glide with unusual calmness and serenity.

On the opposite side of the stream there is a range of steep hills, celebrated for nothing more romantic than their property of imparting to the flocks that browse upon that short and seemingly stinted herbage a flavour peculiarly grateful to the lovers of that pastoral animal which changes its name into mutton after its decease. Upon these hills the vestige of human habitation is not visible; and at times, when no boat defaces the lonely smoothness of the river, and the evening has stilled the sounds of labour and of life, we know few scenes so utterly tranquil, so steeped in quiet, as that which is presented by the old, quaint-fashioned house and its antique grounds,--the smooth lawn, the silent, and (to speak truly, though disparagingly) the somewhat sluggish river, together with the large hills (to which we know, from simple though metaphysical causes, how entire an idea of quiet and immovability peculiarly attaches itself), and the white flocks,--those most peaceful of God's creatures,--that in fleecy clusters stud the ascent.

In Warlock House, at the time we refer to, lived a gentleman of the name of Brandon. He was a widower, and had attained his fiftieth year without casting much regret on the past or feeling much anxiety for the future. In a word, Joseph Brandon was one of those careless, quiescent, indifferent men, by whom a thought upon any subject is never recurred to without a very urgent necessity. He was good-natured, inoffensive, and weak; and if he was not an incomparable citizen, he was at least an excellent vegetable. He was of a family of high antiquity, and formerly of considerable note. For the last four or five generations, however, the proprietors of Warlock House, gradually losing something alike from their acres and their consequence, had left to their descendants no higher rank than that of a small country squire. One had been a Jacobite, and had drunk out half-a-dozen farms in honour of Charley over the water; Charley over the water was no very dangerous person, but Charley over the wine was rather more ruinous. The next Brandon had been a fox-hunter, and fox-hunters live as largely as patriotic politicians. Pausanias tells us that the same people; who were the most notorious for their love of wine were also the most notorious for their negligence of affairs. Times are not much altered since Pausanias wrote, and the remark holds as good with the English as it did with the Phigalei. After this Brandon came one who, though he did not scorn the sportsman, rather assumed the fine gentleman. He married an heiress, who of course assisted to ruin him; wishing no assistance in so pleasing an occupation, he overturned her (perhaps not on purpose), in a new sort of carriage which he was learning to drive, and the good lady was killed on the spot. She left the fine gentleman two sons,--Joseph Brandon, the present thane,--and a brother some years younger. The elder, being of a fitting age, was sent to school, and somewhat escaped the contagion of the paternal mansion. But the younger Brandon, having only reached his fifth year at the time of his mother's decease, was retained at home. Whether he was handsome or clever or impertinent, or like his father about the eyes (that greatest of all merits), we know not; but the widower became so fond of him that it was at a late period and with great reluctance that he finally intrusted him to the providence of a school.

Among harlots and gamblers and lords and sharpers, and gentlemen of the guards, together with their frequent accompaniments,--guards of the gentlemen, namely, bailiffs,--William Brandon passed the first stage of his boyhood. He was about thirteen when he was sent to school; and being a boy of remarkable talents, he recovered lost time so well that when at the age of nineteen he adjourned to the University, he had scarcely resided there a single term before he had borne off two of the highest prizes awarded to academical merit. From the University he departed on

the "grand tour," at that time thought so necessary to complete the gentleman; he went in company with a young nobleman, whose friendship he had won at the University, stayed abroad more than two years, and on his return he settled down to the profession of the law.

Meanwhile his father died, and his fortune, as a younger brother, being literally next to nothing, and the family estate (for his brother was not unwilling to assist him) being terribly involved, it was believed that he struggled for some years with very embarrassed and penurious circumstances. During this interval of his life, however, he was absent from London, and by his brother supposed to have returned to the Continent; at length, it seems, he profited by a renewal of his friendship with the young nobleman who had accompanied him abroad, reappeared in town, and obtained through his noble friend one or two legal appointments of reputable emolument. Soon afterwards he got a brief on some cause where a major had been raising a corps to his brother officer, with the better consent of the brother-officer's wife than of the brother officer himself. Brandon's abilities here, for the first time in his profession, found an adequate vent; his reputation seemed made at once, he rose rapidly in his profession, and, at the time we now speak of, he was sailing down the full tide of fame and wealth, the envy and the oracle of all young Templars and barristers, who, having been starved themselves for ten years, began now to calculate on the possibility of starving their clients. At an early period in his career he had, through the good offices of the nobleman we have mentioned, obtained a seat in the House of Commons; and though his eloquence was of an order much better suited to the bar than the senate, he had nevertheless acquired a very considerable reputation in the latter, and was looked upon by many as likely to win to the same brilliant fortunes as the courtly Mansfield,--a great man, whose political principles and urbane address Brandon was supposed especially to affect as his own model. Of unblemished integrity in public life,--for, as he supported all things that exist with the most unbending rigidity, he could not be accused of inconsistency,--William Brandon was (as we have said in a former place of unhappy memory to our hero) esteemed in private life the most honourable, the most moral, even the most austere of men; and his grave and stern repute on this score, joined to the dazzle of his eloquence and forensic powers, had baffled in great measure the rancour of party hostility, and obtained for him a character for virtues almost as high and as enviable as that which he had acquired for abilities.

While William was thus treading a noted and an honourable career, his elder brother, who had married into a clergyman's family, and soon lost his consort, had with his only child, a daughter named Lucy, resided in his paternal mansion in undisturbed obscurity. The discreditable character and habits of the preceding lords of Warlock, which had sunk their respectability in the county as well as curtailed their property, had rendered the surrounding gentry little anxious to cultivate the intimacy of the present proprietor; and the heavy mind and retired manners of Joseph Brandon were not calculated to counterbalance the faults of his forefathers, nor to reinstate the name of Brandon in its ancient popularity and esteem. Though dull and little cultivated, the squire was not without his "proper pride;" he attempted not to intrude himself where he was unwelcome, avoided county meetings and county balls, smoked his pipe with the parson, and not unoften with the surgeon and the solicitor, and suffered his daughter Lucy to educate herself with the help of the parson's wife, and to ripen (for Nature was more favourable to her than Art) into the very prettiest girl that the whole county--we long to say the whole country--at that time could boast of. Never did

glass give back a more lovely image than that of Lucy Brandon at the age of nineteen. Her auburn hair fell in the richest luxuriance over a brow never ruffled, and a cheek where the blood never slept; with every instant the colour varied, and at every variation that smooth, pure; virgin cheek seemed still more lovely than before. She had the most beautiful laugh that one who loved music could imagine,--silvery, low, and yet so full of joy! All her movements, as the old parson said, seemed to keep time to that laugh, for mirth made a great part of her innocent and childish temper; and yet the mirth was feminine, never loud, nor like that of young ladies who had received the last finish at Highgate seminaries. Everything joyous affected her, and at once,--air, flowers, sunshine, butterflies. Unlike heroines in general, she very seldom cried, and she saw nothing charming in having the vapours. But she never looked so beautiful as in sleep; and as the light breath came from her parted lips, and the ivory lids closed over those eyes which only in sleep were silent,--and her attitude in her sleep took that ineffable grace belonging solely to childhood, or the fresh youth into which childhood merges,--she was just what you might imagine a sleeping Margaret, before that most simple and gentle of all a poet's visions of womanhood had met with Faust, or her slumbers been ruffled with a dream of love.

We cannot say much for Lucy's intellectual acquirements; she could, thanks to the parson's wife, spell indifferently well, and write a tolerable hand; she made preserves, and sometimes riddles,--it was more difficult to question the excellence of the former than to answer the queries of the latter. She worked to the admiration of all who knew her, and we beg leave to say that we deem that "an excellent thing in woman." She made caps for herself and gowns for the poor, and now and then she accomplished the more literary labour of a stray novel that had wandered down to the Manorhouse, or an abridgment of ancient history, in which was omitted everything but the proper names. To these attainments she added a certain modicum of skill upon the spinet, and the power of singing old songs with the richest and sweetest voice that ever made one's eyes moisten or one's heart beat.

Her moral qualities were more fully developed than her mental. She was the kindest of human beings; the very dog that had never seen her before knew that truth at the first glance, and lost no time in making her acquaintance. The goodness of her heart reposed upon her face like sunshine, and the old wife at the lodge said poetically and truly of the effect it produced, that "one felt warm when one looked on her." If we could abstract from the description a certain chilling transparency, the following exquisite verses of a forgotten poet might express the purity and lustre of her countenance:--

"Her face was like the milky way i' the sky,
A meeting of gentle lights without a name."

She was surrounded by pets of all kinds, ugly and handsome,--from Ralph the raven to Beauty the pheasant, and from Bob, the sheep-dog without a tail, to Beau, the Blenheim with blue ribbons round his neck; all things loved her, and she loved all things. It seemed doubtful at that time whether she would ever have sufficient steadiness and strength of character. Her beauty and her character appeared so essentially womanlike--soft yet lively, buoyant yet caressing--that you could scarcely place in her that moral dependence that you might in a character less amiable but less yieldingly feminine. Time, however, and circumstance, which alter and harden, were to decide whether the inward

nature did not possess some latent and yet undiscovered properties. Such was Lucy Brandon in the year ----; and in that year, on a beautiful autumnal evening, we first introduce her personally to our readers.

She was sitting on a garden-seat by the river side, with her father, who was deliberately conning the evening paper of a former week, and gravely seasoning the ancient news with the inspirations of that weed which so bitterly excited the royal indignation of our British Solomon. It happens, unfortunately for us,--for outward peculiarities are scarcely worthy the dignity to which comedy, whether in the drama or the narrative, aspires,--that Squire Brandon possessed so few distinguishing traits of mind that he leaves his delineator little whereby to designate him, save a confused and parenthetical habit of speech, by which he very often appeared to those who did not profit by long experience or close observation, to say exactly, and somewhat ludicrously, that which he did not mean to convey.

"I say, Lucy," observed Mr. Brandon, but without lifting his eyes from the paper,--"I say, corn has fallen; think of that, girl, think of that! These times, in my opinion (ay, and in the opinion of wiser heads than mine, though I do not mean to say that I have not some experience in these matters, which is more than can be said of all our neighbours), are very curious and even dangerous."

"Indeed, Papa!" answered Lucy.

"And I say, Lucy, dear," resumed the squire, after a short pause, "there has been (and very strange it is, too, when one considers the crowded neighbourhood--Bless me! what times these are!) a shocking murder committed upon (the tobacco stopper,--there it is)--think, you know, girl,--just by Epping!--an old gentleman!"

"Dear, how shocking! By whom?"

"Ay, that's the question! The coroner's inquest has (what a blessing it is to live in a civilized country, where a man does not die without knowing the why and the wherefore!) sat on the body, and declared (it is very strange, but they don't seem to have made much discovery; for why? we knew as much before) that the body was found (it was found on the floor, Lucy) murdered; murderer or murderers (in the bureau, which was broken open, they found the money left quite untouched) unknown!"

Here there was again a slight pause; and passing to another side of the paper, Mr. Brandon resumed, in a quicker tone,--"Ha! well, now this is odd! But he's a deuced clever fellow, Lucy! That brother of mine has (and in a very honourable manner, too, which I am sure is highly creditable to the family, though he has not taken too much notice of me lately,--a circumstance which, considering I am his elder brother, I am a little angry at) distinguished himself in a speech, remarkable, the paper says, for its great legal (I wonder, by the by, whether William could get me that agistment-money! 't is a heavy thing to lose; but going to law, as my poor father used to say, is like fishing for gudgeons [not a bad little fish; we can have some for supper] with, guineas) knowledge, as well as its splendid and overpowering (I do love Will for keeping up the family honour; I am sure it is more than I have done, heigh-ho!), eloquence!"

"And on what subject has he been speaking, Papa?"

"Oh, a very fine subject; what you call a (it is astonishing that in this country there should be such a wish for taking away people's characters, which, for my part, I don't see is a bit more entertaining than what you are always doing,--playing with those stupid birds) libel!"

"But is not my uncle William coming down to see us? He promised to do so, and it made you quite happy--, Papa, for two days. I hope he will not disappoint you; and I am sure that it is not his fault if he ever seems to neglect you. He spoke of you to me, when I saw him, in the kindest and most affectionate manner. I do think, my dear father, that he loves you very much."

"Ahem!" said the squire, evidently flattered, and yet not convinced. "My brother Will is a very acute fellow, and I make no--my dear little girl--question, but that (when you have seen as much of the world as I have, you will grow suspicious) he thought that any good word said of me to my daughter would (you see, Lucy, I am as clear-sighted as my neighbours, though I don't give myself all their airs; which I very well might do, considering my great-great-great-grandfather, Hugo Brandon, had a hand in detecting the gunpowder plot) he told to me again!"

"Nay, but I am quite sure my uncle never spoke of you to me with that intention."

"Possibly, my dear child; but when (the evenings are much shorter than they were!) did you talk with your uncle about me?"

"Oh, when staying with Mrs. Warner, in London; to be sure, it is six years ago, but I remember it perfectly. I recollect, in particular, that he spoke of you very handsomely to Lord Mauleverer, who dined with him one evening when I was there, and when my uncle was so kind as to take me to the play. I was afterwards quite sorry that he was so good-natured, as he lost (you remember I told you the story) a very valuable watch."

"Ay, ay, I remember all about that, and so (how long friendship lasts with some people!) Lord Mauleverer dined with William! What a fine thing it is for a man (it is what I never did, indeed; I like being what they call 'Cock of the Walk'--let me see, now I think of it, Pillum comes to-night to play a hit at backgammon) to make friends with a great man early in (yet Will did not do it very early, poor fellow! He struggled first with a great deal of sorrow--hardship, that is) life! It is many years now since Will has been hand-and-glove with my ('t is a bit of a puppy) Lord Mauleverer. What did you think of his lordship?"

"Of Lord Mauleverer? Indeed I scarcely observed him; but he seemed a handsome man, and was very polite. Mrs. Warner said he had been a very wicked person when he was young, but he seems good-natured enough now, Papa."

"By the by," said the squire, "his lordship has just been made (this new ministry seems very unlike the old, which rather puzzles me; for I think it my duty, d'ye see, Lucy, always to vote for his Majesty's government, especially seeing that old Hugo Brandon had a hand in detecting the gun powder plot; and it is a little odd--at least, at first--to think that good now which one has always before been thinking abominable) Lord Lieutenant of the county."

"Lord Mauleverer our Lord Lieutenant?"

"Yes, child; and since his lordship is such a friend of my brother, I should think, considering especially what an old family in the county we are,--not that I wish to intrude myself where I am not thought as fine as the rest,--that he would be more attentive to us than Lord ----- was; but that, my dear Lucy, puts me in mind of Pillum; and so, perhaps, you would like to walk to the parson's, as it is a fine evening. John shall come for you at nine o'clock with (the moon is not up then) the lantern."

Leaning on his daughter's willing arm, the good old man then rose and walked homeward; and so soon as she had wheeled round his easy-chair, placed the backgammon board on the table, and wished the old gentleman an easy victory over his expected antagonist, the apothecary, Lucy tied down her bonnet, and took her way to the rectory.

When she arrived at the clerical mansion and entered the drawing-room, she was surprised to find the parson's wife, a good, homely, lethargic old lady, run up to her, seemingly in a state of great nervous agitation and crying,--

"Oh, my dear Miss Brandon! which way did you come? Did you meet nobody by the road? Oh, I am so frightened! Such an accident to poor dear Dr. Sloperton! Stopped in the king's highway, robbed of some tithe-money he had just received from Farmer Slowforth! If it had not been for that dear angel, good young man, God only knows whether I might not have been a disconsolate widow by this time!"

While the affectionate matron was thus running on, Lucy's eye glancing round the room discovered in an armchair the round and oily little person of Dr. Sloperton, with a countenance from which all the carnation hues, save in one circular excrescence on the nasal member, that was left, like the last rose of summer, blooming alone, were faded into an aspect of miserable pallor. The little man tried to conjure up a smile while his wife was narrating his misfortune, and to mutter forth some syllable of unconcern; but he looked, for all his bravado, so exceedingly scared that Lucy would, despite herself, have laughed outright, had not her eye rested upon the figure of a young man who had been seated beside the reverend gentleman, but who had risen at Lucy's entrance, and who now stood gazing upon her intently, but with an air of great respect. Blushing deeply and involuntarily, she turned her eyes hastily away, and approaching the good doctor, made her inquiries into the present state of his nerves, in a graver tone than she had a minute before imagined it possible that she should have been enabled to command.

"Ah! my good young lady," said the doctor, squeezing her hand, "I--may, I may say the church--for am I not its minister? was in imminent danger--but this excellent gentleman prevented the sacrilege, at least in great measure. I only lost some of my dues,--my rightful dues,--for which I console myself with thinking that the infamous and abandoned villain will suffer hereafter."

"There cannot be the least doubt of that," said the young man. "Had he only robbed the mail-coach, or broken into a gentleman's house, the offence might have been expiable; but to rob a clergyman, and a rector too!--Oh, the sacrilegious dog!"

"Your warmth does you honour, sir," said the doctor, beginning now to recover; "and I am very proud to have made the acquaintance of a gentleman of such truly religious opinions."

"Ah!" cried the stranger, "my foible, sir,--if I may so speak,--is a sort of enthusiastic fervour for the Protestant Establishment. Nay, sir, I never come across the very nave of the church without feeling an indescribable emotion--a kind of sympathy, as it were--with--with--you understand me, sir--I fear I express myself ill."

"Not at all, not at all!" exclaimed the doctor: "such sentiments are uncommon in one so young."

"Sir, I learned them early in life from a friend and preceptor of mine, Mr. MacGrawler, and I trust they may continue with me to my dying day."

Here the doctor's servant entered with (we borrow a phrase from the novel of -----) "the tea-equipage;" and Mrs. Slopperton, betaking herself to its superintendence, inquired with more composure than hitherto had belonged to her demeanour, what sort of a looking creature the ruffian was.

"I will tell you, my dear, I will tell you, Miss Lucy, all about it. I was walking home from Mr. Slowforth's, with his money in my pocket, thinking, my love, of buying you that topaz cross you wished to have."

"Dear, good man!" cried Mrs. Slopperton; "what a fiend it must have been to rob so excellent a creature!"

"And," resumed the doctor, "it also occurred to me that the Madeira was nearly out,--the Madeira, I mean, with the red seal; and I was thinking it might not be amiss to devote part of the money to buy six dozen more; and the remainder, my love, which would be about one pound eighteen, I thought I would divide--'for he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord!--among the thirty poor families on the common; that is, if they behaved well, and the apples in the back garden were not feloniously abstracted!"

"Excellent, charitable man!" ejaculated Mrs. Slopperton. "While I was thus meditating, I lifted my eyes, and saw before me two men,--one of prodigious height, and with a great profusion of hair about his shoulders; the other was smaller, and wore his hat slouched over his face: it was a very large hat. My attention was arrested by the singularity of the tall person's hair, and while I was smiling at its luxuriance, I heard him say to his companion, 'Well, Augustus, as you are such a moral dog, he is in your line, not mine; so I leave him to you.' Little did I think those words related to me. No sooner were they uttered than the tall rascal leaped over a gate and disappeared; the other fellow, then marching up to me, very smoothly asked me the way to the church, and while I was explaining to him to turn first to the right and then to the left, and so on,--for the best way is, you know, exceedingly crooked,--the hypocritical scoundrel seized me by the collar, and cried out, 'Your money or your life!' I do assure you that I never trembled so much,--not, my dear Miss Lucy, so much for my own sake, as for the sake of the thirty poor families on the common, whose wants it had been my intention to relieve. I gave up the money, finding my prayers and expostulations were in vain; and the dog then, brandishing over my head an enormous bludgeon, said--what abominable language!--'I think, doctor, I shall put an end to an existence derogatory to your self and useless to others.' At that moment the young gentleman beside me sprang over the very gate by which the tall ruffian had disappeared, and cried, 'Hold, villain!' On seeing my deliverer, the coward started back, and plunged into a neighbouring wood. The good young gentleman

pursued him for a few minutes, but then returning to my aid, conducted me home; and as we used to say at school,--

" Te rediisse incolumem gaudeo,'--

which, being interpreted, means (sir, excuse a pun, I am sure so great a friend to the Church understands Latin) that I am very glad to get back safe to my tea. He! he! And now, Miss Lucy, you must thank that young gentleman for having saved the life of your pastoral teacher, which act will no doubt be remembered at the Great Day!"

As Lucy, looking towards the stranger, said something in compliment, she observed a vague, and as it were covert smile upon his countenance, which immediately and as if by sympathy conjured one to her own. The hero of the adventure, however, in a very grave tone replied to her compliment, at the same time bowing profoundly,--

"Mention it not, madam! I were unworthy of the name of a Briton and a man, could I pass the highway without relieving the distress or lightening the burden of a fellow-creature. And," continued the stranger, after a momentary pause, colouring while he spoke, and concluding in the high-flown gallantry of the day, "methinks it were sufficient reward, had I saved the whole church instead of one of its most valuable members, to receive the thanks of a lady whom I might reasonably take for one of those celestial beings to whom we have been piously taught that the Church is especially the care!"

Though there might have been something really ridiculous in this overstrained compliment, coupled as it was with the preservation of Dr. Sloperton, yet, coming from the mouth of one whom Lucy thought the very handsomest person she had ever seen, it appeared to her anything but absurd; and for a very long time afterwards her heart thrilled with pleasure when she remembered that the cheek of the speaker had glowed, and his voice had trembled as he spoke it.

The conversation now, turning from robbers in particular, dwelt upon robberies in general. It was edifying to hear the honest indignation with which the stranger spoke of the lawless depredators with whom the country, in that day of Macheaths, was infested.

"A pack of infamous rascals!" said he, in a glow, "who attempt to justify their misdeeds by the example of honest men, and who say that they do no more than is done by lawyers and doctors, soldiers, clergymen, and ministers of State. Pitiful delusion, or rather shameless hypocrisy!"

"It all comes of educating the poor," said the doctor. "The moment they pretend to judge the conduct of their betters, there's an end of all order! They see nothing sacred in the laws, though we hang the dogs ever so fast; and the very peers of the land, spiritual and temporal, cease to be venerable in their eyes."

"Talking of peers," said Mrs. Sloperton, "I hear that Lord Mauleverer is to pass by this road to-night on his way to Mauleverer Park. Do you know his lordship, Miss Lucy: He is very intimate with your uncle."

"I have only seen him once," answered Lucy.

"Are you sure that his lordship will come this road?" asked the stranger, carelessly. "I heard something of it this morning, but did not know it

was settled."

"Oh, quite so!" rejoined Mrs. Slopperton. "His lordship's gentleman wrote for post-horses to meet his lordship at Wyburn, about three miles on the other side of the village, at ten o'clock to-night. His lordship is very impatient of delay."

"Pray," said the doctor, who had not much heeded this turn in the conversation, and was now "on hospitable cares intent,"--"pray, sir, if not impertinent, are you visiting or lodging in the neighbourhood; or will you take a bed with us?"

"You are extremely kind, my dear sir, but I fear I must soon wish you good-evening. I have to look after a little property I have some miles hence, which, indeed, brought me down into this part of the world."

"Property!--in what direction, sir, if I may ask?" quoth the doctor; "I know the country for miles."

"Do you, indeed? Where's my property, you say? Why, it is rather difficult to describe it, and it is, after all, a mere trifle; it is only some common-land near the highroad, and I came down to try the experiment of hedging and draining."

"T is a good plan, if one has capital, and does not require a speedy return."

"Yes; but one likes a good interest for the loss of principal, and a speedy return is always desirable,--although, alas! it is often attended with risk!"

"I hope, sir," said the doctor, "if you must leave us so soon, that your property will often bring you into our neighbourhood."

"You overpower me with so much unexpected goodness," answered the stranger. "To tell you the truth, nothing can give me greater pleasure than to meet those again who have once obliged me."

"Whom you have obliged, rather!" cried Mrs. Slopperton; and then added, in a loud whisper to Lucy, "How modest! but it is always so with true courage!"

"I assure you, madam," returned the benevolent stranger, "that I never think twice of the little favours I render my fellow-men; my only hope is that they may be as forgetful as myself."

Charmed with so much unaffected goodness of disposition, the doctor and Mrs. Slopperton now set up a sort of duet in praise of their guest: after enduring their commendations and compliments for some minutes with much grimace of disavowal and diffidence, the stranger's modesty seemed at last to take pain at the excess of their gratitude; and accordingly, pointing to the clock, which was within a few minutes to nine, he said,--

"I fear, my respected host and my admired hostess, that I must now leave you; I have far to go."

"But are you yourself not afraid of the highwaymen?" cried Mrs. Slopperton, interrupting him.

"The highwaymen!" said the stranger, smiling; "no; I do not fear them; besides, I have little about me worth robbing."

"Do you superintend your property yourself?" said the doctor, who farmed his own glebe and who, unwilling to part with so charming a guest, seized him now by the button.

"Superintend it myself! why, not exactly. There is a bailiff, whose views of things don't agree with mine, and who now and then gives me a good deal of trouble."

"Then why don't you discharge him altogether?"

"Ah! I wish I could; but 't is a necessary evil. We landed proprietors, my dear sir, must always be plagued with some thing of the sort. For my part, I have found those cursed bailiffs would take away, if they could, all the little property one has been trying to accumulate. But," abruptly changing his manner into one of great softness, "could I not proffer my services and my companionship to this young lady? Would she allow me to conduct her home, and indeed stamp this day upon my memory as one of the few delightful ones I have ever known?"

"Thank you, dear sir," said Mrs. Slopperton, answering at once for Lucy; "it is very considerate of you.--And I am sure, my love, I could not think of letting you go home alone with old John, after such an adventure to the poor dear doctor."

Lucy began an excuse which the good lady would not hear. But as the servant whom Mr. Brandon was to send with a lantern to attend his daughter home had not arrived, and as Mrs. Slopperton, despite her prepossessions in favour of her husband's deliverer, did not for a moment contemplate his accompanying, without any other attendance, her young friend across the fields at that unseasonable hour, the stranger was forced, for the present, to re-assume his seat. An open harpsichord at one end of the room gave him an opportunity to make some remark upon music; and this introducing an eulogium on Lucy's voice from Mrs. Slopperton, necessarily ended in a request to Miss Brandon to indulge the stranger with a song. Never had Lucy, who was not a shy girl,--she was too innocent to be bashful,--felt nervous hitherto in singing before a stranger; but now she hesitated and faltered, and went through a whole series of little natural affectations before she complied with the request. She chose a song composed somewhat after the old English school, which at that time was reviving into fashion. The song, though conveying a sort of conceit, was not, perhaps, altogether without tenderness; it was a favourite with Lucy, she scarcely knew why, and ran thus:--

LUCY'S SONG.

Why sleep, ye gentle flowers, ah, why,
When tender eve is falling,
And starlight drinks the happy sigh
Of winds to fairies calling?
Calling with low and plaining note,
Most like a ringdove chiding,
Or flute faint-heard from distant boat
O'er smoothest waters gliding.
Lo, round you steals the wooing breeze;

Lo, on you falls the dew!
O sweets, awake, for scarcely these
Can charm while wanting you!
Wake ye not yet, while fast below
The silver time is fleeing?
O heart of mine, those flowers but show
Thine own contented being.
The twilight but preserves the bloom,
The sun can but decay

The warmth that brings the rich perfume
But steals the life away.
O heart, enjoy thy present calm,
Rest peaceful in the shade,
And dread the sun that gives the balm
To bid the blossom fade.

When Lucy ended, the stranger's praise was less loud than either the doctor's or his lady's; but how far more sweet it was! And for the first time in her life Lucy made the discovery that eyes can praise as well as lips. For our part, we have often thought that that discovery is an epoch in life.

It was now that Mrs. Slopperton declared her thorough conviction that the stranger himself could sing. He had that about him, she said, which made her sure of it.

"Indeed, dear madam," said he, with his usual undefinable, half-frank, half-latent smile, "my voice is but so-so, and any memory so indifferent that even in the easiest passages I soon come to a stand. My best notes are in the falsetto; and as for my execution--But we won't talk of that."

"Nay, nay; you are so modest," said Mrs. Slopperton. "I am sure you could oblige us if you would."

"Your command," said the stranger, moving to the harpsichord, "is all-sufficient; and since you, madam," turning to Lucy, "have chosen a song after the old school, may I find pardon if I do the same? My selection is, to be sure, from a lawless song-book, and is supposed to be a ballad by Robin Hood, or at least one of his merry men,--a very different sort of outlaws from the knaves who attacked you, sir!"

With this preface the stranger sung to a wild yet jovial air, with a tolerable voice, the following effusion:

THE LOVE OF OUR PROFESSION; OR THE ROBBER'S LIFE.

On the stream of the world, the robber's life
Is borne on the blithest wave;
Now it bounds into light in a gladsome strife,
Now it laughs in its hiding cave.

At his maiden's lattice he stays the rein;
How still is his courser proud
(But still as a wind when it hangs o'er the main
In the breast of the boding cloud),

With the champed bit and the archd crest,
And the eye of a listening deer,

Like valour, fretful most in rest,
Least chafed when in career.

Fit slave to a lord whom all else refuse
To save at his desperate need;
By my troth! I think one whom the world pursues
Hath a right to a gallant steed.

"Away, my beloved, I hear their feet!
I blow thee a kiss, my fair,
And I promise to bring thee, when next we meet,
A braid for thy bonny hair.

Hurrah! for the booty!--my steed, hurrah!
Thorough bush, thorough brake, go we;
And the coy moon smiles on our merry way,
Like my own love,--timidly."

The parson he rides with a jingling pouch,
How it blabs of the rifled poor!
The courtier he lolls in his gilded coach,
--How it smacks of a sinecure!

The lawyer revolves in his whirling chaise
Sweet thoughts of a mischief done;
And the lady that knoweth the card she plays
Is counting her guineas won!

"He, lady!--What, holla, ye sinless men!
My claim ye can scarce refuse;
For when honest folk live on their neighbours, then
They encroach on the robber's dues!"

The lady changed cheek like a bashful maid,
The lawyer talked wondrous fair,
The parson blasphemed, and the courtier prayed,
And the robber bore off his share.

"Hurrah! for the revel! my steed, hurrah!
Thorough bush, thorough brake, go we!
It is ever a virtue, when others pay,

To ruffle it merrily!"

Oh, there never was life like the robber's,
--so Jolly and bold and free!
And its end--why, a cheer from the crowd below,
And a leap from a leafless tree!

This very moral lay being ended, Mrs. Slopperton declared it was excellent; though she confessed she thought the sentiments rather loose. Perhaps the gentleman might be induced to favour them with a song of a more refined and modern turn,--something sentimental, in short. Glancing towards Lucy, the stranger answered that he only knew one song of the kind Mrs. Slopperton specified, and it was so short that he could scarcely weary her patience by granting her request.

At this moment the river, which was easily descried from the windows of

the room, glimmered in the starlight; and directing his looks towards the water, as if the scene had suggested to him the verses he sung, he gave the following stanzas in a very low, sweet tone, and with a far purer taste, than, perhaps, would have suited the preceding and ruder song.

THE WISH.

As sleeps the dreaming Eve below,
Its holiest star keeps ward above,
And yonder wave begins to glow,
Like friendship bright'ning into Love!

Ah, would thy bosom were that stream,
Ne'er wooed save by the virgin air!--
Ah, would that I were that star, whose beam
Looks down and finds its image there!

Scarcely was the song ended, before the arrival of Miss Brandon's servant was announced; and her destined escort, starting up, gallantly assisted her with her cloak and her hood,--happy, no doubt, to escape in some measure the overwhelming compliments of his entertainers.

"But," said the doctor, as he shook hands with his deliverer, "by what name shall I remember and" (lifting his reverend eyes) "pray for the gentleman to whom I am so much indebted?"

"You are very kind," said the stranger; "my name is Clifford. Madam," turning to Lucy, "may I offer my hand down the stairs?"

Lucy accepted the courtesy; and the stranger was half-way down the staircase, when the doctor, stretching out his little neck, exclaimed,--

"Good-evening, sir! I do hope we shall meet again."

"Fear not!" said Mr. Clifford, laughing gayly; "I am too great a traveller to make that hope a matter of impossibility. Take care, madam, --one step more."

The night was calm and tolerably clear, though the moon had not yet risen, as Lucy and her companion passed through the fields, with the servant preceding them at a little distance with the lantern.

After a pause of some length, Clifford said, with a little hesitation, "Is Miss Brandon related to the celebrated barrister of her name?"

"He is my uncle," said Lucy; "do you know him?"

"Only your uncle?" said Clifford, with vivacity, and evading Lucy's question. "I feared--hem! hem!--that is, I thought he might have been a nearer relation." There was another, but a shorter pause, when Clifford resumed, in a low voice: "Will Miss Brandon think me very presumptuous if I say that a countenance like hers, once seen, can never be forgotten; and I believe, some years since, I had the honour to see her in London, at the theatre? It was but a momentary and distant glance that I was then enabled to gain; and yet," he added significantly, "it sufficed!"

"I was only once at the theatre while in London, some years ago," said Lucy, a little embarrassed; "and indeed an unpleasant occurrence which

happened to my uncle, with whom I was, is sufficient to make me remember it."

"Ha! and what was it?"

"Why, in going out of the play-house his watch was stolen by some dexterous pickpocket."

"Was the rogue caught?" asked the stranger.

"Yes; and was sent the next day to Bridewell. My uncle said he was extremely young, and yet quite hardened. I remember that I was foolish enough, when I heard of his sentence, to beg very hard that my uncle would intercede for him; but in vain."

"Did you, indeed, intercede for him?" said the stranger, in so earnest a tone that Lucy coloured for the twentieth time that night, without seeing any necessity for the blush. Clifford continued, in a gayer tone: "Well, it is surprising how rogues hang together. I should not be greatly surprised if the person who despoiled your uncle were one of the same gang as the rascal who so terrified your worthy friend the doctor. But is this handsome old place your home?"

"This is my home," answered Lucy; "but it is an old-fashioned, strange place; and few people, to whom it was not endeared by associations, would think it handsome."

"Pardon me!" said Lucy's companion, stopping, and surveying with a look of great interest the quaint pile, which now stood close before them; its dark bricks, gable-ends, and ivied walls, tinged by the starry light of the skies, and contrasted by the river, which rolled in silence below. The shutters to the large oriel window of the room in which the squire usually sat were still unclosed, and the steady and warm light of the apartment shone forth, casting a glow even to the smooth waters of the river; at the same moment, too, the friendly bark of the house-dog was heard, as in welcome; and was followed by the note of the great bell, announcing the hour for the last meal of the old-fashioned and hospitable family.

"There is a pleasure in this," said the stranger, unconsciously, and with a half-sigh; "I wish I had a home!"

"And have you not a home?" said Lucy, with naivety. "As much as a bachelor can have, perhaps," answered Clifford, recovering without an effort his gayety and self-possession. "But you know we wanderers are not allowed the same boast as the more fortunate Benedicts; we send our hearts in search of a home, and we lose the one without gaining the other. But I keep you in the cold, and we are now at your door."

"You will come in, of course!" said Miss Brandon, "and partake of our evening cheer."

The stranger hesitated for an instant, and then said in a quick tone,--

"No! many, many thanks; it is already late. Will Miss Brandon accept my gratitude for her condescension in permitting the attendance of one unknown to her?" As he thus spoke, Clifford bowed profoundly over the hand of his beautiful charge; and Lucy, wishing him good-night, hastened with a light step to her father's side.

Meanwhile Clifford, after lingering a minute, when the door was closed on him, turned abruptly away; and muttering to himself, repaired with rapid steps to whatever object he had then in view.

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