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# WHOM TO MARRY

AND

# HOW TO GET MARRIED!

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WHOM TO MARRY  
AND  
HOW TO GET MARRIED!  
OR,  
The Adventures of a Lady  
IN SEARCH OF A GOOD HUSBAND.



EDITED BY THE BROTHERS MAYHEW.

Illustrated by George Cruikshank.

LONDON: DAVID BOGUE, 86, FLEET STREET.

[1847]



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who

TO

JOSHUA MAYHEW,

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED,

WITH ALL FILIAL LOVE AND RESPECT,

BY

THE EDITORS.



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# WHOM TO MARRY

AND

# HOW TO GET MARRIED!

OR,

## The Adventures of a Lady

## IN SEARCH OF A GOOD HUSBAND.

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### OFFER THE FIRST.

WHICH CERTAINLY WAS NOT WHAT—WITH MY IMPROVED VIEWS OF LIFE—I SHOULD NOW DESIGNATE AN EXCELLENT OFFER, FOR I REALLY DON'T BELIEVE THAT THE POOR, POOR WRETCH OF A MAN HAD SIXPENCE IN THE WORLD, BEYOND WHAT HE GOT BY THE PERSPIRATION OF HIS BROW; STILL AS HE WAS MY FIRST LOVE, AND CERTAINLY REMARKABLY FOND OF ME, PERHAPS IT IS BUT RIGHT THAT I SHOULD BEGIN THIS "*petite histoire*" WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THAT INSINUATING *vaut-rien*; ESPECIALLY AS IT WILL SHOW THE GENTLE READER WHAT A SILLY, SILLY, TRUTHFUL, DISINTERESTED LITTLE PUSS I WAS AT "SWEET SIXTEEN."

I DON'T think I shall ever, ever forget Tuesday, the 3rd of July, 1832. All other thoughts may be erased from my memory—strong and fine, as I'm told it naturally is—but the recollection of that horrid, horrid Tuesday, the 3rd of July, 1832, will, I'm sure, remain with me to my dying hour. Indeed, so lasting an impression has it made upon me, that I am as certain, as certain can be, that if, after I am snatched from this poor, dear, empty world, any one would take the trouble to examine my, alas! too susceptible heart, they would find "TUESDAY, THE 3RD OF JULY, 1832," engraven upon it by the sharp chisel of care, and the heavy mallet of affliction. Ha—ah!

Tuesday, the 3rd of July, 1832, was as angelic an afternoon as I ever remembered to have seen in the whole course of my

chequered life. Oh! the sky was such a sweet, clear blue, you don't know, with only two or three little darlings of white clouds floating about, like so many ducks of marabout feathers; and my pretty little dickey was frisking about in his bright brass-wire cage, and whistling away more sweetly, if possible, than that charming Herr Von Joel at an evening party—(by-the-bye, what a sad, sad pity it is he has lost that front tooth of his). I declare, too, if the beautiful boxes of mignonette we had growing outside our parlor-windows didn't smell more divinely than the inside of that darling Delcroix's shop. As for my heavenly gold fish, positively it was quite beautiful to see the dear little pets shining in the sun as if they were treble-gilt, and sporting in upwards of a gallon of their native element, while they kept swimming round and round their crystal prison, as though they were waltzing away, and tripping it on the light fantastic fin, for very joy. Oh! it was a perfect love of an afternoon, on that horrid, horrid Tuesday, the 3rd of July, 1832.

The beautiful ormolu clock, which stood in the centre of our mantel-piece, and which was a faithful representation of a poor old black porter—without so much as a shoe to his foot, or a shirt to cover his dear dark skin, and, indeed, nothing but a pair of gilt trowsers, and a gold hat, to protect him from the inclemency of the weather—walking away with our eight-day clock, done up in a superbly lacquered bundle at his back, and a magnificent brass cane in his hand—Well! this beautiful ormolu time-piece had only just chimed half-past one, and I was sitting on a sweet little "*prie dieu*" near the window, dressed for our drawing lesson, in a pet of a plum-coloured silk frock, with the *corsage* high, and quite plain, and a broad satin sash with a large bow behind, and ends at least a yard long, which mamma said became me extremely—my luxuriant head of hair, too (which Monsieur Davoren, my coiffeur, has often told me was "*une chevelure seraphique*"), was hanging all down my back, and over my shoulders in rich raven ringlets—and my cheeks (which Signor Baretti, my Italian master, used over and over again to declare, in his dear broken English, "Vare like ze side of ze peeshe vat is next to ze sun") were not only tinged with the roseate hue of youthful health, but had borrowed even a



higher flush from the crimson cloth window curtains near which I had placed myself—as I was saying, then, I was, on that horrid, horrid Tuesday, the 3rd of July, 1832, sitting in our parlor, working one of the handsomest brigands, I think, I ever remember to have seen in all my days, and was just putting in the love's darling tiddy moustachios with some black Berlin wool, when who should come bounding into the room—like a silly, artless, impulsive thing as she is—but little sister Fan, with her eyes streaming with tears, and sobbing out, “Oh, Lotty, dear, what do you think—boo-oo—Ma says—boo-oo—that we are to go up in our bed-rooms, and not let her see our faces till Pa comes home to dinner—boo-oo—oo”

“What on earth have you been doing, then? I declare, if I'm not always getting punished through you, you stupid, stupid child!” I exclaimed, not a little vexed at being obliged to go and pass the whole of such a beautiful afternoon as it was on that horrid 3rd of July, 1832, up in that poking back bedroom of ours, with nothing but the stables to look out upon.

“I'm no more a child than you are, Miss Charlotte; for if it comes to that, you know Ma says you're not yet old enough yourself to turn up your back hair,” answered the pert, passionate little puss.

“Let my back hair alone if you please, miss!” I replied, tossing my front ringlet over my left shoulder; “and tell me what on earth you have been doing now, that I should be locked up again for you.”

“I've been doing nothing, I'm sure; and it's a great shame!” Fanny answered, crying; “but Ma's got a spite against me, and is always scolding me for doing nothing; and when Pa comes home, I declare, I'll tell him how I'm treated—see if I don't.”

“Don't tell me, miss; you must have been doing something!” I said, getting quite in a puff with that wicked little story of a sister of mine. “Come, tell me, now, like a good girl, what you've been at; and then I'll go up to Ma, and kiss her, and say you're sorry for it, and have promised never to do it again, if she'll let us off this time.”

“How you *do* teaze, Charlotte!” she answered; “I tell you again and again I've been doing nothing, but none of

you will believe me; and, I declare, I'll run away if it goes on much longer! Ma says I'm a wicked, good-for-nothing girl, and I ought to be ashamed of myself—boo-oo," she continued, bursting out into a fresh flood of tears.

"And so you are, and so you ought, no doubt," I replied. "If you'd only tell the truth, like a good child. I'm sure I wouldn't go and get *you* into disgrace, if *I'd* done anything."

"But Ma says you're just as bad as I am; and she doesn't know what will become of us both if we go on in the way we do."

"Well, I *do* like that extremely!" I had only just time to reply, when who should march into the room but Mamma herself, looking as cross as two sticks.

"Why aint you in your room, Miss Fanny, as I ordered you, ten minutes ago, at least?" she said; "Get up stairs with you directly. And you too, Miss Lotty; for I don't know which is the worst of the pair of you. Oh you naughty, bad, bad, deceitful children!"

"But what is it all about, Mamma?" I replied, bursting into tears, and going up to throw my arms round her neck; "do tell us, there's a dear."

"Go along with you, miss," she answered; "I don't want to kiss any such wicked things as you. Your father shall tell you all about it when he comes home."

"But, please Ma," I said, "it's drawing day, and Mr. Lacy comes at two. Aint we to take our lesson first?"

"You'll have no lessons to-day, I can assure you," she replied, "excepting a very strong one that your father will read you this evening, and one that you won't forget for a long time, I'll take good care."

After this she marshalled Fanny and me and my brigand up to our bed-rooms; and although all the way one of us kept asking her, "What it was all for?" and the other one, "What we had been doing?" still she only told us "not to speak to her;" and directly she had seen us safe into the room, she turned the key of the door, and went down stairs.

As soon as we had had our cry out, and I had nearly spoilt the head of my dear little brigandey by my tears continually falling right on his face, as I sat there stitching and sobbing away—I and Fanny kissed each other, and having made it all

up, set to work puzzling our poor little wits to find out what all the hubbub could be about. First, I thought it was because I had allowed Fanny to keep a nasty little puppy that she had found in the enclosure of our Crescent, in our ottoman dirty clothes box, without saying a word to Ma about it. Then Fanny fancied it was because I had been painting a number of the beautiful lithograph title-pages to the songs in our music-book; and then it struck me it must be because I had been foolish enough to help that great big baby Fanny to unpick her old light green silk spencer, and make a new frock out of it for her doll. But, of course, Miss clever Fan would have it, our Mary had been and told Ma all about my getting her to fetch me from our circulating library that dear dear Mr. Hugo's darling Hunchback, and that I had been reading it in bed. However, after all, we couldn't make out what it was—it might be any one of these, it might be none of them. All that we knew positively was, that Mamma was in our room, when Fanny went up to her to ask whether, as she had done practising, she might go out and walk in the enclosure till Mr. Lacy came for the drawing lesson; and then Ma declared she was astonished Fanny dare show her face, and went on saying ever so many cruel things to her just as Fan had told me in the parlor.

So there we sat upon thorns in a shocking fright, fancying every footstep we heard coming up stairs was Pa's, and resolving if he was very cross with us, that we would both of us run away, and hire a lodging, and take in needle-work, and go partners together; and when we had got enough money, we would go down into the country, and take a pretty little cottage, with roses climbing up to our bed-room windows, and never marry, but always live together like two affectionate sisters as we were, and a couple of little romantic stupid into the bargain.

About six o'clock, as near as we could judge, we heard a double knock at the street-door, and made certain it was Pa's. Sure enough so it was; for in about a quarter of an hour up came Mary, and having unlocked the door of our room, said "Please, Miss Fanny, master wants the key of your desk;" when all we could learn from her was, that Pa was looking very black indeed, and that he and Ma had been

closeted together in the library ever since he had come home, and that dinner had been ordered to be put back half an hour at least. All this put us in a greater fright than ever; and when I questioned Fanny about what she had got in her desk that they could want to see, the poor thing began crying again as if her heart would break, and said she supposed it must be the frontispiece to last year's Keepsake, that she had dropped some tallow upon as she was reading it one night in her room, and then torn from the book and put in her desk to prevent it being found out.

But, alas, it was something more serious than this, as we soon learnt to our cost; for in about five minutes more, Mary came up again and said her master wanted to speak with Miss Fanny alone in the library. The poor little dear went down stairs trembling and sobbing away, so that I couldn't help thinking, that, notwithstanding all her protestations to the contrary, she had been doing something in her giddy, thoughtless way, that she hadn't the heart to acknowledge even to me.

After Fanny had left, I was all on tip-toe to know what it could be about, and kept fidgeting on my chair. Then I went and stood at the top of the stairs to try if I could overhear anything, but of course that was quite impossible, so high up as I was; so that I declare if I wasn't drawn down stairs, one step at a time, until at last I positively found myself outside the library door, with my ear as close to it as possible, listening to what was going on within.

First of all, I thought I heard Pa say something about a brooch with—I fancied I could catch—a portrait of Mr. Lacy, our drawing-master set in it. But Pa was speaking in such a low solemn tone, and the door was so thick, that I felt assured I must be mistaken.

Then Ma said, very loud, “To think of a girl at her age—only fifteen,—receiving a pack of love-tokens from a pauper like that. What on earth, miss, do you expect will——”

But here Papa began speaking at the same time, which prevented my hearing what either of them said. When Mamma was silent, I distinctly heard my father telling her “that was not the way to bring the child to a sense of her proper conduct.”

After this, I heard poor little Fan declare, between her sobs, "upon her word and honour, she knew nothing at all about the brooch,"—(Good heavens! then, I was not mistaken—it was a brooch)—"and if she was to be locked up for a twelvemonth, she had never seen it before that very moment—indeed, indeed, she hadn't."

Whereupon, Mamma broke in, saying, "her bare-faced falsehoods only made the matter ten times worse;" adding, "I suppose you would wish to make us believe that it's your dear, good sister Lotty's—you wicked, wicked girl." (I felt the blood rush scalding into my cheeks on hearing my name introduced.)

Then Papa asked Fanny "if she in any way meant to imply it belonged to me," adding something that nearly escaped me; for all I could catch was the end of his speech, which was "to beware how she told him a lie."

Upon this Fanny stopped crying, and answered, "I don't mean to say it is sister Lotty's, but it isn't mine."

Here they both of them began lecturing poor Fanny together again; and as Ma spoke loudest, I could only catch what fell from her, which was "that Fanny ought to be ashamed of herself to stand there and say such things; for to declare it wasn't hers, was as much as to say it was mine; and did Fanny think she could ever believe such a good girl as I was would be guilty of such wickedness and deceit; for my only fault was, I encouraged her too much in her bad, bad ways, I never got into disgrace except through shielding her," and many other things, for they kept on talking for about ten minutes.

Then there was a dead silence, with the exception of poor Fan's hysterical sobs. At last Papa said, in a loud, grave tone, "that after all Mamma had told him, as well as from Fanny's manner, he felt convinced Fanny was persisting in a wicked untruth, which made the black affair appear ten times blacker in his eyes, and he should feel it his duty to have her confined to her room, and make her take all her meals up there by herself, nor would she be permitted to share in any of the pleasures or amusements to which he might treat me; and this should continue until such time as he saw she was heartily sorry and ashamed of what she had done, and he felt convinced that she was an altered girl."

I was ready to faint; but hearing something in the room drop heavily on the floor, I put my eye to the keyhole, and there I saw poor dear little Fan down on both her knees at Papa's feet, her eyes and cheeks almost blood-red with crying, and her hands clasped up in the air before him. Then I heard her say, in a tone that I had never heard her speak in before, "God, who knows everything, knows I never saw that brooch until this evening. Upon my word and honour—indeed, indeed, dear father, I never did."

Poor dear little sister!

I jumped up, and turning the handle, stepped into the room, saying, "Fanny speaks only the truth; that brooch is mine, father." Then my courage left me, and my head dropped upon my breast, while little impulsive Fan, directly she saw me, and heard what I said, ran to me, and throwing her arms round my neck, wept hysterically on my bosom.

Mamma was so astonished at the suddenness of my confession, that she did not say a word; but father, stepping up to me, took me kindly by the hand, saying, "Charlotte, I hardly know whether I am glad or sorry to hear you say this. I am glad to find one of my girls noble enough to confess to a fault, in order to save her sister from the blame of it; but I am sorry to learn that my eldest child should have been artful and imprudent enough to have received love tokens from any man, unknown to both of her parents, and especially when her very secrecy shows that she must have been aware there was something disgraceful in the connexion. So truthfully, though, have you acted this evening, that I will promise you to say no more about the thoughtlessness—to call it by no harsher name—of your previous conduct, if you will give me your pledge that you will never in any way countenance the addresses of Mr. Lacy, from this time forth."

My father looked at me, waiting for my answer, but I said not a word.

"Charlotte," he continued, "what am I to infer from this silence?" and he stopped inquiringly again.

Still I said not a word.

"Then you *will not* give me the promise I ask!" he added, in a half-angry tone.

"I *cannot*!" was all I could stammer out.

“You cannot, eh? Hem! Well, then, simpleton!” he returned, “since matters seem to have gone thus far, I must take means to make you. So before another week is over your head, I will have removed you to a place, where at least it will be impossible for you to hold any further communion with this scoundrel, who has taught my daughter, for the first time, to fly in the face of her father.”

“Mr. Lacy is no scoundrel, sir!” I said, firing at the idea of such a term being applied to my own dear Herbert.

“There, go back to your room, Charlotte,” he answered, coolly; “and never come into my presence again until you can learn to speak to your father as a friend.”

What occurred afterwards I don't know. Fanny told me I was carried fainting up stairs. When I came to, I found myself lying on my bed, with my things all loosened behind, and the little packet of Herbert's letters, that I always carried in my bosom—gone!

All that dreadful, dreadful night through I tossed about and wept, till my brain seemed to be burning hot, and I hardly knew what I did or thought. Even Fanny was taken away from me to sleep in a different room; so that it seemed as if I had nothing left but death to console me. As long as there was any candle left, I sat kissing and kissing and crying over a little lock which I had cut from dear Herbert's hair, and which as yet had escaped them; and when the light had died out, I threw myself on the bed, dressed as I was, and burying my face in the pillow, prayed Heaven to take mercy on my sufferings, and either to soften my father's heart, or else to help me to fly to Herbert's protection.

When the morning, that I had been praying for, came, the light was so painful to my eyes that I was obliged to keep them shut, for I hadn't strength to leave my bed and close the shutters, and I felt almost mad for a drop of water. My head, too, ached as if my brain was cramped within my skull; while strange queer faces seemed to be moving about the room, though I had still sense enough left to know they were mere visions.

The sequel was a blank to me.

The next thing I remembered was that little Fan, watching beside me; that my room was all dark, and that I could

just distinguish Mamma standing at the little table covered with phials and glasses which was at my bedside. Round each arm I had a bandage, while my beautiful long hair had been cut short, and my head was covered with nice cold, wet cloths.

All seemed to me as if I had been in a long, dreamless sleep; but I felt that I had been very ill; while from the numbness of my limbs, I knew that I had been confined to my bed for a considerable period. It took many days before I could collect my thoughts sufficiently to remember the cause of my illness. Mamma and Fan and the servants were all extremely good and attentive to me (how wonderfully sensitive we are to kindness during sickness), while Papa came to see me every night and morning, and would sit with me sometimes for a whole hour, talking to me in his most affectionate way, and telling me of pretty places he would take me to when I was strong enough to bear the journey. And when he left me of a morning, and I beheld the sun shining on the wall without, and the air looking so bright and warm, oh! how I longed to be out in it, smelling it, and tasting it, and feeling it on my cheeks again, away from that wearisome room, the very pattern of whose paper I had learned by heart.

But it was a long time before I could entirely get rid of the illusions which had been brought on by my fever. One in particular made so strong an impression on me, that for weeks I could have sworn it had actually taken place, for I could remember hearing, as distinctly as I ever heard anything in the whole course of my life—whilst Herbert and I were standing at the altar—the clergyman say, “Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?” and then seeing Papa, as plainly as plainly could be, step forward and answer in a tremulous voice, “I do;” and by-and-by I clearly saw Herbert take the ring from the right-hand pocket of his waistcoat, and while he was in the act of putting it on the fourth finger of my left hand, and was about to say after the minister, “With this ring I thee wed,” it slipped from his hold, and falling on the stones at my feet, shivered into a hundred pieces—like glass.

What took place after this, I couldn't exactly call to mind;



but so real and vivid had been all the previous particulars of the scene, and so strong an impression had I that I had been married somehow, at some time or other, to dear Herbert, that, though I heard all the maid servants about me calling me "Miss," and "Miss De Roos," still I couldn't help feeling convinced that Mrs. Lacy was my lawful name, and that the reason why they called me by my maiden one was, because they couldn't, in so short a time, get rid of their old habit of doing so.

"Still, if I *am* married," I would say to myself, "why does Herbert never come to see me?" And when I used to ask Fan or Mamma "whether my husband would not come back to me soon," they would answer, "Yes, yes," in a hurried, pitying tone, just to humour me in my fancies, and then would immediately turn my thoughts into another channel.

At length Papa thought I was well enough to be removed to the sea side. Every day there I felt the mist clearing away from my brain; and, as my health returned, I found my doubts as to the reality of my marriage grow stronger and stronger. Until one morning, when they had wheeled my invalid's chair to the cliffs, and Papa was seated on a camp stool by my side, I determined to learn the truth from him. So I said, taking hold of his hand—for his arm was resting on the elbow of my chair—

"Did I dream that I was married to Herb—that is, Mr. Lacy, I mean, or am I really married, Papa?"

"Has Mr. Lacy, my dear, been to see you even once during your illness?" he replied, turning round to me from his book, and then almost immediately turning back to it again.

"I know—I know;" I said, half to myself and half to him, "that has struck me as being very strange several times before. Then, of course, you mean that I am *not* married to him."

"Yes, my dear Charlotte," he answered, in a kind, yet decided tone, "I am happy to say you are *not*."

I no sooner heard the fact from *him* who I knew would not deceive me, than I burst into a violent flood of tears.

"Come, come, my poor one!" he said, patting my hand, and pressing it in his, "I did not mean to wound you."

"No! no!" I replied, "I know you did not. But, father, you cannot tell what a happy, happy dream that has been to me, and how my returning reason has lately made me dread it was *only* a dream; and yet how my too sanguine affection has made me still nurse it as a reality. You tell me I am much better. Indeed, father, I felt much, much better when I was worse."

I was so low-spirited, that I couldn't help leaning my head on his shoulder, to hide my tears, and cried away like a silly, romantic girl as I was *then*.

He tried to divert my thoughts from the subject, but I could think and speak of nothing else. At last he raised his head, and kissed me, saying, "Lotty, you *must* dismiss this subject altogether from your mind."

I turned myself round in my chair, and looking steadfastly in his eyes, said, "Father! you have always told me to consider you as my best friend; now, if you really *are* my best friend, why do you stand between me and my happiness?"

"Between you and your *misery*, rather say, Lotty;" and I saw the tears start into his eyes. "You see, my little lamb, we differ in our notions as to the consequences of this union, and therefore you think me cruel, when I am striving but to be kind; and God only knows what a struggle it has cost me."

"But why should my union with Mr. Lacy bring only misery with it? He loves me. Indeed, indeed, he loves me; and my long illness tells you how fearfully I love him."

"My good girl, something more is required to make a happy union," he replied. "Mr. Lacy has not the means of supporting you, Lotty."

"I understand you, father," I answered, starting with indignation—"I understand. You object to Herbert because he is poor; and yet you've told me that the purest happiness proceeds from affection, and you know *that* is beyond the power of money to purchase; for directly it is bought, it is no longer affection."

"You are too apt a pupil, Lotty," he said, sternly; "and I am sadly afraid you borrow rules of life from novels. When I was your age, I had just as great a contempt for money as you have, and I remember, thought my old father as mer-

cenary as I dare say you think me now. But once in the world, and left to myself to provide those luxuries which the comforts of my father's home had rendered necessities to me, I soon found that the filthy lucre my young blood and romances had made me spurn whilst I had not *to earn* my own enjoyments, wasn't quite so contemptible a thing after all. It was not long before I discovered it was good so long as it was used as a means to one's desires, and bad only when it was made the object of them."

"But you forget, dear Papa, Mr. Lacy is not wholly without money," I interrupted him; "and I'm sure his profession yields him enough, at least to keep us two."

"To *keep* you," he continued; "yes, but how, Charlotte? The diet of the workhouse is enough to *keep* the pauper; but it would be worse than starvation to one who has been brought up like you in the lap of luxury. You have as yet wanted for nothing, and always had a maid ready at your hand to do whatever you required. How, then, would you, who think it a degradation now to darn a stocking—how would you like to have nothing but a second floor for drawing-room, sitting-room, kitchen—aye, and nursery, too—and become your husband's servant as well as wife. There is an old proverb, 'when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window.' It may seem a harsh one to you, child, but experience has too often, alas! certified to its truth, and believe me, love depends so much upon the happiness conferred by its object, that when the misery of the deprivations we have to put up with through him outweighs the enjoyments we receive from his company, then disappointment and regret step in, and good-bye to affection. There may have been noble exceptions to this rule, Charlotte; but I do not believe that you have sufficient of the heroine in you to add another to the list—even romantic as you are—for romance appears to me to proceed more from vanity than principle."

"Are you not looking too much on the dark side of human nature, father?" I asked him, half frightened at the picture he had drawn.

"No, my dear one," he replied; "conscientiously, I believe not, neither on the very dark nor yet on the very bright side do I wish to look, and my experience, as a physician, has shown

me both. I wish to consider you and Mr. Lacy as two ordinary beings with ordinary feelings about you; and judging you by this standard, I believe that you might for the honeymoon—or even for a year—be happy and contented together. But when familiarity had sobered down your admiration of one another, I cannot help thinking that your husband would find *you*—with the accomplishments I have heaped upon you, as one I naturally expected would move in an easier path of life—rather a drag than a helpmate to him; while you—after the sacrifice you couldn't help feeling you had made for *him*—would think your husband selfish and wanting in affection, for denying you those indulgences which could not but seem extravagances to him, but which habit had made necessities to you. Further still, each child you bore him would appear to him as an intruder at his not too plentiful board; and you, with the feelings of a woman, must ask yourself how you would like to find each of your little babes looked upon, not as a farther bond of union between you and your husband, but as another incumbrance on your scanty means. Ah, you may stare, Charlotte, but every day's paper will show you that such is the term the many who are struggling for a living do not hesitate even in print to apply to their children."

I could find neither words nor arguments to combat what Papa had said; still, as I felt convinced coming age had made him lose all faith in the love of the young, I merely shook my head in answer.

"Well, my poor one, you think differently," he added. "It is but natural that at your time of life you should; but rest assured it won't be many years before I—who know that each twelvemonth makes girls like you almost different creatures—before I hear you laughing at the very sentiments you now think the beauty of life, and speaking of your first attachment as the thoughtless love of a silly romantic child.

"Never! so long as I live," I exclaimed, with warmth; "you do not know me, father, or you would not think so lightly of me."

## OFFER THE SECOND.

THIS WAS FROM A LITTLE WHISKERLESS BOY, THE BROTHER OF ONE OF MY SCHOOLFELLOWS, TO WHOM I WAS CERTAINLY DESPERATELY ATTACHED AT THE TIME; THOUGH TO BE CANDID, I HADN'T SEEN THE AMOROUS MANNIKIN MORE THAN TWICE IN MY LIFE, AND IT'S THE GREATEST MERCY THAT OUR LOVES WERE NIPPED IN THE BUD: FOR WE WERE BOTH OF US MERE CHILDREN, AND HE HAS TURNED OUT SO VERY WILD SINCE THEN, THAT ENSIGN DARBY HAS POSITIVELY INFORMED ME, THAT THE SCAPEGRACE, HAVING GAMBLED AWAY EVERYTHING HE HAD, HAS SUNK DOWN TO A MERE "BONNET" IN THE QUADRANT—THOUGH, AS I SAID AT THE TIME, I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW HE COULD EVER HAVE THE FACE TO SHOW HIMSELF IN SUCH A STATE.

PAPA'S lecture didn't do me much good. The more he told me that I must forget Mr. Lacy, the more I was continually thinking of him; and I really do believe that if I'd only had an opportunity, and dear Herbert had proposed to me to run away with him, in a post-chaise and four, to Gretna Green, I should have jumped into it, and been off to that nice obliging old blacksmith who shoes horses and rivets young couples. Besides, I had read so many novels, that at last I began to think that all fathers were naturally tyrants, with bosoms of cast iron, and whose chief amusement consisted in breaking the tender hearts of their poor, dear, beautiful young daughters, by not allowing them to marry some wonderfully prepossessing pauper, whose "exquisitely chiselled nose" they had fallen madly in love with at first sight. As for me, I'm sure I used to do nothing all day but saunter about the beach, with our Mary keeping close behind me, and carrying that beautiful brigand of mine in her arms, while I, in my green veil and buff slippers—with my head cast down and my eyes cast up—went moping along close by the water side, sighing like a sea shell, and looking the very picture of a poor, dear, broken-hearted maiden—occasionally stopping, just to trace with the ivory tip of my sweet, pretty, brown satin parasol the loved name of "*Herbert Lacy*" in the sand,—all of which gave me such an extremely interesting air, that people used to go up to our Mary and inquire whether I had not been crossed in love. Then of a night my chief amusement used to be to

sit at the casement of my little front bed-room, watching the pale-faced moon, and, as I sipped my basin of warm arrow-root, asking her if *her* complexion too had been blanched by long, hopeless pining for some good-looking young planet, who, alas! had the misfortune to move in a different circle to herself.

When Papa found that it was no use talking to me, he determined upon sending me to school, where, as he said, the occupation of my studies would soon drive all such silly, sentimental ideas from my head; and I declare if in less than a week my mother hadn't found out a "highly genteel" finishing establishment for young ladies, at Turnham-green, whither, as soon as all my things had been got ready, I was transported, and where poor, dear Mamma, with tears in her eyes, handed *me* over to the Misses Thimblebee till the next holidays, and *my* six towels, and silver fork and spoon, to them—for ever!

I hadn't been long at Turnham Green, before I found out that Mrs. Thimblebee's was no ordinary establishment. It was the boast of both ladies that no vulgar tradesman's daughter had ever polluted the exquisitely refined atmosphere of "CHESTERFIELD HOUSE"—even though they had had several advantageous offers upon the "mutual advantage" system. Indeed, they referred with great pride to their heroic refusal to allow the eldest girl of a highly fashionable butcher at the west end to mingle in their select circle, notwithstanding her fond parent had generously consented to estimate the blessings and graces of French and Italian, Music and Dancing, and Berlin-wool work, at several hundred pounds—of beef and mutton per quarter. No! the Misses Thimblebee were in no way anxious to devote their energies to the rearing of young plebeian "mushrooms," though nothing on earth would have given them greater pleasure than to have bestowed their talents upon the training of budding ducal "strawberry-leaves." At Chesterfield house, young ladies rehearsed the parts they were intended to *act* at Almack's. There the rough block of the child of nature received its finishing touches, and was converted into the highly polished statue of fashionable society—fit for an ornament to any drawing-room. There the grave of departed nature was

adorned with all kinds of artificial flowers; and there, Woman—tutored in all the fascinations of the ball-room—was taught to shine at night like the glow-worm; in order to attract her mate by the display of a brilliance that had no warmth in it.

The Misses Thimblebee, though in their prospectuses they passed as two maiden sisters (the only daughters of a deceased clergyman at the west end of the metropolis), were, to tell the truth, not both in a state of “single blessedness,”—as the rougher sex delight to call it. Miss Grace Thimblebee still dawdled on in all the slow purity of spinsterhood; but Miss Prudence—her younger sister—had, in the flighty moments of her thirty-fifth year, been imprudent enough to rush blindly into matrimony with a certain gay commercial traveller, of the name of Dawes—though if ever she allowed herself to allude to the occupation of that “bad, bad man,” she always dropped the “commercial,” and spoke of him as a “great traveller,” who had unfortunately been led astray, and ruined his “fine intellect and noble figure” by an over fondness for the bottle. On condition that he should not come near the school, Miss Prudence allowed her husband a very respectable annuity; but still the poor thing lived in constant dread of seeing the hopeless prodigal some fine morning force an entrance into the highly moral precincts of Chesterfield House, and demand to be instantly furnished with all the ready cash she had on the premises, and which she knew he would be certain to declare was *his* by law. The very first half I was there, after he had sent—every day for a whole fortnight—a fresh letter, unpaid, with “IMMEDIATE,” written in large characters, and with three notes of admiration after it, on the envelope, he one afternoon, whilst we were at lessons, doing velvet painting, marched into the school-room, smelling disgustingly of spirits and tobacco, with his eyes all heavy and red, and seating himself down on one of the forms among the young ladies, said, he had “just dropped in about *that* small matter,” and vowed with a horrible oath, that he wouldn’t “leave the place until he had got what was justly his own.” Then, I declare, if the monster didn’t begin whistling and winking at some of the girls in the first class, and pinching the arm of the “*Native de Paris*,”

and telling her never to mind him, for he was "only honest Jack Dawes." As far as I could judge—considering the fright I was in—the monster must have been upwards of six feet high, in his "stout men's," and at least a good ell-wide across the shoulders, with very large, bushy, sandy whiskers, and little or no colour in his face, except at the end of his nose, which was almost as deep as beet-root. Nor was there any getting rid of the red-nosed giant, until poor Miss Prudence had gone up stairs, and brought down some bank-notes, which the brute took, saying, he'd make shift with them for the present; and adding, that he was glad to see his "old girl was not neglecting her duties," and that he "was sorry he couldn't stop and dine with the ladies that day;" he staggered out of the room, singing, "Nine cheers for the girls that we love." After this, Miss Grace gave us a long lecture upon "the wreck that once remarkably fine man had made of himself by the use of ardent spirits," and hoped that "the disgusting scene we had just witnessed would act as a warning to us all, and make us 'look before we leapt' into matrimony."

The first day I was at Chesterfield House, upon my word, if my whole time wasn't completely taken up in telling the stupid girls "what my Pa was," and "what kind of a carriage we kept," and "how many servants we had," and "whether I had any brothers or not;" and when I informed them, that I had "only one,"—then it was, "Is he good looking?" and "had the dear got black or blue eyes," and "what was the colour of the pet's hair?" and "did it curl naturally or not?" and was the "angel in long-tailed coats yet, and out of turn-down collars or not?" and "did Ma intend the beauty for the army, or the church; or did I think she'd make a duck of an impudent-young-monkey of a midshipman of him, in a gold lace cap, and tiddy-ickle ringlets, like that charming rogue of a brother of Miss Ghearding that left last half, and whom Miss Thimblebee had ordered to quit the house, at least a dozen times, for his tricks."

I declare, too, if I had to unpack my box once, I had to do it twenty times; for they would one after another make me show them my things, while they kept exclaiming, "Oh! goodness! what a duck of a clear muslin!" and "Mi! what a dear dear poppet of a riband—whatever did it come to a



yard, love?"—then, "What a divine lutestring! Did I get it at that paradise of a Howell and James's?"—afterwards, "Well! there is a superb chemisette—only look! They never saw such exquisite open work, and such a little pet of an edging. Lor! if it wasn't the very best Valenciennes! Oh! what delightful extravagance, dear!"—next it was, "What a heavenly crinoline! oh! it was fit for an angel—it was *so* beautiful and full. Did I have it sent over to me from Paris?"—then, again, "Gracious! if I hadn't got some sweeties, and a whole tin case full of acidulated drops, too, as they lived!—Oh! how nicey! Do let me taste only just *one*—there's a dear—I'll give you some of mine next time they send me any;"—after that, "Do open this fixture for me—there's a love—just to let me see if it's the same as I use, and whether the directions say it's to be put on with an old toothbrush like mine, dear;" and lastly, "Wouldn't I just draw the cork of that lovely nosegay of a mille-fleurs, only to let them have one smell;" and then, "As it was open, and some of the finest they'd ever smelt in all their days, would I mind pouring just half a drop down their bosoms like a good-natured pet as I was?"

When they'd all seen my box, some of the big girls took me down into the play-ground, and there we walked up and down with our arms round each other's waists, while they told me they were "so glad I'd come that day I didn't know;" for I was to sleep in the long room, and they were going to have "such a bit of fun" there that night, I couldn't tell. What did I think? They were going to get up and have a grand feast, after they had gone to bed, and they'd heard Miss Thimblebee let down the night-bolt in her room; and if I chose to be my share towards it, and let them have—like a dear—that pot of tamarinds I'd got in my trunk, they didn't mind letting me go partners—only I was to be sure and not say a word about it to the girls in the other rooms, for they were enemies, and the nasty spiteful things would be sure to go and tell—especially that red-haired Miss Coburn, who had such a long tongue, and was such a tell-tit, there was no trusting her with anything, although she had been pinched till she was black and blue for it. So they wouldn't have it come to her ears for ever so much, for they had made up their minds that it should be the grandest feast they had

had "that half." Only to fancy, too! they had got Susan, for an old pair of Miss M'Taggart's satin shoes, to go out and fetch them half a dozen large fourpenny mutton pies from the pastry-cook's, and a shilling box of ginger-beer powders, which they had all subscribed for. Wouldn't it be nice? and they'd got cook, who was a dear old thing, to give them a whole nightcap full of flour on the sly; and Emmy Strong'i'th'arm, who had won the prize for morals last half, had made yesterday—which was a half holiday—ever so many sweet cakes in the wash-hand basin. And the best of it was, they'd agreed to try and do some fritters at night with some of the peaches Miss Clanricard had had sent her from home. Didn't I think it would be a good game? Of course, I said yes, and they could have a bit of my plum-cake as well, if they liked; but they told me Miss Thimblebee always made it a rule to have all the cakes the young ladies brought with them cut up for tea, which they all agreed was a great shame—saying, it was all very well for the greedy pigs of little girls, but they did think that *they* were old enough to know when they'd had enough, and ought to be allowed to keep their own good things to themselves, and share them among the girls who slept in their room just as they pleased.

Accordingly, that night, after we had heard the Miss Thimblebees go up to their room, and Susan had taken up the plate-basket, and the glasses of hot elder wine and rusks, which they were accustomed to sup upon in bed, we remained quiet until we fancied they were fast asleep, and then slipping on our wrappers, we lighted the candle-ends we had bought of cook. Then, while some of us went to work on tip-toe, laying the sheet which we used for a tablecloth, and setting the tooth-glasses for tumblers, and the scissors for knives, and cleaning the tops of our pomatum pots for plates, Miss Strong'i'th'arm, who was the best cook in the room, began beating up with the end of a tooth-brush the batter for the fritters in the bottom of the soap-dish, which she washed out expressly for the occasion; and when it was all ready, the clever creature fried them quite nicely on a slate over the brisk fire of six ends of candles.

"Do come and eat them whilst there're hot, there's dears," whispered Miss Strong'i'th'arm, as soon as they were done;

and after we had burnt some brown paper, to take away the smell of the frying, down we sat on the floor, as hungry as poets, and devoured as much as one and a half a-piece—giving two to the cook. After this came the second course, of delicious mutton pies; and this was followed by a remove, of beautiful sweet cakes and tamarinds; in the middle of which, *that* Miss Waterford—who is a rare merry one—said, bowing across the sheet to me, “Will you allow me the honour of taking a glass of ginger-beer with you, Miss De Roos;” and then, I declare, if Miss Rawlinson—who is so fond of a bit of fun—didn’t get up, and say in a whisper, “Will you be so good as to fill your tooth glasses, I have a toast to propose;” and when we had stood up in our wrappers, and put the tartaric acid into the ginger-beer powder, she asked us, in a low voice, “Are you all mixed? Then, here’s ‘THE LADIES! God bless ’em!’” Whereupon we all emptied our glasses, and cried out, “Hip, hip, hurra! hurra! hurra-a-a-a!” as faintly as we possibly could. This done, we put all the things by in the foot-pan, and jumped into bed, and began telling stories to each other; when Miss Howard told us all about how she had once dressed in her brother Henry’s clothes, and turned up all her hair, and made herself a pair of moustachios with burnt cork—and how then she had gone out at dusk, and walked ever such a way down Portland-place, all by herself—’pon her word and honour she had!—and nobody knew her from a real man; and how, when she came back, even their maid didn’t recognise her, and threatened to scream if she dared to kiss her; and, at last, how, when her hat fell off, and the girl found out who it was, she said she ought to be ashamed of herself, to impose upon a poor servant girl in that way—though she couldn’t help saying, that Miss Howard made one of the most good-lookingest and wickedest young gentlemen she ever set eyes upon. Oh! it was such a good bit of fun, we didn’t know; and she wished she’d been born a boy—that was all! After this, Miss Cabell remembered how, once, when Uncle Ben came to stop a week at her Pa’s in Hampshire, she and her sister Kate, who was married, used to stitch up the tops of his stockings together, and sow up the bottoms of the lining of his trousers, and flour the inside of his nightcap, and either make him an apple-pie bed, or else put the hair

broom down at the bottom inside of it, and play him a whole number of such funny tricks, no one could tell. Oh, it was the best game she had ever had in all her life, and she did like romping *so!*" And thus we went on, talking away, till we heard the market gardeners' carts and the mail-coaches going past the door on their way to town, and could see the daylight looking quite grey through the cracks in the shutters.

Next morning we were all of us so tired, that when the bell rang for us to get up, as we were allowed an hour to dress, we remained in bed, and didn't move till it only wanted ten minutes to the time for us to be in the school-room for prayers, so that when we made our appearance down stairs we all looked such slovens there was a fine to do. First of all, Miss Grace Thimblebee called up Miss Strong'i'th'arm, and asked her how she could have the audacity to think of appearing before her without having bandolined her hair, and what she expected would ever become of her if she went on in that way; and then having ordered her to translate the whole of the description of the plates in the last week's "PETIT COURIER DES DAMES," she told her to take herself up stairs immediately after prayers, and make her hair look something like a Christian's. Then she turned round to Miss Cabell, and said, "Come here, child, and let me see your hands, that you're rubbing in that furious way, for they look disgustingly red; and well indeed they might," she added, "for I can plainly see that you never slept in your gloves with the *pâté d'Amande* inside of them. Where on earth do you expect to go to with hands like those, you bad, bad child! You'll please to stand in a corner, and hold your arms up over your head for a whole hour, immediately after prayers." And when she was done with her, she turned round again, and said, "Miss Rawlinson, your forehead looks extremely low this morning, and your eyebrows much closer than they were a week ago; I'm half afraid you haven't used your tweezers for these many days past. It's a wonder to me that the ground doesn't open and swallow you up, you wicked, wicked girl! There, go along with you, and just to teach you in future to remove all superfluous hair from between your parting and eyebrows, you will please to get by heart the six first pages of the second chapter of 'THE HANDBOOK OF THE TOILET.'"

“Miss Howard,” then she went on, “just step this way, if you please. Your dress seems to hang down behind you, as if you had no more bend in your back than an old oak chair. Why, you uncivilized little heathen—you! You’ve got no crinoline on, as I hope to be saved! Were there ever such girls! But I must put a stop to these evil ways; so you’ll remember, Miss Howard, to be able to repeat to me the first five-and-twenty rules of your ‘ETIQUETTE FOR THE LADIES,’ before you taste a mouthful of luncheon. And, Miss Waterford,” she continued, “why are you hiding behind Miss M‘Taggart in that way? Oh, I see! you are afraid I should discover how thin your hair is, I suppose? How often, now, am I to tell you that if your mamma desires you to wear ringlets, you must throw as much of your back hair into your front curls as you can, or you never will appear to have a luxuriant head of it. If you go on in this way, I’m sure I won’t take upon myself to say what your latter end will be. All I can tell you is, I sha’n’t be able to rest easy in my bed until I see a very great alteration in your looks. So you will please to stop in the school during play hours, and devote your leisure to the translation of the first of ‘TIMOTHY’ into elegant Italian.”

At half past two the bell rang for our *gouté à la fourchette*, when we were expected to make a hearty meal, so that we might appear to be remarkably delicate, small eaters at dinner time, (which never took place till six o’clock,) and Miss Strong’i’th’arm told me, that though we were allowed beer at luncheon, still it was to be considered a profound secret, and that Miss Grace Thimblebee had once put Miss Howard in the stocks, and kept her on bread and water for three whole days, for asking at dinner for a glass of the disgusting beverage, which she said no lady of the least pretensions to breeding was supposed to know even the taste of. During lunch, I unfortunately said, I would take a little cabbage, as I saw a vegetable dish of very nice white-heart summer one’s upon the table. No sooner had the word fallen from my lips, than Miss Prudence (she objected to our calling her Mrs. Dawes) dropped her knife and fork, and looking at me with all her eyes, inquired, “*What* did you say you’d take, Miss De Roos?” “A little cabbage, if you please, ma’m,” I re-

plied, quite innocently. "Cabbage! cabbage!" she echoed, "I don't know such a word in the English language, and yet I am not generally considered to be *utterly* ignorant of my mother tongue. Pray, what may you mean by the term?"

"I only wanted some of the vegetables opposite to *Made-moiselle de Nemours*," I answered.

"Then you will not have any," she returned; "and that, perhaps, will make you remember for the future, that those vegetables are only known here, as well as in all other fashionable circles, by the name of Greens. Cabbage! cabbage!—I suppose I shall soon be doomed to hear you ask for a piece of horrid, horrid cheese. What *do* you expect will become of you, if you go on in this way?"

After lunch we all laid down on our backs for an hour on the boards, so as to improve our figure, and prevent any roundness in our shoulders; then we had lessons in personal deportment, and after this came a slight lecture on the art of stepping into a carriage like a lady; on the conclusion of which, we adjourned to the bottom of the play-ground, where the body of an old landau was fixed up under a shed, so that we might put into practice the valuable precepts that had just been expounded to us. This done, we were dismissed to dress ourselves for the evening, for which we were allowed an hour; and at ten minutes to six, we all entered the drawing room, whence, as soon as dinner was announced to be on the table, we handed down each other, descending the stairs in couples to the dining-room.

Here I got myself, if possible, into worse disgrace than ever; for, unfortunately for me, there was some very nice *soupe Julienne*, and it was so much to my taste, that when Miss Grace Thimblebee said, "Miss De Roos, now do allow me to send you a little more soup," I replied, "Thank you; since you're *so* pressing I *will* take a little more, if you please, m'am;" and immediately I had said so, I never saw such mental agony expressed in a human countenance before. "Do I live to hear one of my pupils say that she will take twice of soup," she groaned. "Oh, that it should come to this; that *I*, who have devoted the whole of my energies to the refinement of my sex—that *I* should be doomed to have my heart-strings snapt asunder by any such unheard-of barbarisms. Surely,

Miss de Roos, you must have been brought up in the back woods of America? But you will be pleased to go through the whole of the tenth edition of my little book of "How to LIVE UPON TWO HUNDRED A-YEAR, so as to make it appear a thousand;" and until you can repeat all its valuable precepts by heart, you will not dine at this table again. It is a moral duty that I owe to the other young ladies."

"But, ma'am!" I replied, "you yourself pressed me to take some more!"

"Of course I did; good breeding required as much from me," she answered; "but I never expected that *you* would be ill-bred enough to think for one moment that I meant you to take me at my word. I suppose next, that if I *pressed* you to wear your best gloves at evening service, you would be stupid and prodigal enough to do as I requested."

I declare though, she had no sooner done lecturing me, than observing little, red-haired Miss Coburn convey some peas to her mouth by means of her knife, she fell into a state of greater horror than ever.

"Miss Coburn! Miss Coburn!" she screamed; "*do* you want to drive your faithful preceptress to a premature grave! I'm sure, if I have made you once go over the sixty-eighth maxim of 'ETIQUETTE FOR THE LADIES,' I must have made you do it at least a hundred times; and yet it only seems as if the golden rules and inestimable truths of that little treasure of a book were entirely thrown away upon you. Now, what does that very sixty-eighth maxim tell you the lady of fashion used to say were her feelings on seeing a person raise her knife to her mouth?"

Miss Coburn remained silent, in evident forgetfulness of what the lady of fashion really did say.

"Oh, you don't know, don't you;" Miss Thimblebee continued; "then I shall fine you sixpence out of your pocket-money, though I regret to state, you have been fined so often that you have no more to receive this quarter. However, perhaps, Miss Smythe Smythe will oblige us all by instructing you on this interesting point."

And immediately Miss Smythe Smythe started off with—"Please Ma'm—the—lady—of—fashion—used—to—say—that—she—never—saw—a—person—guilty—of—this—

ugly—habit—without—a—shudder—as—every—minute—she—expected—to—see—the—head—of—the—unfortunate—severed—from—the—body.”

“Very pretty indeed! thank you! Miss Smythe-Smythe,” said Miss Grace. “We are all of us very much obliged to you, I’m sure; and after dinner you may come to me for a card of merit.”

We had only just been helped for the first time to the second course, and had scarcely finished what was on our plates, when Miss Grace Thimblebee said to her sister at the end of the table, “Prudence, my love, can I send you a little more?” and no sooner had Miss Prudence, of course, replied, “No more, I thank you, dearest,” than Miss Grace ran her eyes round the table, nodding her head to each of us as quickly as she could, saying, “Nor you?—nor you?—nor you?—n’you?—n’you?—n’you?—n’you? Then you may take away, Susan. I’m sorry to see my pets are such small eaters.”

After dinner we had to sit down to knit anti-maccassars and window-curtains; and when the evenings were long, Miss Thimblebee *would* make us amuse ourselves either with Berlin-wool work, or velvet-painting, or embroidery, or jappanning, or wax flowers, and other odd knick-knackereries; and though the materials for them were regularly charged for in the half-year’s bill, still the articles themselves when finished were considered to be the property of the Misses Thimblebee. “Idleness, my dear children,” Miss Grace would say, “is the root of all evil, and consequently I *am* never so well pleased as when I see my sweet girls like an united family, innocently—ay, and I may add profitably—engaged in some lady-like pas-time (not *parse*-time, you will observe, Miss de Roos).”

And well the thin, old, turbaned thing *might* be pleased with seeing us engaged so innocently—ay, and profitably,—as well indeed, too, she MIGHT add; for to tell the truth, “her sweet girls” had managed to supply her with gratuitous window-curtains, and chair and sofa cushions and covers for most of the apartments in Chesterfield House; while the grand reception-room for all parents and guardians had been entirely stocked with furniture and ornaments—from the large worked ottoman which stood in the middle of the room, down to the



two superb bouquets of wax flowers which graced each end of the mantel-piece—free of all expense, by “the lady-like exertions of her united family.”

Whilst we sat there at that stupid knitting, dropping one, and missing two, and letting go three, and throwing off four, and then taking up five, and casting off six, or something just as intellectual and amusing, it was the established rule that we should talk nothing but French; and in order to enforce the practice, the “*Native de Paris*,” as she was called, always remained in the room with us. However, to tell the truth, the “*Native de Paris*” wasn’t of much use amongst us, for we were not long in finding out that she had entered this world *viâ* the Surrey-side of the Thames, and was rather “*une native de Peckham Rye*,” and though she now chose to give herself a fine French name, still, in common gratitude to her godfathers and godmothers, or even in common honesty to the parents of her pupils, she should have added to her grand “ANGELIQUE DE NEMOURS,” “*néé SALLY COCKLE*,” and, perhaps, it wouldn’t have been so much amiss if, while she was about it, she had affixed to the title, “and cousin to the Misses Thimblebee by their mother’s side,” into the bargain. But we liked her the best of the whole of the teachers, for though we were all taught to look up to her as our French mistress, still poor Angelique couldn’t help looking down upon herself as a mere French pupil. And well, indeed, she might; for, to be candid, her pure Parisian accent had such a strong Bow-bell twang, that I doubt very much if she could have made herself understood at even a Boulogne *table d’hôte*. So, finding that she was incapable of expressing herself in good sound French, she always made a point of speaking her mind in bad broken English, in which she was materially assisted by a strong lisp, and that Babel-like confusion of the v’s and the w’s which appertain to the true London dialect.

As I was saying, then, there we used to sit, knitting away, while Mademoiselle Angelique read to us the descriptions of the plates in the last number of the “*Petit courier des Dames*,” though it was with the greatest difficulty that we could understand, from her pronunciation, what grand new discovery had been made in the not-at-all-fixed sciences of millinery and mantua-making.

"*Les robes,*" she would read, "*song generalmong à corsage excessivemong buskey et tres decollectées ong avong.*"

"And sweetly pretty it must look, my dears," cried Miss Prudence, who said she could understand the language perfectly, though she couldn't speak it.

"*Ong fait le dos,*" continued mademoiselle, "*ong amazong; et ong pose doo rong de volang au haut des manches pour former des Jockeys.*"

"What is that you say about jockeys? Let me see the book," said Miss Grace Thimblebee, taking it from Mademoiselle Angelique's hand. "Dear me! it certainly is as you said, my dear! Sleeves—formed at the top—like—jockeys. And, now I come to think of it, I've no doubt it would have a very charming and novel effect. And even if it didn't—why, since it is the fashion, it is our duty, while sojourning in this sublunary sphere, to follow it. Proceed, mademoiselle."

"*La mode des voitures,*" continued mademoiselle, "*reste assez stationnaire. Quong aux livrées elles ong leur saisong bieng markey. Le chapeau est rond bordée deune large galong. L'habit est deune blue vif garni de bontong de mettle. Le gilet est jone. Le culotte est rouje ong panne et de grandes quêtres de peau, finissang au-dessew dew gennew.*"

"*Oh! ness par que say jolly!*" cried mademoiselle, in raptures, "how me would likey von footman dressed *com sar*. But me never have no hidear dat dare vare de fashions for de footmen, as vell as for de ladies of *haut Tong*."

"Then I blush for you, Miss Co——, that is, Mademoiselle de Nemours, I should say," exclaimed Miss Thimblebee, rising from her chair. "Why should not the noble aristocracy of this land of freedom delight to see their serving-men gaily dressed as well as themselves? Tell me, I ask—where will you see such taste displayed as in the liveries of old England? Why, even my Macaw appears tawdry beside the British Footman. But if you have any doubts on this subject, I must beg of you, Miss Co—dear me, Mademoiselle de Nemours, I mean—not to let me hear you profess any such wicked scepticism again."

Thus matters went on for upwards of three months; and although every half hour through the day some fresh study

was introduced, and I learned an infinity of accomplishments, still, I cannot at this present time call to mind that I was taught any knowledge. Miss Thimblebee was constantly reminding me that I was receiving the finished education of a perfect lady, though, when I was finished, and had left her school, I was totally ignorant of all that was really useful, or truly admirable. Thus matters went on, then, until one day, just as we had finished our morning lessons, and Miss Thimblebee had quitted the school-room, Miss Prudence, who had remained behind, requested silence, and then told us she had a few words to say to us before we retired to the play-ground, on the subject of a joyful event, in which she was sure we all felt equally interested.

To be brief, she was happy to inform us that that day month was the birthday of her dear, dear, dear sister, and our faithful preceptress, Miss Grace Thimblebee. She could read in our eyes how the pleasurable intelligence had gratified us, and how we were all planning in our hearts, like sweet good girls as we were, some little fond surprise, which should be a tangible proof of our love, and worthy the acceptance of that exemplary woman, whom to know, she would add, was to adore. Well, she would not stand between us and our generous feelings, but would forthwith place in Miss Strongi'th'arm's hands a money-box, for the reception of subscriptions—however trifling they might be—for it was the sentiment that gave each offering its value and not the amount—though at the same time it might be as well to mention that nothing under five shillings would be received."

After she had gone, I asked Miss Strongi'th'arm, "What we had better buy for Miss Thimblebee with the money?" But she told me, "I needn't trouble my head about that, as Miss Prudence would be sure to lay the money out herself; adding, it was only last half that Miss Grace Thimblebee had made very nearly the same speech to them on behalf of her sister Prudence, and indeed it was a rule with the two ladies once a year to do a similar turn one for the other, for by such means they had amassed a very handsome service of plate-out of their joint birthdays.

About three days before the joyful event, Miss Prudence came into the school-room, and having unlocked the money-

box and put the contents into a reticule, which she had brought with her for the purpose, told us, after she had reckoned the amount, that she had hoped she should have been able to have presented her sister with a very neat silver liqueur stand, (which Miss Grace had much admired,) but as she regretted to find the subscription was not so liberal as it had been on former occasions, she must content herself with a small set of silver shells for scolloped oysters, (which she knew her sister was excessively fond of for supper.) Further, she had prepared a short congratulatory and complimentary address, begging Miss Thimblebee's acceptance of the trifling token of our affection and esteem. This she purposed should be spoken by the two youngest ladies in their establishment, on the joyful occasion, when there would be a little *réunion*, just a "*dunnee*," a glass of negus and a cake or so, for she intended to treat us all as friends, and make no stupid fuss with us. Then giving the copy of the address to Miss Strong-i'th'arm, she said, "Perhaps she would be kind enough to see that Miss Coburn and Miss Smythe Smythe got it off by heart as soon as possible, taking care that they were quite perfect in the hard words, and that they paid particular attention to their stops."

On the evening of the joyful event, the drawing-room was lighted up, and the carpet removed; while the forms which had been brought up from the schoolroom were, by means of a covering of green baize, converted into rout seats. The music mistress had been invited to join in the festivities of the evening; and immediately she made her appearance, she was asked if she would be good enough to oblige them with just one of her beautiful quadrilles, and then handed to the piano, which she never left the whole evening through. The dancing master had been likewise asked to make one of the happy party; and as soon as *he* set foot in the room, he was requested to act as master of the ceremonies. The company consisted of the whole of the teachers, and only one mother and an aunt out of all the parents and relations, though every one of them had been asked; "but, unfortunately," as Miss Thimblebee said, at least ten times in the course of the evening, "they had all previous engagements, which they regretted would deprive them of the pleasure of being pre-

sent on the joyful occasion." However, there were several young gentlemen from a neighbouring establishment, who, though of rather too tender an age to please us, still looked particularly clean and uneasy, and had all been elaborately curled and pumped for the joyful event. Their entrance was immediately followed by quadrilles and a strong smell of rose hair oil. After one or two dances, in which the young gentlemen went through the different steps with their eyes intently watching each movement of their feet, Miss Thimblebee asked Miss Rawlinson—whose mamma was *the* one present—if she would be so kind as to oblige the company with her "Gavotte?" When, by dint of saying one-two-three-four to herself, that young lady had accomplished this feat, Miss Howard was requested to let her aunt see how charmingly she was getting on with her music, and to be good enough to play "the Battle of Prague" for them. As soon as she had finished, and been highly complimented for the beauty of her "cries of the wounded," Miss Strongi'th'arm and Miss Waterford kindly consented to favour the visitors with one of their charming Italian duets; and after a long consultation with the music mistress, at last decided upon singing their beautiful "*La chi darem la mano*," which went off delightfully. Then came a fearful pause; for Miss Prudence had retired with little Miss Coburn and little Miss Smythe Smythe, followed by Miss Strongi'th'arm, while Miss Thimblebee, who appeared to be greatly astonished at their all leaving the room together in such a mysterious way, wondered what it could mean, and drew the attention of the visitors to a table strewn with our crayon drawings, where Miss Cabell's head of Andromache was much admired by all, excepting Miss Rawlinson's mamma, who said that she thought the pencilling was neither so firm nor so free as that in the sheet of noses by her daughter; indeed, to be candid—and with the young, she was sure Miss Thimblebee would agree with her, it was much better to be so,—she thought the shading, and under the chin, looked too much like hair to please her; and surely *the* tear she was shedding was a *leetle* out of proportion; while, to tell the truth, she never did think much of the original; nor did she ever like the subject; nor was she at all pleased with the way in which it was treated. So Miss

Thimblebee, to take *the* parent's attention from the drawings, dexterously asked Miss Clanriccard who Andromache was? and just as that young lady was informing the guests that, "Please, ma'm, Andromache-was-the-wife-of-Hector-of-Troy-and-she-was-so-fond-of-her-husband-that-she—" when, unfortunately, Miss Strongi'th'arm entered the room, followed by little Miss Coburn and Miss Smythe Smythe, bearing the silver scollop-shells on one of the ottoman cushions out of the reception-room.

"Why, bless me! what *is* the meaning of this, my dears?" cried Miss Thimblebee, retiring and seating herself in the embroidered easy chair, which one of the girls had wheeled into the middle of the room for her.

Then Miss Coburn and Miss Smythe Smythe each made a profound curtsy to the enthroned lady, and nearly dropped the silver shells in so doing. After this they both began, in a sing-song tone,—

"We humbly approach you, Miss Grace Thimblebee, our much-respected and beloved mistress, on this, the anniversary of your natal day, to offer you (will you mind your stops, Miss Coburn, whispered Miss Prudence,) to offer you our heartfelt con—con-gratulations ('One,' said Miss Coburn in an undertone to herself, minding her stops, and so marking a comma,) and to breathe a hope (one,) and prayer (one,) that your valuable existence may be spared for many revolutions of this globe to come (one, two:) and—a—a—a—('That you will condescend to accept,' "Oh, you bad child! where *is* your head?" whispered Miss Prudence to Miss Smythe Smythe,) and that you will condescend to accept," continued the young lady, in a half-crying tone, "this paltry token of our profound gratitude (one,) and esteem (one, two;) which (one,) however insignificant its real worth may be (one,) we feel convinced you will attach no trifling value to (one,) as the testimony of the admiration and respect of the young and innocent for the virtues (one,) beauty (one,) accomplishments (one,) and learning of one who is so bright an ornament to her sex (one,) and so kind to her pupils (one, two, three, four.) And please, ma'm, that's all."

"Very nicely spoken indeed! Thank you, young ladies," exclaimed Miss Prudence; and then taking Miss Smythe

Smythe aside, she added in an undertone, "I'll make you suffer for this to-morrow, Miss!—that I will!" then turning round to the company with a bland smile, she said, putting her hand up, "Sh-sh-sh-sh-sh!"

Immediately Miss Thimblebee rose from her chair, and taking a small slip of paper from her pocket, she occasionally spoke and occasionally read as follows:—

"Beloved pupils and respected parents"—but suddenly remembering that there was only one present, she corrected herself—"parent I should have said; I can assure you the presentation of this little token of your profound gratitude and esteem, has taken me so much by surprise—that—that," (looking at the paper.) "I cannot find words to express the feelings that this simple silver liqueur stand—no, scollop shells I should say, has—dear me, no—*have*, of course, I mean—but," she added, crumpling up the paper, which had caused her to make so many mistakes, "my feelings quite overpower me—you see—so I can only say—a—a—that I am extremely obliged—you know—for this—a—a—a—whatever is the word—I've got it on the tip of my tongue—this—a—a—a—what-d'ye-call-it; on this my—a—a—a—no matter what—birthday, so I return you all my very best thanks." And then down she sat, quite in a puff.

Any one may well imagine, that at such an establishment as I have in these last six or eight pages endeavoured to describe, I was not long in discovering the impropriety of bestowing my affections upon one of so low a standing in society as Mr. Herbert Lacy, and I don't think I had been under the moral training of the Misses Thimblebee more than three months before I had almost entirely forgotten my former drawing-master, and—to confess the truth—had fallen half in love with a young gentleman—the brother of one of my schoolfellows—whom I had never even set eyes upon.

I couldn't have been at Chesterfield House above one quarter when a new girl came, of the name of Margaret Soojee, and by that time I had got so much into the way of the school, that, strange to say, I found myself asking her whether *she* had a brother? and when she told me she had one who was just turned seventeen, I in my turn wanted to know what kind of a person he was; and inquired most minutely into the shape

and colour of his different features. Whereupon, I declare, she gave me such a glowing description of what she called her dear Phil's looks, and curled his flaxen hair, and lit up his blue eyes, and chiselled his Grecian nose so beautifully for him, that upon my word, I was so taken with the representation she had given me, that I found myself getting every day greater and greater friends with her, and walking about the play-ground with my arm round her waist, listening to her telling me of all his tricks and ways, while I endeavoured to find out, whether he had ever displayed any attachment to any young lady of their acquaintance; and when I heard he was rather partial to a game of romps with his cousin 'Tilda, I found myself conceiving a most bitter hatred for such a designing tomboy, as I knew *that* 'Tilda *must* be. Sometimes I would ask her whether Mr. Philip liked dark beauties, and when she told me that she thought his taste *did* run that way, I made her promise, that when she next wrote to him, she would speak of *me* in the letter, and tell him that I had got long black hair and large black eyes. On her consenting to do so—like a dear—I asked her how soon she intended to write to him, and on learning from her that she didn't think she should write to him for a week or so at least, I couldn't help saying that if he loved her, as much as she said he did, of course he couldn't but feel anxious to know whether she was comfortable or not in her new school, and that I thought that she really *ought* to write as soon as she possibly could.

Well, like a love, she wrote the very next day; and I got her to let me see what she had said about me in the letter, when, I declare, if the darling hadn't written such a number of fine things about her little gipsy of a black-eyed friend of a Lotty de Roos! I felt the blood rush tingling into my cheeks while I read them, and told her I'd do the same for her if she chose, when I wrote to *my* brother Edmund, only he was such a nasty selfish disposition, that I knew she wouldn't like him any more than I did.

The letter once posted, I couldn't do a thing until the answer came, and, when it did, if Mr. Philip hadn't sent his love to me in a postscript, which, I couldn't help saying, was like his impudence indeed; adding, that I should like to know, too, what business he had to call me Lotty; so I made Meggie



write back as soon as she could, and say that she had given his love to me, and that I had blushed my deepest crimson on the receipt of it.

All play-hours we did nothing but talk together about her brother "Phil," as Meggie called him; and she would tell me how he very often took her out walking, and would sometimes treat her to an ice, and as many Bath buns as she could eat,—and how he would get them tickets for the play—and how he had made her a present of a dear little duck of a Skye terrier that would sit and beg for anything—and how he used to bring her home toffy and chocolate drops, and shoulders of mutton and ends of candles, and things in sugar, and all kinds of sweeties—and how he wasn't at all friends with his papa, because he wanted a latch-key, and his papa said that eleven o'clock was quite late enough for a boy like him to stop out of an evening, which hurt his pride so, that he said that he could never either forget or forgive the insult. No sooner had I heard that he wasn't friends with his father, than I at once settled in my mind that he was a poor dear persecuted love, and felt more convinced than ever that all fathers were tyrants, and only lived to see how much they could thwart the wishes of their children. After this, I must needs go setting to work, making a crimson silk purse, with plenty of steel beads about it; and when it was done, I put some wool at the ends of it, and gave it dear Meggie, saying, that if she would promise—'pon her word and honour—not to tell I had made it, she might send it as a present to her brother Phil, merely observing, that one of the young ladies had worked it for him, and she'd leave him to guess which. But, I declare, if the naughty puss didn't go telling him outright whose handiwork it was, which put me in such a puff, that I vowed I'd never forgive her as long as I lived. From that time forward, I don't think Meggie ever had a letter from her brother without there being at least a whole page in it about me; and either he would be wanting to know whether Meggie and I ever went out walking alone together, or else, whether Meggie couldn't get her mamma to invite me to spend a day or two at their house. He was positively dying to see me *so*,—poor dear young man!

In this way we went on, as Meggie couldn't get her

ma to ask me home until the holidays, when she said she should be happy to see me. But as I was dying quite as much to see Mr. Philip, as he was dying to see me, and I couldn't wait all that time, I got my mamma to ask Meggie to spend a Sunday with me at *our* house. As soon as it was arranged, Meggie wrote to Philip, telling him all about it, and directing him to call on that Sunday afternoon, and ask leave to take us both out for a walk in the Park. When the day came, and he called, I was never so astonished in all my life; for instead of seeing the great, strapping, big-whiskered young man I had imagined him to be, I declare if he didn't look quite a mere boy, as fair as a girl, and with about as much hair on his cheeks as there is on a caterpillar's back. Though I had told Meggie that I would give it him well, the first time I saw him, for the impudent messages he had sent me, and though he had written to Meggie, saying, that the first time he saw me he would have a good flirtation with me, yet I declare neither he nor I, after our introduction, dared say a word, or even look at each other; but there we sat as silent as snow—he admiring the shape of his boots, and knocking his leg with his little cane; while I kept pulling a pink to pieces leaf by leaf, and doing “loves me” “loves me not” all the time to myself,—and I wasn't sorry when Mamma came into the room, and gave me permission to go out walking with him and his sister. Once out of the house, and with Meggie's help, we grew more and more intimate, so that by the time we had reached home, I declare I thought him quite an angel, and I dare say he thought equally highly of me.

When I got back to school, we commenced a regular correspondence through Meggie, and he used to send me letters at least twice a week, breathing the fondest affection, and smelling strongly of cigar smoke. It wasn't more than a fortnight, too, before we indulged in the customary exchange of locks of hair. I also sent him a crimson velvet pin-cushion, in the shape of a heart, filled with bran, and he sent me a beautiful red cornelian ornament of the same shape, with a love of a little gold ring through it, so as to hang it round my neck.

At last, thank goodness, there was a prospect of seeing him again. The Misses Thimblebee, on the evening before the

pupils went home for the holidays, always gave a grand evening party, when the prizes were distributed before the company, which consisted of the mammas, papas, and brothers of the different pupils. To this party Philip was asked, and, like a love, came looking so interesting and genteel that the more I looked at him and thought of Mr. Lacy, I couldn't help saying to myself, that my taste was as different from what it had been not six months before as Philip was from Herbert. Need I tell my lady readers how, behind the window-curtains, we were all fondness, and how, before them, we were all coolness; or how, after he had danced four quadrilles running with me, he could prevail upon none of the other young ladies to dance with him; and how I could see in him nothing but good, and the other young ladies could see in him nothing at all.

While Mr. Jabez Thimblebee—who was a professor of the double-base viol, as well as a distinguished performer at a chapel of ease at Ball's Pond, and who had kindly brought his viol with him,—was delighting the company with his admired pastoral symphony of “The Country Farm-yard,” and making the instrument speak, with several wonderful imitations of the various domestic animals introduced in the piece—while Mr. Jabez Thimblebee was doing this, Mr. Soojee was vowing, in solemn whispers, behind the window-curtain, that he would not leave me that evening, until I had given him my promise that when he came to fetch his sister Meggie on the morrow—which he would do precisely at one o'clock,—I would grant him one short secret interview in the cloak-room. What could I do but promise? and, having promised, what could I do but keep my word?

Precisely at one there I was in the cloak-room, sitting on the old sofa there, with its deep valance hanging from it, to hide the well underneath it—for in Miss Thimblebee's less prosperous days it had done the double duty of sofa and bedstead. I was looking at the engravings in the last year's “Book of Beauty,” and had just got to the portrait of the lovely Honourable Miss Lilian Toplady, *en dishabille*, with her morning-wrapper carelessly thrown open in front, so as to display as much of her beautiful neck and shoulders as she could, while her hair all loose was streaming down her back,

when Philip rushed into the room. After inquiring whether I had dreamed of him last night, and I had desired him to go along with him, for I wasn't going to tell him, he proceeded to relate to me an extraordinary and highly complimentary dream he had had about me, and he had just got to the bar of the Old Bailey, where he was being tried for his life, for having begged of the Emperor of Russia to get his father to allow him a latch-key, and was just describing to me his surprise at seeing me in a full-bottomed wig and gown, seated on the bench, playing a hit at backgammon with his uncle William, when, goodness gracious me! I heard the voice of Miss Prudence on the first landing, saying, "Miss de Roos, are you up stairs?"

"There's Miss Thimblebee looking for me, as I live!" I cried, "and she will be here in a minute, I know. Oh, Philip, Philip! hide yourself underneath the sofa; there's a dear!"

The words were no sooner out of my mouth, than I remembered that, being a sofa-bedstead, it was impossible for him to get under it, and immediately it struck me that the well at the bottom of it was the very place to put him in. Lifting up the cushion and grating, I got him to jump into it; and very luckily! for I declare I had only just got to the door, when there I met Miss Thimblebee in the passage outside. Perceiving me, she said, "She had been looking for me everywhere; for she wanted to ask me when I first went into the department class, as she was making out my bill?" Being rather stout, and afflicted with a difficulty of breathing, the coming up stairs had made Miss Prudence pant so, that, to my horror, I saw her move towards the sofa, and, goodness gracious me! go to sit down upon it. No sooner had she sunk down upon the cushion, than Philip—who would not lie down at the bottom of the well, but would remain upon his hands and knees, though I told him at the time it prevented the grating from shutting close down,—received the whole of Miss Prudence's weight on his back, and uttered a long and prolonged "O-o-o-o-o-oo!" Up jumped Miss P. Thimblebee, and, making for the door, she rushed down stairs, screaming out, "There's a man in the sofa-bedstead—there's a man in the sofa-bedstead! Grace, Grace, there's a man in the sofa-bedstead!"





Geo. Cruikshank

*Philips Hiding place.*

I was too frightened to stop; so I rushed up stairs to my bed-room, and stood outside the door listening to the sequel. Presently up came the whole school, armed with brooms, and headed by the two Miss Thimblebees, one with a poker, and the other with the breakfast-room toasting-fork; and what was my surprise at hearing them, about five minutes afterwards, returning from the room, declaring that there was no man to be found there after all. Every one agreed, that the cry Miss Prudence had heard must have been either mere fancy, or else the creaking of the sofa; and when, on my going down, Miss Thimblebee consulted me on the subject, and asked if I heard the cry—like a wicked story—I declared I didn't hear anything of the kind. This having convinced, as well as quieted them all, I, at the first opportunity, crept back to the cloak-room to see if I could find out whatever could have become of poor Philip. Opening the door very gently, I put my head in, and said in a whisper, "Philip, Philip, where have you got to?"—"Here," he replied; but where that "here" was I couldn't make out. It wasn't the sofa, I knew; and I put my hand up the chimney thinking the "Here" might be there. So I said again, "Philip, whereabouts are you?" "Here," he repeated; and this time, I could have declared, the voice proceeded from the inside of Mr. Jabez Thimblebee's great big double-base viol case, which was standing up in the corner of the room. Going towards it, I opened the lid, and there found the little fellow stowed away in it, as compact as a chicken in an egg shell, and with his head so firmly fixed in the narrow top part of it, that he could hardly move it—"Oh you clever dear angel!" I couldn't help exclaiming; "but where have you put the great big fiddle to?"—"In the bottom drawer of the wardrobe," he said in a whisper.—"Well, you are a darling," I replied; "only remain quiet where you are for a few minutes longer, and then all will be safe." So I shut the lid again, and hooked it to prevent his coming out before the time; and down I went into the school-room again. I could not have been down stairs a quarter of an hour before, hearing the street-door slam to, I went to the window to see who had gone out, when I discovered that it was Mr. Jabez Thimblebee who was getting into a cab at the door; and, oh hor-

ror! there, on the box beside the driver, stood the dreadful case of the double-base viol, in which I had fastened my poor dear unfortunate little wretch of a Philip! This was more than I had strength to bear, so I rushed up stairs to Miss Grace Thimblebee, and, throwing myself at her feet, confessed the whole affair to her. No sooner had she heard my tale, than she gave a scream, and cried out, "Good Heavens! and Jabez is going by the very next train to the Manchester Festival, and only called here to take his base-viol with him; oh! the young man will be smothered alive, and we shall be all ruined. Go and put on your bonnet directly, you wicked, wicked girl, for our only hope is to catch him at the Euston-square station!" Then off we all hurried together, I in hysterics, Miss Prudence in a terrible fright, and Miss Grace in a towering passion. When we got to the station, who can depict the horror of the whole three of us, at finding that the train had just started! and that a gentleman with a double-base viol was very well remembered by one of the porters, who carried the case for him to the carriage, to have been among the passengers to Manchester!!!!

On this, Miss Thimblebee said, that it was now her duty to take me on to the residence of Mr. Soojee, sen., and having made him acquainted with the painful circumstances, leave him to hand me over to justice; adding, that I should certainly have to answer for the life of that young man at the bar of the Old Bailey. When we arrived at Mr. Soojee's, as poor Philip's father was out, Miss Thimblebee requested to see his wretched mother, immediately, on important business. No sooner had she broken the dreadful news to her, in as gentle a manner as possible, than the poor, fond lady went off into the most violent hysterics I ever saw in all my life; and I no sooner saw the agony which I had caused this good woman to suffer, than I went off into violent hysterics as well; and our combined agony, together with the prospect of the speedy ruin of their school, had such a sympathetic effect upon the nerves of the Misses Thimblebees, that they went off into violent hysterics too. In the midst of this dreadful scene, a double-knock came at the door, and who should walk into the room but young Mr. Philip Soojec



himself, who, to our great surprise, informed us, that, finding somebody—after having nailed a card on the top of the double-base viol case in which he was confined, was proceeding to lock it, he thought it was high time to cry out, and let the party know that he was inside instead of the instrument. On being released, he found the gentleman disposed to be angry at his being there; he quieted him by apologizing, saying, that he had been playing at hide-and-seek with his sister, and had taken the liberty of putting his instrument in the bottom drawer of the wardrobe, and his own body in its place. After the gentleman had gone, he had still remained hid in the room for fear of getting me into trouble, until at last an opportunity had offered for his escape, which he had effected as rapidly as he possibly could.

After this, the Misses Thimblebee obliged me by accompanying me home to my mamma, and having politely informed her of all that had occurred, told her that they were sorry to be forced to decline ever receiving me again into the highly moral precincts of Chesterfield House. At first, mamma was very angry about it, but she was so very fond of me, that I could do almost anything I pleased with her. So by coaxing and kissing her, and assuring her that I would never do it again, and reminding her that she had once been a girl herself, I at last got her to promise that she wouldn't tell papa, for I couldn't bear to offend him. The very kindness of his reproofs made me fear his displeasure more than all my mother's weak and intemperate scoldings. "Ah!" she said, after she had nearly forgiven me, "I don't know what will become of you, Lotty, if you go on in this stupid, imprudent way. To think of a girl with accomplishments and personal attractions like yours, to go and throw herself away upon the first man who falls in love with her; why, it is a downright wicked sin, it is; and it really seems as if the blessings of Providence, and the advantages of a superior education, were entirely lost upon you. Where is your pride? Where is your proper self-esteem, I should like to know? And have you no ambition? that you must needs waste all the graces, both of your mind and figure, first upon some handsome pauper of a drawing-master, and then upon some fortuneless, whipper-snapper of a boy, who, however well connected, isn't

entitled to a pennyworth of property, as far as you know, on his coming of age. And you must be as well aware as I am, that you might, by taking pains, and being only commonly prudent, have the first nobleman in the land for your slave. So remember, that although I look over your indiscretion this time, still, beware how I find you carrying on any flirtation, however innocent, with any young gentleman who has neither possessions nor expectations again."

Yet with all mamma's scoldings, I couldn't bring myself to think that it was my fault—foolish, innocent, artless girl that I was then. For it was but natural that I—scarcely seventeen—surrounded with a whole schoolful of giddy girls, who laid awake half the night, talking of sweethearts and husbands to come, and who were all as ready as I was for a game of romps with Cupid; it was but natural, I say,—when an opportunity offered for playing at blindman's-buff with young Love,—that I, more imprudent than the rest, though shrinking, like them, with timid coyness, from the blind god's clutches, still should be the first to be caught, and being caught should be the first to be blinded in the true spirit of the game.

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It was strange how true my father's words came. I now began to find that the sentiments which I had once thought the beauty of life, I every day got to fancy more and more the folly of it. Scarcely a month went over my head but I felt myself a different girl, with different tastes, aims, and opinions from the month which preceded it. The Misses Thimblebees had taught me to look down upon even the wealthy tradesman with abhorrence, and I had progressed so far in the morals of "the superior classes," as to have learnt from my mother's continual lecturings, that even the gentleman unblessed with an abundance of wealth, though he might pass as a tolerable acquaintance, still was not a desirable connexion. And it was not long before a circumstance occurred which went far to fix those principles in my mind.

One day, when papa returned from his professional visits, as we sat alone in the parlour, previous to dinner, he told me he had seen a most distressing case of poverty in his rounds that morning; and that he had been so interested in the poor





creature, who seemed to have known better days, that finding that she endeavoured to earn her living by her needle, he had told her to call at the house the next day for some work. He then begged of me to see if I could not find something for her to do, and also to look out any warmer clothing that I could spare for her, as he was afraid, from even the little he had seen of her, that she wanted it sadly.

On the morrow when she came, I was but little prepared for the misery I perceived—for, with the quickness of a woman's eye, I read want in her dress. Though the snow was on the ground, and it was as much as I could do to keep myself warm, even by the blazing fire-side of our snug little music-room, still she wore a light summer gown, that was so thin that it made me shiver to look at it, while the only covering that she had to her shoulders was a rusty-black silk scarf. And yet her clothes were put on with exquisite grace, and there was a something about her appearance that convinced me some sad change must have come over her. Her face was so pale and delicate, that it almost looked like a white china vase, with a faint light behind it—her teeth were so white and regular—her nose so exquisitely shaped and transparent—her hair, too, so tidily arranged and silk-like—and when she took her old-crumpled glove off, her hand was so beautifully small and fair, that I saw at a glance that she was no common sempstress.

I felt quite a sympathy for the poor thing, and begged of her to take a seat near the fire; yet, with her teeth almost chattering, she assured me she was not cold. But it was so clear that she was afraid of acknowledging as much, for fear of drawing attention to her slender clothing, that I would make her do as I requested. Scarcely could she have sat there five minutes, before I saw her head and hands drop—the poor half-frozen thing had fainted from the heat of the fire. When I had removed her bonnet, and unloosed her dress, I was horror-stricken at the wretched scantiness of her under-clothing; and when she came to herself, and found her dress open, I could tell by her sudden blushing, she knew I must have discovered how miserably she was clothed. Though I had looked out some few articles of warm clothing, and had them in the room ready to give her, still, from her evident

sensitiveness on this subject, I was so fearful of offending her, and stammered so, and offered them to her in so ungracious a manner, that I could see her bite her under lip as she felt her tears start into her eyes, and said, "I thank you extremely, but I came for work, and not for charity"—adding, that if I would let her have what I wanted her to do, she would feel obliged, as her husband had requested her to return home as soon as possible.

I gave her the needlework, and she left, thanking me, and promising me that I should have it in a day or two, as I wished. But a week and a fortnight passed without my seeing her, and I at last began to imagine that I had bestowed my sympathy upon one of the many dexterous impostors of the alleys of London. I told papa as much, when he said that perhaps the illness of her child, or, might-be, her own delicate health, had prevented her doing the work in the limited time—adding, that he thought I had better step on to her lodgings that morning, and inquire into the cause of the delay myself.

She lived in a miserable court running out of Tottenham-court-road; and as I went up the dark and close-smelling staircase to her second-floor, I trembled at finding myself in such a place. When I entered the room, I don't know which struck me most—the wretchedness or the cleanliness of the apartment. In one corner stood a bedstead, and from the thin fold of the sheet, which was turned down over the patchwork counterpane, I knew directly that there was not a blanket upon it. In another corner, her little invalid son lay stretched upon a mattress on the ground, with an old flannel petticoat wrapt round his limbs to keep him warm. Across the room, on a string suspended from wall to wall, hung a few stockings, and other articles of wearing apparel, to dry. There were but two wooden chairs; one of them, with its broken back roughly mended with string, was by the sick boy's side, with a cup on it, while seated on the other, by a deal table, and close to the small shovelful of fire in the grate, was the sempstress herself. As she turned her head round to see who entered, I perceived that one of her eyes had been bruised since she was with me, and no sooner did she see me at the door, than, starting up, she raised her handkerchief to her face; and observing that the disfigurement attracted my

notice, she told me—with such hesitation, that I knew it was an untruth—that she had had an accident, and knocked her eye against the door.

“You have come for the work you gave me,” she said; “yes, I know I have been very remiss. I ought to have brought it home before, but—the fact is—a—a—”

“You have had illness in the house,” I added, endeavouring to help her.

“No—it was not that—but—” and she burst into tears.

“Come, come, my good lady,” I continued, “do not vex yourself; I am not in a hurry for it, and next week, or even the week after that, will be time enough for me. Now, come, be candid with me—you are in distress. Tell me, can I be of any assistance to you?”

“No, thank you,” she replied, with a quiver of the lip; “I can assure you we are not in distress, however much appearances—a—a—, and we do not require assistance *yet*.”

“Yes, but I know you *do*,” I added; “though you cannot bring yourself to confess it.”

“Madam, I said I did *not* require assistance,” she replied, rising, “and surely I am not sunk so low that my word cannot be received.”

My woman’s curiosity was so piqued to learn who she could possibly have been, that I sat there talking about the illness of her child, and twisting the conversation into a hundred different channels, in the hope she would let drop something that would give me a clue to her history. At last, just as I was about to take my leave in despair, her husband staggered into the apartment. He was a man whose coarseness and grossness of feature contrasted wonderfully with hers; and yet, notwithstanding his high cheek bones and unshorn chin, and sodden complexion, there was something in the expression of his blue eyes and manly figure, that made me fancy that at one time he must have been almost handsome.

“Now, Georgiana,” he said, in a husky thick voice, “have you got any tin, cos if you has, hand it over.”

“Don’t you see there is a stranger present?” she answered, biting her lips at the idea of my being a witness to the scene.

“Strangers be hanged!” he replied, looking first at me

and then at his wife; "I want some money, I tell you; those cursed skittles has regularly cleaned me out. So, come, hand us over a bob, and take that hankercher from that black eye I guv you for your stinginess last Tuesday. Where's the odds of her knowing on it? She's got a father and mother, I dare say, and understands these matters. There, you needn't look so plaguy proud—though yer are the *Honourable* Mrs. Duggan. Come, are you going to give me that money, or am I to make you?"

"I have none," she returned, with a shudder.

"None of your lies!" he answered, brutally; "but hand the money over this minute, or else, s'help me, I'll——" and he shook his burly fist in her trembling face, in continuation of the sentence.

"Here! here, my good man!" I almost shrieked out with fright, "here is some money; it is all I've got, but do go—oh! *do*."

"Well, now I've got all I come for, I don't mind if I does," he replied, looking at me. "You see, miss, it's my turn at the Coach and Horses to have a quartern in; and I can't abear, when I been drinking all the morning at other gentlemen's expense, not to do the thing what's right, and be my share towards keeping up the spree."

"Yes, of course—I know," I answered; "but do please leave us alone here together."

"That's enough, miss! I'm o-p-h," he said. "So good day to you, miss, and good day to you, the *Honourable* Mrs. Duggan"—and out he reeled again.

I couldn't help noticing the struggle that was going on in his poor wife's breast during all this frightful scene. And directly her husband left the room, despite all her exertions, the tears flooded her eyes. I rose to console her; and on going up to her, she fell upon my bosom, and wept like a child.

Presently she raised her head, saying, "There, that has done me good; tell me, *now* can you guess who I am?"

"I know enough, my poor one," I replied, "to know that you are suffering from some imprudent alliance."

"Imprudent! it was a mad—downright mad one!" she exclaimed with bitterness. "To think that I, the daughter of an



earl, should have united myself to my father's gardener's son! But desperately—idolatrously I loved him; and for him I braved the fearful rage of father—mother—all. And what was my reward? Why, when my husband found every one of my many supplications for forgiveness spurned by my haughty parents, and even the door of my former home shut for ever against me, then he—seeing how he had been foiled in the ambitious game he had played, and that instead of the rich heiress he had expected, he had only an expensive pauper for his wife—then he, I say, reeked his vengeance on me, and then began the long series of such sufferings and privations, as even I who have suffered them cannot so much as shadow out to you.”

“But wouldn't *his* father do something for you?” I asked.

“What could he do?” she replied. “Dismissed from his situation—ruined through my marriage with his son—(for my father, of course, suspected he had connived at it,) how could we expect support from him? And yet we might have been far beyond want, had my husband only permitted me to exercise the accomplishments that had been heaped upon me at home. But to drown the vexation he felt at the fearful mistake he had made, he flew to drink, and soon lost in the bottle all power of exertion. When he had drunk up all the trinkets I had carried with me in my flight, he began taking my dresses from me, one by one, and converting them into more money for more liquor; until at last I was forced, from the very want of proper clothing, to discontinue giving the lessons which were our only means of subsistence.

“But if he has treated you thus badly,” I replied, “why not have left him?”

“I could not—he would not leave *me*,” she answered; “*that* was all I wanted—all I asked of him. But no, he knew he was entitled to all I earned, and that I must work if it was only for my child; so as he was too idle to keep himself, he was but too glad to be kept by me. And yet, notwithstanding all this, I could have loved him—ay, and did love him like a dog, even though he beat me like a dog. But when, in the wantonness of his dissipation, he *dared* to bring his degraded companions to my home, my whole woman's nature rose up and rebelled against it, and I hated him as in-

tensely—madly as I once had loved him. And now, you may fancy how gladly I would leave him if I could. But oh, Heavens, I cannot! Often and often have I fled with my child in the night to save myself from further wrong, and my poor boy from the pollution of his father's example; but the hound has tracked me out so soon, that I now see how foolish it is to hope ever in this life to be rid of him."

"Poor, poor lady," I half said to myself.

"Oh, you know not how sweet it is to find one consoling voice," she continued calmly, as the tears flowed anew,—"friends all, have turned from me, and yours are the first kind tones I have heard for years. Indeed, indeed, you cannot tell what I have suffered from that man! The very work *you* gave me, he took by force from my drawer, and pawned to get more gin. You may look, little lady, but the worst is yet untold. The drink your work procured him only made him mad for more—ay, and he would have it—though I told him he had swallowed every rag that was of any value in the place. Suddenly, the wedding-ring on my finger caught his eye, and even *that* he wanted to take from me—that, the only outward sign I had to distinguish me from his wretched female companions. I told him I would not let him have it. He threatened blows. Still I told him he should not have it. He sought to force it from me. I struggled with him, and the coward finding how tightly I grasped the sole remaining token of my honour, struck me in the face—with what force the bruise still remaining there will tell you—and as I lay senseless on the ground, he robbed me of my ring."

I was so moved by the wretched history I had heard, that I couldn't help weeping with her. And I would not leave her, until I had got her to promise that she would henceforth look upon any little service I might have it in my power to render her, not in the light of charity, but of friendship.

Early on the morrow I went again to see her, to consult with her as to how I could best befriend her; but to my great sorrow I found that she had left shortly after daybreak; but whether to avoid her husband's ill-treatment, or my assistance, always remained a mystery to me, though from that time forward, I never forgot her fearful history of THE UNEQUAL MARRIAGE.

## OFFER THE THIRD.

THIS WAS AS GOOD AN OFFER AS ANY YOUNG GIRL COULD REASONABLY EXPECT—IT SEEMED TO PROMISE VERY FAIRLY INDEED AT ONE TIME, BUT THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE (AS THE READER VERY WELL KNOWS) NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH, AND MINE MET WITH SO MANY OBSTACLES, THAT UPON MY WORD IT WAS A PERFECT CASCADE OF CALAMITY.

THE incident detailed at the end of the preceding chapter took so violent a hold of my mind, that, trained as it had been by the Misses Thimblebee, and that training strengthened by my mother's pleasing appeals to my vanity and ambition, I determined it should not be my fault if I did not marry *above* my station rather than under it. And this determination so pervaded my mind, that I couldn't help saying as much to Papa, after I had described to him the scene I had witnessed, and the tale I had heard from his poor sempstress.

"Lotty," he answered, "do you recollect, not many months back, my telling you that before a twelvemonth had passed, I should hear you ridiculing the sentiments which you then thought the beauty of life?"

"Yes, Papa," I replied; "and you called me a silly romantic girl, and so I'm thoroughly convinced I was—a very silly, silly, romantic girl then."

"*Then!*" he echoed. "And do you think, Lotty, that you are very much wiser now?"

"Yes," I answered: "I've grown this much wiser, Papa,—I wouldn't marry the handsomest man under the sun, unless he was at least an independent gentleman, with a fortune large enough to allow me to have my carriage, and my opera-box to myself."

'And this, Lotty," he replied, sternly, "you bring forward as a proof of your superior wisdom. Indeed, my good girl, I am afraid you are retrograding instead of progressing in sound sense."

"Why, Papa," I answered, surprised; "your own words were, that something more than love was required to constitute a happy union."

“Yes, but Lotty,” he said, “I never gave my child to understand, that something *less than love* would do so. I sincerely hope that you are ignorant of the impropriety of the sentiments that you now profess. Not a year ago, and you were all truth and enthusiasm, and now I hear you resolving to make your whole life a snare, a trick, and a lie. My little girl, what on earth *do* you think matrimony is? Does it merely consist in the solemn promise of a certain man to share his worldly possessions with a certain woman? And if not in merely this, what is the woman to give the man in return? Is the sacrifice to be all on one side? If so, there is but one unmentionable name for it!”

“Yes, but father, you put such strange constructions upon my words,” I answered, blushing. “Of course I mean that I shouldn’t marry the gentleman unless I loved him.”

“It is there I have my doubts, Lotty,” he replied. “You may put in the moral saving clause *now*, but when you have angled for your carriage and your opera box with real love as your bait, you will, after a time, like other anglers, bait with something so cunningly like the real thing, that it will catch almost as well; and the poor tricked fish will find to his cost too late, that he has been taken by what is only artificial, after all.”

“Never, father! Never so long as I live!” I cried.

“You said those very words, Lotty, about ten months ago,” he replied; “and how can I believe you *now*, when I find you professing principles, that you yourself would have hated *then*?”

“Believe in my honour, father,” I exclaimed; “believe in my virtue. Is not that sufficient assurance for you?”

“We shall see, Lotty! We shall see!” was all his answer.

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About this period, I found I began to take longer and longer to dress; and yet, whatever time I might have been at my toilet, still I was never thoroughly satisfied with myself when I was forced to finish it. I would sit by the hour before my glass, doing my hair in all kinds of ways: first, trying how I looked with it curled like Mamma’s, *en sau-*



George Brinkshank

Angling - Luring your fish.



*cisson*. When I fancied *that* was too matronly for me, doing it in two small bunches of ringlets, and immediately afterwards brushing them out again, when I thought of their getting out of curl, and hanging down each side of my face like spaniels' ears. Then I'd turn it all back "*à la Chinoise*," so as to show off my forehead, with two little pets of "*accrochés cœurs*" gummed to my cheek bones, till I declare my head looked as round and sleek as a bird's. If that didn't please me, I'd pull it all down again, and set to work, first doing it "*en bandeaux*," or else in braids, or else "*à la Madonna*," and sometimes wishing to gracious that I had only wetted my front hair, and plaited it tight over night, so as to have given it a beautiful wavy appearance, and made it look as if it had a natural curl in it. After this, I'd tell our Mary I thought, as there was going to be no one particular to dinner, I'd wear my *aventurine* merino; and then, before she'd time to get it out—No, I wouldn't. As I looked rather pale, I might as well put on my pink striped *mousseline de laine*; and as soon as I had got that on, and taken a peep at myself in the glass, I'd change my mind again, and determine to wear my beautiful silk Macgregor plaid, especially as somebody might drop in in the evening, and the body of that old mouslin was so shockingly high, that I shouldn't like any visitor to see me in it. And then, when at last I was dressed, first this band didn't seem to go well with it, then that one wouldn't do a bit better; and now this worked collar didn't please me, and next I could never wear that *fichu*: and so I would go on fiddle-faddling over my looking-glass until the upstairs bell had rung at least half a dozen times for dinner. Even then, though I knew they must have finished the soup, and that I should catch it for being late, still I couldn't, for the life of me, help slipping into Mamma's room on my way down, and just arranging her two beautiful cheval glasses one in front of the other, so as to see myself both before and behind, and to satisfy myself that my skirt looked as nice and full as I liked.

But luckily I had always a good friend in Mamma, who used to take my part, and tell Papa "he ought rather to be pleased to see his daughter taking a proper pride in her

appearance, instead of continually scolding the poor thing for wasting what he called the best part of her life over her looking-glass." Indeed, Mamma and I went on so comfortably, that we were always together; and we used to go out shopping, or—when we could get the carriage—paying visits with one another. And we had all our dresses of the same pattern, and made alike as if we were sisters, though, to tell the truth, this didn't please me quite so much as it seemed to please Mamma; for though it might take ten years off her looks, I felt that it had the effect of putting them on to mine, and every compliment upon her youthful appearance that she got by it, I knew was a compliment at my expense; for if, as the flattering old whist-players said, *she* looked young enough to pass for my sister, of course it was as much as to say *I* looked old enough to pass for hers.

Indeed, it was quite wonderful the pains Mamma used to take with me. Scarcely a moment passed but she was telling me what I ought to do, and what I oughtn't. First, I was the stupidest thing alive, and never would take a look from her, though she had been frowning at me ever so long, like a beadle at church. Then I was her own dear girl, and if I had learnt nothing else at Miss Thimblebee's, at least I'd been taught to carry myself like an angel, and she was sure any one to see me move past them would admit that that walk of mine alone was worth the whole money. One morning it would be, the gifts of Providence and the blessing of a superior education seemed to have been entirely thrown away upon me. How I could ever have danced two quadrilles running, last night, with that Mr. Belchambers, was more than she could tell, when I knew as well as she did that the man hadn't a sixpence beyond what he had to fag night and day for. What on earth did I expect would become of me, if I went on in that shameful way? Then another morning she would declare I was her own dear pet, I was. The way in which I had valtzed with that dear Sir Frederick Lushington, who was one of the oldest and richest baronets in the kingdom—and very luckily a widower—did her heart good to see. "Bless you, my lamb!" she would say, "you are your foolish fond mother's own dear child, you are, every inch of you."



But the worst of it all was, Mamma was always taking me up so about my mode of talking; now I didn't sound this word rightly, and then it wasn't considered elegant to pronounce that word in the way I did. I recollect one morning, at breakfast, asking her for another cup of coffee, with rather a broad accent on the word.

"*Kawfee*, Charlotte," she replied, "and pray what may that mean, Miss? I never recollect hearing the term used before; but perhaps you may mean *coffee*, for that's the only name I ever heard given to it. Really your father might just as well have kept his money in his pocket, and never sent you to school at all, for the good it seems to have done you."

"Why," I replied, quite innocently, "I thought that as a-l spelt al, and a-l-l awl, so o-f spelt of, and o-f-f owf."

"And, I dare say," she answered, "g-l-a-s glas, and g-l-a-ss glarce. But you'll please to think otherwise in future, Miss; and remember that in polite society when we join a quadrille we *dannce*, when we are pleased we *laf*, (though smiling is more genteel, my dear,) when we have a cold we *cof*, and when we take a promenade we *wal-k*; no, I'm wrong, there we do wawk, yes, wawk like other people. So don't let me hear any more of such vulgarisms from you in future. And now, may I have the pleasure of sending you another cup of *cof-fee*?"

"Thank you," I replied, "you are very kind!"

"*Keyind*, *keyind*! if you love me, child," she answered, throwing her hands up; "*keyind*; unless you wish to split your poor dear mother's ears in two. Pray do be more attentive to your pronunciation, my dear! for really it sets my teeth quite on edge to hear you."

"Well, Mamma," I answered, "I will try and have more regard for the future."

"*Re*—what is that?" she exclaimed, drawing in her breath, as if in great bodily pain. "*Gard*, did I hear you say, child? Oh! if you would not see your poor dear mother fall senseless at your feet, do, do remember to call it *re-gheard* for the future."

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As the London season was drawing to a close, and as every civilized person had flown from the horrid dust of London to

the refreshing breezes of the sea-side, Mamma was seized with her usual attack of low spirits, and I felt myself so weak and delicate, that we both agreed that nothing but two or three months at Brighton would restore our healths. So I used to tell Papa that it was positively frightful to see how Mamma was sinking every day for want of change of air, and that I shouldn't like to answer for the consequences if she remained much longer in London; and Mamma would in her turn declare, that if she had to go down on her bended knees and borrow the money of a mere stranger, we *must* go out of town somewhere. She didn't speak for herself, though she felt that she was every day sinking more and more for want of a mouthful of fresh air, and indeed knew that each week she remained boxed up in town at that season was as good as ten long years off her life. But she could not, as a mother, stand still, and see that dear dear Charlotte growing as white as a plaster cast under her very eyes for the want of a few weeks residence at some fashionable watering-place. And she could and would tell him this, that however clever he might think himself as a physician, still she, as a mother, knew much more of her darling's constitution than he possibly could. And the end of it all was, that if he couldn't afford the money for her to take me down to the sea-side, he would be obliged, before long, to afford the money for my funeral expenses, and that then—when it was too late—he'd have the happiness of knowing that he had been the murderer of his eldest and finest girl.

As we neither of us ever ate anything at dinner with Papa, though we kept pressing each other to try as much as would lie on a sixpence, and reminding one another that exhausted nature must give way under the little nutriment we took, Papa at last gave us his consent, and a cheque to go down to Brighton. When Mamma had put the cheque in her purse, she suddenly remembered that it was of no use, for really and truly we hadn't a dress to put on, or a bonnet that we could wear. For herself, of course, it didn't matter how she went, so long as she was merely decent; but it was her duty to see that her pet of a Charlotte, who had her way to make in the world, should at least be as well dressed as other people's daughters. How, on earth, she

would ask him, did he, as a man possessing the smallest amount of common sense, expect that his dear girl was ever to get comfortably settled in life, unless she could keep pace with other persons' daughters? Mamma said she knew as well as he did, that it was all mere pomp and vanity; but when one's at Rome, one must do as Rome does; and really there was such a struggle now-a-days, and so much competition in the matrimonial market, that unless you made your girl look as showy and attractive as possible, you wouldn't get a single offer for her, and have the poor thing remaining on your hands all your life.

As usual, Mamma managed to have her own way somehow, and for my sake she first bought a beautiful white chip "pomp" for herself, and a heavenly drawn silk one for me, and then to do her duty to me she treated herself to a love of a green gros de Naples "vanity," and me to a pet of salmon-coloured poplin ditto. As soon as the dresses were made up (I had mine trimmed with cherry-colour, and when it came home, oh! it did look heavenly—the dear) we didn't lose a day before we had booked two inside places for ourselves, and one out for our Mary to Brighton, by that splendid fast safety coach, "THE HURRICANE," and the next morning having taken a meat breakfast and an affectionate farewell of Papa, we left home with a tear in our eye, and fourteen boxes in a hackney-coach for the "Bull and Mouth."

When we got to the office there was "The Hurricane" drawn up ready in front of it, with such a crowd waiting to see it start, that it was as much as we could do to get into our places; and, indeed, scarcely were we seated, before there was a cry of "all right," and we dashed down Waterloo-place, the guard playing the "Girls we left behind us" so beautifully, that everybody turned round to look at the coach as it darted by; while we kept continually hearing the coachman hallooing out "Heigh! heigh!" to all the carts before us, and abusing the drivers as we rattled past, so that Mamma and I got so nervous, that we expected every minute to be upset, and have to be taken home again on a shutter. When once we got clear of London, I never knew anything to go so fast as we did; and, although the old gentleman in an intensely black wig and whiskers dyed a dark purple to match, who was our only fellow

inside passenger said that the pace was beautiful,—still Mamma, who was half dead with fright, expressed an opinion that the coachman must be tipsy, or he'd show more regard to the feelings of the poor dumb animals that he was driving. But the gentleman would have it, that the horses liked it as much as any one—though if they did, theirs must have been a merry life and a short one,—for he told us immediately afterwards, that they never lasted more than three years on the road, and when we stopped to change, the poor things were all over in such a white lather, that they looked just as if they were going to be shaved.

While they were getting ready to start again, we were quite shocked with the shameful language of that disgusting driver, who kept swearing at the stable boys, first setting at "Jim," and then giving it "Sam," and calling everyone either a dog or a scoundrel. Then, if the fellow hadn't the impudence to come and stand right opposite the coach-window, with his legs apart, and stroke his imperial, while he stared at me, in such an impudent way that Mamma pulled the blind down right in his face, exclaiming aloud, that she never knew such an ill-bred fellow in all her life, and vowing that she should make a point of representing his conduct to the proprietors and get him discharged.

"It will not be of the slightest use I can assure you, Madam," said the old gentleman, who, although he must have been sixty at least, was dressed in the height of fashion. "Perhaps you are not aware that he is the Honourable Gustavus Adolphus Gee, and it's only his way, Ma'm; he means nothing by it."

"The Honourable Mr. Gee! Indeed, sir!" replied Mamma, with a smile. "Well, if he means nothing by it, that alters the case entirely; only I did the gentleman the injustice to mistake him for a common coachman; though really, now I come to think of it,—he! he! he!—it was very short-sighted and silly of me—he! he! he!—to make such a blunder—he! he! he!—for now I look at him again," she continued, pulling up the blind, and taking a peep at him, "any one could tell by that beautiful aristocratic nose of his that he was nobly connected. Gee!" she added, musing to herself—"Gee! yes, of course, if I'd only heard the name, I should have

known that it is the family one of Lord—hem! hem!—Lord—a—dear me! I shall forget my own name next.”

“Lord Fortiwinx, Ma’m; Mr. Gee is his Lordship’s brother,” suggested the old young man.

“Yes, Fortiwinx! so it is, to be sure,” answered Mamma, as if the truth had just struck her—“closely connected, you know, my dear,” she continued, addressing me, “to our friend young Snorhard, who had such a hard fight for Beds last election. But dear me,” she added, again turning to the old gentleman, “I thought the family was very rich, and certainly never expected to see one of that noble stock reduced to such extremities. What a nice, handsome, classical face, too, he has of his own, has he not, Charlotte, love? What a pity it is that his Lordship doesn’t put him into the church or the army, with those splendid white teeth of his! And is the poor young man very badly off, can you inform me, sir?” observed my mother, as the Honourable driver finished his glass of soda-water and brandy, and remounted the box.

“Badly off! Dear me! no, Madam,” said the gentleman with the purple whiskers; “he’s rolling in money, I can assure you.”

“Goodness! what an interesting character!” replied Mamma.

“Plenty of money; and what’s better, he knows how to spend it, Ma’m,” answered the gentleman in the intensely black wig. “Why, he pays a good round sum every year to be allowed to drive this coach.”

“Dear, dear! what a delightfully eccentric being! isn’t he, Charlotte, my love?” replied Mamma. “And his poor, poor lady?—for I think, if my memory serves me truly, I recollect hearing my talented young friend, Mr. Snorhard, say that Mr. Gee was married.”

“I am afraid you have been misinformed, Madam,” answered the old gentleman; “Mr. Gee is still single, I can assure you.”

“Indeed, you surprise me; I suppose I must make some mistake,” replied Mamma. “And does he really take the half-crowns now, like an ordinary coachman?”

“Oh yes, Madam, he expects the customary perquisite as if he had been bred and born to the business.”

“Dear me! how delightfully he sustains the character!”

“Yes, Ma’m, as if he’d been brought up on the *stage*—he! he!”

“He! he! he!” echoed Mamma, and “He! he! he!” echoed I, at the old gentleman’s jokelet.

“I suppose the passengers do them up in paper, and he presents them to some charity at the end of the year?” asked Mamma.

“Pardon me, Madam, not at all,” he replied. “He says that they just find him in rats, for his famous dog ‘Tommy’ to kill.”

“Oh, he’s quite the sportsman, I see,” continued Mamma. “And Mr. Gee, I suppose, resides with my lord his brother at Brighton? for I think I heard my friend young Mr. Snorhard say that Lord Fortiwinx was among the visitors there.”

“I believe not, Madam; Lord Fortiwinx has, to the best of my knowledge, retired for the winter to his seat in Witney, and Mr. Gee usually stays at the hotel where the coach puts up.”

This conversation made me so anxious to see more of one who, from my ignorance of young noblemen, struck me at that time as being a most eccentric and singular character, that when the coach stopped again to change horses, I took a good long peep at the Honourable driver. Though Mamma would have it that any one might see at a glance that noble blood flowed in his veins, still, he did look so thoroughly the coachman, that even the Norroy King-at-arms himself would have been puzzled to say whether he was a gentleman or not. Upon my word, if he hadn’t got on a big short drab coat, that hung all loose about him, and looked exactly like a flannel petticoat with large sleeves and pockets to it, and with buttons the size of penny almond cakes at least, on which were engraved pictures of stage-coaches, and sportsmen shooting. His trousers were of the well-known duster pattern, and fitted so tight, that really his legs looked like two thin rolls of wire gauze. Round his neck was twisted a large handkerchief of a staring shawl, or, indeed, almost carpet pattern, fastened by a pin, with a little gold horse-shoe at the top of it. He wore a grey hat, without any nap on it, which gave you an idea that it had been shaved to make the beaver grow stronger, and he had an eye-glass hanging down through the brim of it. He had no whiskers; and his hair was cut so

short, that when he took his hat off, it looked like a drab plush wig; and when he walked, he carried his arms as curved and stiff as a pair of parentheses.

Mamma, who I could now see was most anxious to make his acquaintance, kept, every time we stopped, letting down the window, and asking either, what was the name of the place we were at? or, whose mansion that was with the long avenue of elm trees that we had passed on the road? or, how long it would be before we arrived at Brighton? And when Mr. Gee had informed her, she would appear surprised, and say, "Good gracious, so soon as that!—what beautiful horses you *must* drive, to be sure; but, perhaps, quite as much praise is due to the cleverness of the driver." The last time the coach stopped to change horses, she asked whether Brighton was full, and whether there were many visitors of "*ton*" there or not; and having learnt from Mr. Gee that there was "a tidy show of nobs" there, she requested to know whether he could recommend the hotel the coach stopt at; and after the Honourable Gentleman had told her he'd back it as the best house for bashawed lobsters in the whole place, she said, that, upon his recommendation, she and her daughter (drawing Mr. Gee's attention to myself,) would make a point of putting up there.

The morning after we arrived in Brighton, on my telling Mamma that I had, whilst coming down in the coach, lost the drop out of one of my earrings, she said that I really ought to take more care of my things, and it was so annoying as she would have to go and see Mr. Gee about it, and really he might think it was only an excuse for making his acquaintance. However, on ringing the bell after breakfast, to know whether she could speak with the gentleman, she was informed that he had just two minutes before stepped out to the barracks, as at twelve o'clock that day he had a match coming off with one of the officers; and on inquiring what the match was, she learnt that Mr. Gee had bet fifty pounds that he would drink a pint of porter out of a soup plate with a teaspoon, before Captain Lollop could devour the whole of a plain penny bun. Mamma was equally unsuccessful in her endeavours to obtain an interview the next morning, for then she heard that Mr. Gee had to make his ap-

pearance before the magistrates, at eleven o'clock, to answer a charge of having on the preceding evening, after dinner, turned off the main gas pipe of the chapel of the Independent Wesleyans, and so plunged the whole congregation into sudden darkness. On hearing this, I couldn't help expressing rather an unfavourable opinion of Mr. Gee's conduct, and though Mamma agreed with me that it was highly reprehensible, and there was scarcely any excuse to be made for it, still she said I ought to remember that young men would be young men, and that it was ridiculous to expect that you could put an old head upon such youthful shoulders as those of the Honourable Mr. Gee. Besides, I should recollect, that from the little we had seen of him, it was easy to perceive that he was a young man with a great flow of animal spirits. And further, that with a purse like his, he would be able to make such ample reparation, that when she came to think of it, it did not strike her as being altogether so inexcusable as she must confess at the first blush of the thing it appeared. And she added, in conclusion, "You see, Charlotte, the poor young man sadly wants a nice little wife to look after him, and between you and me," she continued, fixing her eyes on me, "if a certain lady I know, who is not a hundred miles from this spot, were the Honourable Mrs. Gee, I have no doubt he would soon become quite an altered being under her guidance."

However, Mamma had set her mind on seeing Mr. Gee, and at last she succeeded. I declare, when he heard of my loss, and had ascertained that the drop was nowhere to be found in the coach, if he did not, with the greatest politeness imaginable, present me with a beautiful pair of pearl earrings. After this, what with being in the same hotel, and always meeting him either in the passage, or else on the parade, or on the pier, we became more and more intimate, for Mamma had always something complimentary to tell him. First, his dog-cart was the sweetest thing she had ever seen; or then, he must have a constitution of iron, to be able to go through such fatigues, and yet look so remarkably well as he did; and now she would stop him to tell him how I had fancied that I had seen him at the concert the other night, when who should it turn out to be, after all, but Prince George. Then she would ask him, whether the likeness had ever been



noticed before, adding, that I, who was very difficult to please, thought the Prince a remarkably handsome young man. Whenever she heard him coming up, or going down stairs, she would rush to meet him, and ask him whether he could spare her a minute, for either she wanted to have his opinion upon some shells that she and her daughter had picked up on the beach, and she was sure he was a Conchologist, or else could he inform her who that disgraceful paragraph, in the *Morning Post*, about shop-lifting in high life, referred to, for she was dying to know who the Countess of C-with-three-stars was, and whether he thought her ladyship was likely to have carried off the pot of anchovies, as mentioned in the paper. At last, Mamma, to her great joy, found out that Mr. Gee was a constant visitor at the Tolle-maches, who were very intimate with our friends the Dowdeswells, and she got them to take us to a party where we were formally introduced to Mr. Gee, and grew to be very good friends indeed. After this, Mamma arranged a little soirée, which so completely broke the ice, that we ultimately thawed into the best of friends, and very often—as we were in the same hotel—Mr. Gee would dine with us, and repeatedly drop in of an evening to smoke his cigar, the smell of which, Mamma declared, she was exceedingly partial to.

It was very astonishing how Mr. Gee altered as he became better acquainted with us. When first we knew him, I could, with an occasional exception here and there, understand what he said; but as we grew more and more intimate, his figures of speech got more and more unintelligible to me, until at last really if one wanted to comprehend him, one ought to have had a pocket dictionary of the language he delighted to indulge in ready to refer to every minute. Any human being that was at all to his taste was, he declared, “a brick;” while his hat he would term with equal appropriateness “a tile.” If you inquired after his health of a morning, he was sure to be either “bobbish,” or “seedy;” while if he referred to his father, it was always under the affectionate title of “the governor.” Nor did he restrict the eccentricities of his language solely to his mother tongue. Were he about to take his leave, he would tell you that he was going to *couper* his *bâton*; while at another time, if he wanted to express his approbation of my appearance,

he would declare that I looked quite the *fromage*. After any of these remarks, he used to chuckle so heartily, that Mamma and I, fancying they must be something funny, used to laugh at them almost as much as he did. And, indeed, we both set him down as a perfect wit; for, upon my word, he would always be putting the v's for the w's, and the w's for the v's, in the most facetious manner. Sometimes, too, when the fancy took him, he would translate some of the vulgar sayings into fine language; and if ever he met me on the beach along with our Mary of a morning, he would request to know "whether my maternal parent was aware of my absence from home." But the most curious part of all Mr. Gee's strange language, and which was a perfect riddle to both Mamma and myself was, that every thing that the rest of the world were accustomed to look up to, he stiled "slow," while everything that other people looked down upon he called "fast." Any kind of mental occupation was "slow," but all those which to me seemed positively cruel were fast. Reading was "slow," but taking the linch-pin out of a washerwoman's cart, was "fast;" music was "slow," but throwing red-hot halfpence to Italian boys was "fast;" dancing was "slow," but a maggot race for a hundred pounds a-side was "fast."

These opinions of Mr. Gee certainly did not tend to increase my admiration of him, and whenever I ventured to hint as much to Mamma, she would say I was a sad, sad, ungrateful girl, and didn't deserve to be acquainted with a member of the aristocracy, and she really must beg that, whatever my sentiments might be, I would keep them locked up in my own bosom for the future, or else I should be having people fancy that I had never known a young nobleman before in all my life. And my dear, she would continue, you really should remember that, whatever Mr. Gee's eccentricities may be, still everybody allows he has no vice in him, and I'm sure even his greatest enemy couldn't charge him with a want of generosity; for if ever he inflicts a wound, he is always ready to heal it with a Bank Note. Now there's that case when he and Sir Sidney Buzzard punished the policeman so severely that the man was obliged to leave the force—didn't Mr. Gee, in the handsomest manner, settle ten shillings a-week on the lucky fellow for





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the rest of his life? And hav'n't you heard Mr. Gee over and over again say he had out of his own pocket put a common prizefighter—"the Hampstead Bull-dog" I think he called him—in a very respectable public-house, merely because he had taken a fancy to the man? And isn't it well known nothing pleases him better than to treat the poor London cabmen of a night to bottles and bottles of champagne, out of their common pewter pots? And surely such acts as these are more than sufficient to make amends for any other little irregularities that the Honourable gentleman might be guilty of. Besides, are you so blind, my love, to your own interest, as to set your face against the young man, when you yourself have heard Mrs. Tollemache say, that the only son between him and the title is going out of this empty world as fast as a consumption can gallop, and that his dear, noble old brother has already got at least one foot in the grave. And, to conclude, you know as well as I do, what kind of husbands "reformed rakes" are generally said to make.

The fact was, Mamma, it was clear, had made up her mind that I was to marry Mr. Gee. She told me she had dreamt that I was Lady Fortiwinx, three nights running; and she was continually planning means for bringing us together. And really I, from seeing the man so often, and from the presents he gave me, began to grow less and less disgusted with him every day. It was no fault of Mamma's, too, if Mr. Gee didn't think very highly of me. Before my face, and behind my back, she was continually singing my praises. I was such a dear, affectionate thing—she didn't know what on earth she should do when the time came for me to leave her, for of course she could not expect that I should remain always with her. Though there was only one thing she prayed for, and that was, that the happy man who had me would be able to appreciate my worth. So that after a month or so, Mr. Gee and I used to be seen so frequently together, that both the Tollemaches and the Dowdeswells, were continually quizzing me, and asking me whether the day was fixed, and requesting to know whether I happened to want such a thing as a bride's-maid or not; while all the time Mamma only kept wondering why Mr. Gee didn't propose. However, as she said there was nothing like a pic-nic (unless, indeed, it was a

moonlight ramble) for converting Bachelors into Benedicts,—she was determined to get up a grand one to the Devil's Dyke, and it would be odd, indeed, if that didn't bring matters to a crisis. She had no idea of seeing me dilly-dallying away the best part of my life, and all my good looks, with those social dogs-in-the-manger—silent suitors, who *wont* propose themselves, and yet prevent people who *would* from doing so.

Accordingly, the next time Mr. Gee came, Mamma told him she had made up her mind to have a little trip to the Devil's Dyke, and hoped that Mr. Gee would join us. This was just to Adolphus' taste. He said it would be capital, especially if we had three or four donkeys over there for a bit of fun after dinner. To this Mamma gave her consent, saying, she supposed young people would be young people; adding, as she smiled, with a view to a compliment upon her youthful appearance, "She was young herself *once*." But Mr. Gee took no notice of the observation, further than answering "Certainly;" and immediately went on to say, the gentlemen would bring "the drinkables," if the ladies would provide "the eatables"—only he hoped to goodness some one would remember the salt, and he'd make it a moral duty to bring the cork-screw.

But Mamma, on making out her list, was in sad tribulation to find we should be dreadfully short of gentlemen—in fact, there were only two to more than half-a-dozen ladies. Whereupon she asked Mr. Gee whether he didn't think he could prevail upon some of his gallant young friends at the barracks to join us. On this, Adolphus informed her he thought he could reckon upon Captain Lollop, and young Doonuffin, but he was afraid he couldn't get Ensign Dawdle, who, he said, was "the fastest of the lot;" for Dawdle was at that moment in training for his grand match of fifty pounds a-side, to pick up a hundred eggs a yard apart within the hour. Besides, he added, it would be no use Dawdle's coming even if he could, for his backers wouldn't allow him to touch anything but raw rump-steaks till the feat came off. However, he would do his utmost to secure four or five of the officers for us, though we mustn't blame him if we found them nothing but a pack of donkeys. At this we both

laughed, and I said he was a sad quiz, and Mamma told him he really was too severe upon the poor young men. But he would have it they *were* all donkeys; adding, that they were such a set of mere boys, and “so intensely green,” as he called it, that he had christened the regiment “Her Majesty’s *Sappies and Minors.*”

Next morning at breakfast, Mamma did nothing but talk about the officers, telling me how glad she was we were going to be introduced to them. They were generally single men, with independences as handsome as their uniforms; and there was no knowing whether Gee’s affection mightn’t turn out to be disgustingly platonic after all, and we, perhaps, find that he’d only been trifling with the best feelings of my nature, and loving me “as a sister,” in the very prime of my life. So she hoped and trusted I’d put on that beautiful pink-bonnet that I looked so well in, for we couldn’t tell what might happen—blind mortals as we were.

The breakfast things couldn’t have been taken away above ten minutes, when the waiter brought us up a note, saying a man was waiting below for an answer. It was from Mr. Gee, written in his usual eccentric and would-be witty style, and ran as follows:—

“MY DEAR MRS. DE ROOS,

“I have secured Lollop, and he says he’s sure Doonuffin will come if the ladies wont mind him smoking his weed after dinner.

· So, lul-lul-lul-lul-la-li-e-tee, yours truly,

A. G. GEE.

“P.S. By the by, *consarning* them donkeys,—how many will you require? I think the ladies ought to have one a piece. Please send word back by the man, as I am waiting at the barracks to know. ‘Oh, criky, don’t I love my mother!’”

We could neither of us understand the postscript to the note, for Mr. Gee having always spoken of the officers as a pack of donkeys, Mamma would have it that it referred to the number of officers we wanted to make up the party; while I said I felt convinced that it merely related to the donkeys he had proposed to engage for us to ride upon. However

Mamma said it would be better to speak to the man on the subject, as such a mistake would be very awkward, and she wouldn't for the world give any offence in *that* quarter. But so thoroughly convinced was she that she was in the right, and I—as usual—in the wrong, that she would twist everything the man said to her own view of the case, and kept fancying that all the donkey-man told her about the long-eared things related to Mr. Gee's friends at the barracks.

When the man came into the room, Mamma—determined to put the question plainly to him, and so find out whether Mr. Gee, when he spoke of Donkeys, intended to refer to the Officers—said with a smile, “Do you know, my good man, whether the Honourable Mr. Gee, in the letter you brought from him, in speaking of donkeys—he! he! he!—means them for the Officers or not?”

“Oh yes, Marm,” replied the donkey-keeper, “I knows he do, 'cos Cap'en Lollop was with him—Cap'en Lollop, you know, Marm—him as were had up for a tarring of the hind-sides of all the ladies' bathing gownds—and they was a talking on a party to the Devil's Dyke, and saying as how it 'ud be capital fun.”

“There you see, Charlotte, I *was* right, only you *will* be so positive, my love!” she said, turning to me; “and a nice mistake I should have made if I had followed your advice.” Then turning to the man, she continued, “Will you tell the Honourable Mr. Gee that I think half a dozen will be sufficient. That will be just one to each lady.”

“Werry good, Marm,” the man answered; “and you may depend upon their all being quiet and fit for ladies.”

“Yes, I hope Mr. Gee will attend to that,” replied Mamma, sharply; “for I should be sorry if anything occurred to upset the party.”

“Oh, yer needn't be afeard on any party being upset with the ones you'll have, Marm,” answered the man; “Mr. Gee knows 'em well, and will answer for none on 'em being at all wishus. Indeed there never were but one in our whole troop as couldn't be trusted out with a lady, and he were a black 'un, with a white nose.”

“A black one with a white nose!” exclaimed Mamma; “dear me, how singular! He used to play the cymbals, I suppose?”



“No, Marm, not exactly that,” the man answered; “though he were uncommon clever, to be sure!—Do almost anything but talk. Understand everything that was said to him, like a Christian, Marm.”

“Ah, I see,” replied Mamma; “of foreign extraction, and understood the language, but could not speak it?”

“Why, Marm,” laughed out the donkey keeper, “I suppose that were about it.”

“And was he really such a bad character?”

“Yes, Marm,” replied the man; “he wornt to be trusted out without some one to look arter him. You see, he was inclined to shy, and them is always the most dangerous to ladies, Marm.”

“Yes, very true, my good man,” answered Mamma; “your shy ones are always such sly ones, that one is never safe with the creatures.”

“No more yer are, Marm,” continued the man; “but yer needn’t have no fears of them as Mr. Gee has settled upon. Now, there’s ‘*Sir Tatton Sykes*’ will be just the werry thing for you. He’s a grey un, but not at all shaky about the knees, I can assure yer; and Mr. Gee, who knows him well, said he were the only one as would take *you*.”

“Indeed, I am very much obliged to Mr. Gee,” replied Mamma, with biting sarcasm, “for choosing the grey *Sir Tatton* for me.”

“Well, Marm,” the man added, scratching his head, “if yer objects to him, there’s ‘*Handsome Jack*’ as yer can have; only, yer see, Mr. Gee were afeard on his being a lee-eetle too fast for one o’ your time of life. And the worst on it is, he will get at his tricks occasionally, and that might frighten yer, Marm; though, if yer just gives him a tap on the head with yer parasol, he’s as quiet as a lamb arter it. Otherwise he’s a beautiful sweet temper, and so uncommon partial to carrots, that, bless you, he’ll follow my eldest daughter about anywhere.”

“Your daughter has auburn hair, then, I suppose?” asked Mamma.

“Well, it is a leetle inclined that way, Marm,” replied the man, with a look of wonder, as if he was asking himself what on earth that had got to do with the business? “How-

ever, Marm, to keep to the pint," he continued, "as yer dont seem to fancy either 'Sir Tatton Sykes' or 'Handsome Jack,' there's one among the lot as Mr. Gee said he should like to be there, as I'm sure you'd be werry pleased with. He's not a werry good 'un to look at; but he is so quiet and gentle, that even if you were to dig your shawl pin into his back, I don't think it 'ud make any difference to him much."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mamma; "well, he must be a donkey indeed."

"Yes, Marm," answered the man; "he's a werry extraordinary donkey, I can assure yer. He's called '*the Philosopher*,' Marm, and has one of the most raggedest coats you ever seed. The strangest thing is, too, that yer can't use him to shoes nohow; for do what you will, he's always flinging 'em off, and going about without ere a one."

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed Mamma, horrified; "I should hope Mr. Gee would never think of bringing a creature like that."

"Well, I told you, Marm, as he worn't a werry good 'un to look at," said the man, in explanation; "only I thought the gentleness on his natur 'ud please yer. Bless you, though he's been pelted and persecuted by all the boys in the town, yet I never know'd him to kick one on 'em. His love of taters, too, is wonderful—biled, or unbiled, bless yer, it's all the same to him—so long as they's taters. As for beer, too, I gives yer my word, Marm, I've seed him get as drunk on it as any Christian—I have, indeed."

"Pretty *Philosopher*, truly!" cried Mamma, indignantly. "However, I'm very glad you've given me this warning; and you'll be good enough to tell Mr. Gee that I wouldn't have such a mere animal as he seems to be at our picnic on any account."

"Well, then, Marm, I suppose yer must have one in his place; and if I might make so bold, I should recommend 'the General.' He's prodigious hansome to be sure, and has a fine Roman nose of his own, with the thinnest legs I'm sure you ever set eyes on."

"There, never mind about his legs," replied Mamma. "But do you really think that Mr. Gee could persuade 'the General' to come? I should so like him to be there."

“Oh, yes, Marm, I’ve not the least doubt he could be persuaded to come, if so be as he was took round by the road, and kept away from the water; for you see, Marm, it was only t’other day, when he was out on the beach along with Lady Limpet, as lives on the Steyne, when all on a sudden, hang me, if he doesn’t bolt off, and carry her Ladyship right into the middle of the sea, and there he stood with the water up to his shoulders, and the poor lady clinging to his neck, and screaming away for help, so that two on us was obliged to go in and pull him out by main force.”

“What an extraordinary propensity, to be sure!” cried Mamma, considerably alarmed.

“Yes, Marm,” continued the man; “but it’s the only drawback he’s got, Marm, unless, indeed it be that he’s blind of one eye.”

“Ah! lost it in the field, I dare say,” added Mamma. “Ah! gallant creature! I’ve no doubt he’d sooner die than run.”

“Well, I really do believe he *would* sooner die than run any day, Marm,” replied the donkey man.

“Yes, it is easy to see ‘the General’ is something out of the common!” exclaimed Mamma.

“Out of the common! I believe you, Marm!” the man replied. “He’s been regularly bred and born to it, like one of the right sort. So I’ll tell Mr. Gee as how you’d like to have him. Now, Marm, if you’d excuse the libity, there’s ‘*young Ducrow*’—would you like to have him as well? He goes out to most of the pic-nics here, and is a gen’ral fav’rite with the ladies.”

“‘Young Ducrow?’” asked Mamma; “why, how old is he?”

“Rising four, Marm,” he answered.

“Only four years old!” exclaimed Mamma. “What is the man talking about? No, I don’t want any such little things at my party.”

“He’s wonderful clever, indeed, Marm,” continued the man. “Mr. Gee always takes him out, wherever he goes. You can’t tell how he’ll amuse yer. He fires off a pistol, and sets at table with a napkin round his neck, and will pick your pocket of anything, Marm.”

“ Bless me, I wouldn’t have a creature with any such propensities near me for the world!”

“ You’d much better have him, Marm. He does it all in play, Marm; and what’s more, he’s the littlest thing of his age you ever seed; and he’s not above five hands, I can assure yer.”

“ Not above five hands!” returned Mamma. “ Why how many hands would you have him? Once for all, my good man, such juvenile monstrosities may please Mr. Gee, but they are not at all to my taste. So you can go back to the Barracks, and tell Mr. Gee all that has transpired; only pray take care and mention, that I would rather ‘the General’ came than all the Officers put together.”

The man touched his hair, and left, laughing at what he thought Mamma meant for a sarcastic joke.

No sooner had he taken his departure, than Mamma began congratulating herself upon her good fortune, and said, it would make the party so *distingué* to have one of the General’s rank among the company; adding, that if the whole affair went off as well as she expected, she certainly would go to the expense of a paragraph among the fashionable intelligence of the local papers, with a list of the distinguished guests present. Then, suddenly, she’d exclaim, that she’d give the world if she could only find out what that dear old General liked. Perhaps a raised pie might be too heavy for him. However, military gentlemen were generally partial to lobster-salad, and if there was one thing that she prided herself upon more than another, it was *her* lobster-salad. Only let the fish be fresh and firm, and—however much people might laugh at her—on her lobster-salad she would stand before the first cook in England.

In this way she went on, all dinner-time, and even up to tea, talking of nothing but the General,—now wondering whether the loss of his eye disfigured him much, and then whether he wore a shade or green spectacles to hide it, till at last the waiter put an end to her rhapsodies by bringing in the cards of Mr. Gee and Captain Lollop, who, he said, were in the Coffee Room. Telling the waiter to show the gentlemen up, Mamma thrust the work she had been engaged upon under the sofa, and begged of me to run and smooth my hair, while she stepped into her room and changed her cap. As we

were going up stairs, she told me that she supposed Mr. Gee had called about the Donkeys he was to see after for us to ride upon. But it seemed as if all the fates were conspiring against us, for in reality he had only come to speak about the Officers, and the consequence was that Mamma insulted the whole Regiment, by mistaking the one for the other.

When she came down, Mr. Gee introduced her to the Captain—who was in his uniform—and I could see from the change that immediately took place in her manner, and the mincing way in which she talked, that she was endeavouring to make herself as amiable as possible, and impress the Captain with the idea that she was no ordinary personage.

“Indeed, Mr. Gee,” she said, after the introductions were over, “I have to tender you my very—very best thanks for affording me the pleasure of the Captain’s acquaintance. It is very—very *keyind* of you, for both my daughter and myself have long been anxious to number him among our friends.”

Lollop answered nothing, but smiled graciously, and curled the ends of his mustachios, till they looked like the tip of a camel’s-hair paint-brush; while Mr. Gee assured Mamma, that she would find Lollop “a perfect brick”—and to tell the truth, from the colour of his coat, he *did* look something like one.

“So you intend honouring our little *fête champêtre* on Tuesday,” Mamma said again, addressing the Captain. “You must not, however, expect *grande chose*. It will be a mere cold collation on the *gras*, and perhaps a *dannce*.”

“You-au-are very good-aw,” answered the Captain, still twiddling his moustache. “I purpose-aw-affording myself the pleasure-aw-aw of being there-aw.”

“You are very *keyind*,” replied Mamma. “I believe we are also to be honoured by two or three of your friends we have not as yet had the pleasure of being introduced to. I am sure, Mr. Gee, I do not know how we should have managed without your assistance. Really, the ladies ought to be greatly indebted to you for the pains you have taken on their behalf.”

“Not at all,” answered Adolphus. “I was glad to hear from the man I sent up to you this morning, that you were jolly well pleased with the selection I had made. They are a rum lot; but they’re the tidiest I could stumble over.”

“I’m sure,” returned Mamma, “that no one could have done better. I was quite che-armed at your being able to secure ‘the General’ for me.”

“Well, I’ve done almost as well the other way,” he replied.

“Indeed,” said Mamma, with a smile, fancying he was now going to tell her about the donkeys. “You mean those stupid creatures you propose having for the young ladies. Well, perhaps they will complete the party. How many have you engaged?”

“Oh! I have got four of the fastest of the lot for you. Do’nt you think I have, Lollop?”

“Yes-aw,” answered the Captain. “I-aw-think they are-aw; and decidedly the best looking.”

“I’m very glad of that,” returned Mamma; “for really some of those I have seen standing at the bottom of the Steyne had such a disreputable and dirty appearance, that I really should feel ashamed to be seen out with them. Upon my word, I do believe the poor creatures are half starved. But perhaps you know the ones I allude to, Captain Lollop—I mean those that generally stand at the end of the Marine Parade. You must know them; for I can assure you the boys annoy nearly every lady that goes by.”

Lollop, thinking that Mamma alluded to some of the junior officers of his regiment, stared again, and at last stammered out, “I really, Madam-aw-aw don’t know those you refer to; but-aw——”

“Well, that is a good un,” interrupted Gee, “when you know as well as I do, that I’ve seen you yourself out with some poor devils that I’m sure no one would have taken for gentlemen.”

“The ones I mean,” said Mamma, still clinging to the donkeys, “are generally taken for children—though, indeed, I have known some of them to be taken for young ladies. Now, it was only the other day that Miss Kate Tollemache, who certainly is not a proud girl, got one to take her over to Rotten Dean, and she said the poor creature was such a miserable object, that she blushed when any one went by. And would you believe it, she told me his coat was so full of dust, that she was sure it never was brushed from one year’s end to another. And you would fancy, that when they get as

much as seven-and-sixpence a-day, they might be, at least, decently dressed for the money."

I could see that Lollop was getting more and more angry at the idea of any gentleman being spoken of in such terms.

"You may depend upon it, that's Ned Byng," said Gee—"for he's very seedy, and has only seven and sixpence a-day, I know; and it's always been a wonder to me how the fellows could allow him to remain in the mess."

"That's just what Mrs. Tollemache said, I can assure you, Captain Lollop; but they're all such a dreadful set of donkeys, that one isn't a bit better than the other," continued Mamma, who was so anxious to make friends with the officers, that she *would* direct all her conversation to the Captain, though, from his forced smile, I began to see that Mamma was making some dreadful mistake; and though I nudged her underneath the table, still she would go on, saying, that many ladies of her acquaintance had entirely given them up; and that if it wasn't for the nursery-maids, they wouldn't have a soul after them.

Gee burst out laughing at this, and cried out, "Bravo, Rouse!" and Mamma, encouraged by this approbation, only went on ten times worse, notwithstanding I endeavoured to turn the conversation, by asking Captain Lollop whether he thought the fine weather would continue?

"But," proceeded Mamma, "I hope my *keyind* friend, Mr. Gee, has managed better for us. Now *do* see that at least they are clean, there's a good creature, and that their shoes and straps are all right; for I'm sure Captain Lollop will agree with me that they are not generally so, and that, indeed, they more frequently look as if they had just come out of the stable."

"I am sorry to say I do not understand you, Madam," answered the Captain, with great hauteur.

"Well, Mrs. de Roos," said Gee, who, I could see, was afraid of his friend's losing his temper at what he thought Mamma intended for a joke, "I think the best way will be for them to come round here for you, and all go on together."

"Oh! dear me, no!" exclaimed Mamma, with a smile and a shake of the head, "I wouldn't be seen in the public streets with the things for all you could give me; in the country,

where there is no one to notice you, of course, it is quite another affair; but bless you, if I was to show myself in the town with them, I should be afraid of being pointed out for weeks afterwards. But tell me, Mr. Gee, I hope you have chosen nice ones for us?"

"Why, Madam," said the Captain, with sarcasm, "you are so difficult to please; but Lord Clozehorse is coming, and perhaps you may not think him quite so disreputable as the rest."

"Lord Clozehorse!" exclaimed Mamma; "why, what an extraordinary name to give the donkey."

"Well, Madam," said the Captain, rising with dignity, "if such be your opinion of Lord Clozehorse, perhaps they had better *all* stop away."

"Oh, do not say so," cried Mamma; "you should have more *regheard* for the ladies, for at any rate they will afford us a hearty laugh."

Gee, who all the while had been blowing his nose most violently to smother and hide his laughter, now burst out, and leant his head on the corner of the mantel-piece, and kept lifting his leg up and down, as if some convulsion had seized him.

Captain Lollop rose up—scarlet in the face with rage—and saying, "Madam, I will bear with your insults no longer," bounced out of the room. Mamma, alarmed at his sudden departure, turned round to Gee, who was still laughing, and clasping her hands, said, "Oh! what ever have I done? Oh! Mr. Gee—Mr. Gee—what ever have I done—Mr. Gee?"

But Mr. Gee could only giggle out, "Oh dear, my poor sides! it's the best bit of fun that has come off for this long time. If you haven't been mistaking her Majesty's Sappies and Minors for a pack of donkeys." And then he explained.

I never in all my life saw a person in such a dreadful way before; and I do verily believe that she would have torn her false front—if she hadn't been afraid of its coming off in the presence of Mr. Gee—when she found that Lord Clozehorse was a peer of the realm, instead of a donkey on the Marine Parade, and that "the General," for whom she had expressly intended to prepare her delicious lobster salad, was a long-eared animal who would have preferred a thistle, and have



looked upon her delicious lobster salad as only so much green-meat spoilt.

But the worst of it all was, that the next Saturday, at breakfast, Mamma, while looking over the columns of that horribly radical paper, the BRIGHTON GUARDIAN, discovered a long and ludicrous caricature of the whole proceedings, under the head of "CURIOUS BUT NATURAL MISTAKE;" after which, upon my word, the whole affair got to be so public, that whenever the waiters came into the room, they were obliged to put their napkins to their mouths to hide their laughter; and whenever we walked out on the Parade, people used to turn round and giggle, and even those impudent donkey-boys used to run after us, crying out, "Do you want a Hofficer, Marm?"

As this was not to be borne, we made up our minds to go back to London; for, *of course*, whenever we went out we were certain to meet that Captain Lollop, or some of the officers, and they always crossed over to the other side of the way directly they saw us; and though Mamma tried to explain away the mistake, and wrote a long letter, apologizing for it, to the Captain, still he took no notice of it. Indeed, Mr. Gee told us, that it was a most unfortunate affair altogether; for he said that owing to his having nicknamed the regiment "Her Majesty's Sappies and Minors," and having always spoken of them as a pack of donkeys, it was Lollop's tenderest point. And if he could hardly bear it from him, why of course it came with double force from a lady on the first time of his seeing her. Accordingly, putting all these matters together, we agreed that it would be much better to say "good-bye" to Brighton and Mr. Gee, and return home as soon as possible.

## OFFER THE FOURTH.

I SHOULD ADVISE ANY YOUNG FEMALE CANDIDATE FOR MATRIMONIAL HONOURS, WHO WISHES TO MAKE ASSURANCE DOUBLY SURE, BY WISHING TO HAVE TWO STRINGS TO HER BOW, OR RATHER TWO BEAUX TO HER APRON STRING, TO READ THIS CHAPTER. THERE IS AN OLD ADAGE, THAT A BIRD IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH; AND IF I HAD ONLY KEPT THE STRANGE BIRD I HAD IN MY HAND, INSTEAD OF BEATING ABOUT THE BUSH AS I DID, I SHOULD HAVE SAVED MYSELF A GREAT DEAL OF ANNOYANCE, AND MY GENTLE READER THE TROUBLE OF PERUSING WHAT FOLLOWS.

DURING our absence, Papa—who I dare say used to feel lonely of an evening—had made a new acquaintance in the person of the Reverend Evelyn Dossey, who had come to consult him about what he feared was a slight tendency to apoplexy. He certainly was one of the handsomest and most elegant clergymen I think I ever saw. Not only had he a beautiful florid and wax-like complexion, but his hair was as black and shining as patent leather, and parted beautifully down the middle; and I could have declared it curled naturally, if it hadn't been that sometimes, when he called early in the day, it had that peculiar smell of the tongs clinging to it, which no bergamot can overpower. Mamma said he must be between thirty and forty, if he was a day; for with her quick eye for detecting the difference between real and apparent youth, she told me that, notwithstanding he took such pains to brush his long back hair on to the top of his head, still she could see that he was quite bald on the crown. His whiskers were perfect little pets; and it was clear from the beautiful way in which they were curled, that he took great pains with them, and was not a little proud of their appearance. The worst part about him was his neck; though at first sight you hardly noticed it's being so short as it was, for his white cravat was so beautifully tied and fluted in front, that I declare, all the while he was in the room I used to sit and wonder how on earth he managed it, and fancy what a time it must take him every morning to do. Both Mamma and I agreed that his linen was the finest we had ever seen, and that it was quite a shame to put such lovely French

Cambric into shirts; while his white pocket-handkerchiefs were of such exquisite texture, that we each of us allowed that, with a nice rich *Valenciennes* lace border, they would have been fit for the first lady in the land. He always dressed in black, of course; and his clothes, and patent leather boots, were so elegantly made, that he certainly *did* look a perfect gentleman. Indeed, everything about him was extremely quiet, even down to his jewellery—he wore very little, but very good; for the only articles of *bijouterie* to be seen were the agate buttons to his wristbands, and two or three inches of a thin gold chain running to his waistcoat pocket, besides a magnificent diamond ring, set quite plain, on the little finger of his right-hand—and this was the hand, I noticed, off which he took his black glove while in the pulpit.

The reverend gentleman, Mamma soon found out, was a widower of several years' standing. He had early in life married a young lady with a small fortune and a confirmed consumption. As he had but little interest in the church, he thought it better, instead of devoting the money his wife brought him to the purchase of an advowson—for indeed he had a moral objection to the sale of such holy offices—he had thought it better, I repeat, to build a commodious Chapel at the West End of London,—especially as the accommodation at the Churches was far from sufficient, and his personal appearance was highly attractive. This chapel he had taken great pains to have so well warmed in winter, and ventilated in summer, that—what with the softness of the cushions and the hassocks—and having three or four professional singers for his choir—and there being only free seats enough to accommodate the footmen—and what with the rhetorical language of his sermons, and the elegance and grandeur of his delivery—and his being an extremely devout Christian, and a remarkably handsome man—and what with his having written two epic poems, one entitled “PARADISE FOUND—IN WOMAN!!” and the other “BEELZEBUB, THE KING OF ROME!!!”—there was soon not a seat to be had in the place for love or money, and it was currently reported that the rent of the pews yielded him a considerable income.

Mamma and I went there the very first Sunday after we had made his acquaintance; and of all the elegant congregations I ever saw there never was anything equal to his!

Nine-tenths of the pious and fashionable assembly were ladies. The bonnets alone were worth going miles to see; and there was scarcely a prayer-book in the pews that hadn't a coronet emblazoned in gold on the back of it. The gay colours of the splendid liveries of the Footmen, with their powdered heads, had a magnificent effect; and I declare, if the singing wasn't equal to the Italian Opera! As for the Reverend Evelyn Dossey, too—much as I had been taken with him before—when I saw him in the pulpit, I felt that if it hadn't been for my attachment for Mr. Gee, I should have fallen violently in love with him then and there. Oh! it was so beautiful to hear him, in the most choice and poetical language, raising his musical voice, and lifting up his beautiful white hand—till his diamond ring sparkled again in the light—against all the pomps and vanities of this wretched vale of tears; and when he came to a new division in his discourse, and he paused for a minute to take his pocket-handkerchief from his black silk gown, I declare the scent that came from it, as he unfolded it and waved it to and fro, was so heavenly and refreshing, that I could see all the ladies in the gallery feasting upon the perfume. Then it was so charming to hear him warn the be-rouged old dowagers in the kind and delicate way he did, of the shortness of this life; while the splendid figures of speech in which he alluded to our all being “miserable sinners” took away greatly from the harshness of the truth. And if—to give greater effect to his sermon—he found it necessary to comment in strong terms upon the innate sinfulness of the human race, he invariably directed his eyes to the free seats, and addressed himself in the most solemn and severe tones to the congregated Footmen in particular.

When we returned home to lunch, Mamma was so thoroughly captivated with Mr. Dossey, and so taken with the rank and fashion of his flock, that she couldn't help saying the Reverend Gentleman was the very man to make a young girl happy. She was sure, too—from the number of times that he had turned his eyes to me during his sermon,—I had made a deep impression upon him. Mr. Gee would be certainly a very eligible match for me, but of course he was not the moral character that Mr. Dossey was; and she must confess she would much sooner see her child happy in an un-

pretending Brougham with a man of virtue, than miserable in a dashing Curricie with a confirmed Roué. Not that she wished me entirely to discard Mr. Gee; but, as she told me before, there was so little dependence to be placed in the young man, and he was so flighty, that really there was no telling whether he meant anything beyond mere friendship after all. So she should like me not to be altogether reserved in my manner to Mr. Dossey.

The next evening, when the Reverend Gentleman called, I never heard anybody go on as Mamma did to him about his sermon. She went to such extremes in her admiration of his discourse, and flattered him so broadly, that it was a wonder to me how she could ever have the courage to say as much, and he be weak enough to be tickled by it. "Ah!" she would exclaim, "it had made me, as well as herself, a sadder but a wiser woman. Indeed, all the time we were walking in Kensington Gardens, I did nothing," she told him, "but talk of his discourse and him, and kept continually blessing him for the new thoughts and feelings he had given me."

First thing next morning, I declare if Mr. Dossey hadn't been so pleased with Mamma's compliments on the previous evening, that he sent me both his Poems, splendidly bound, "with the best regards of the author" written in a very neat hand on the fly-leaf. Mamma directed me to write back immediately a long letter, thanking him for the present—she herself dictating it to me, and making me speak in no measured terms of both the pleasure and profit I anticipated from the perusal of his celebrated works. Twenty-four hours had not gone over our heads, before Mr. Dossey in person answered my note. Mamma pretended to scold him for having sent the books, saying that she had not been able to get me away from them ever since they had been in the house. And when he volunteered to read us some of the passages that he said had been the most admired in the humble effusions of his pen, Mamma's rapture knew no bounds, and she kept making him—though he certainly didn't require much pressing—continue to read the whole evening through. When he rose to take his departure, she got him to promise that he would come again as soon as he possibly could, and proceed with the intellectual banquet to which he had so kindly

treated us. After he had gone, Mamma told me she really must beg—unless I wanted to offend her seriously—that I would be a little more enthusiastic in my admiration of Mr. Dossey's genius the next time he called. It really seemed like a want of gratitude, and incapacity to appreciate high poetry on my part. Besides, any one with half an eye could see that Mr. Dossey's weak point was his love of approbation; and when I could afford the poor man so much pleasure by my praise, it was unkind—nay, almost wicked of me, to withhold it. After this, Mamma, finding that a very pleasing and highly prepossessing portrait of the Reverend Gentleman, in his robes, had been published, bought one of the lithographs, together with an engraving of Milton, and had them both framed, and hung up in the parlour as a pair, one on each side of the chimney glass. This was a most agreeable surprise to Mr. Dossey, on his next visit. Then, hearing that he was extremely partial to Orange Marmalade, she got some of the best Scotch expressly for him; so that, finding himself so thoroughly at home, and so much admired in our little circle, Mr. Dossey used to "drop in" to tea nearly every evening. Then he would either read to us whole pages of the volume of "Selections" from his Poems, that had been published by a very dear and intimate friend of his; together with a dissertation on his Genius and Writings, in which Milton's "PARADISE LOST" was proved to be far inferior to Dossey's "PARADISE FOUND." Or else he would copy into my Album some "IMPROMPTU" on my beauty he had composed at home. But Mamma observing that, in the various poetic effusions he addressed to me, he only spoke of himself as being warmed by "Friendship's pure flame," was continually getting him to take my Scrap Book home, and write something else in it, in the hopes of his ultimately poetising himself into a less tepid state of feeling. And, true enough, he did; for he kept gradually working himself up, Lyric by Lyric, until, at last, he confessed himself to be devoured by the "consuming fire of Love." Consequently, what with his "STANZAS ON MY EYES," or "CANZONETS ON MY LIPS," and "*LINES on being asked for a definition of the feeling of Love,*" upon my word, I began to like him more and more, and to think how different he was to Mr. Gee. He seemed to be so much more intellectual. Then, he was undoubtedly far better looking.

Again, there was such a dove-like expression in his eyes; and his manners were so much more refined—and his language so much more elegant—(Oh, it was so rich and round when he warmed upon any subject!)—that, though he had not the same liveliness of spirits, and frankness of disposition, and manliness of deportment as Adolphus, still, I felt that my affections were becoming more and more devoted every day to Evelyn. And yet—though Mr. Dossey occupied the centre of my heart—I still had a corner or two left for Mr. Gee.

Nor was the Reverend Gentleman long in detecting that my love was not entirely given to him; for he was very anxious to learn who Mr. Gee was. And whenever he heard me speak of him with approbation, his fine brow would lower, and he would endeavour, in strong terms, to point out to me the immorality of that gentleman's conduct, and at once proceed to denounce him as a mere man of this vain and empty world. In all of this Mamma would strictly agree with him, and declare that his conduct never was to her taste. And when she observed, that I always endeavoured to find some slight excuse for Adolphus's singular habits in the volatility of his disposition, Mr. Dossey would become extremely agitated, and hope that that depraved young man would never cross his path, for he never felt such a contempt for a human being before, and he believed he was not altogether devoid of love for his fellow-creatures.

But the worst of it was, just about this time, Mr. Gee left Brighton for his chambers in the Albany. Of course he was not long in calling at our house, and then—as ill-luck would have it—because I kept him waiting a few minutes in the drawing-room, he must go peeping into my album which was lying on the table. Scarcely had he asked after my health, when he wanted to know “who the deuce *that* Evelyn Dossey was, who had been shooting his highly impassioned rubbish about my angelic form into my album?” I told him, as delicately as I could, that he was a very intimate friend of Papa's, and had a great talent for poetry: but he only flew out at me, and said in his eccentric way, “he should just like to come across the buffer, and he wouldn't be long in knocking him into the middle of next week,” (those were his very words!) And he was so cross and surly, too, that he would scarcely say a

word beyond "Yes" and "No," and only kept half-whistling to himself, and beating time with his fingers on the top of his hat; observing, that he supposed he should meet the Poet some day, and then he'd just take the liberty of astonishing his weak nerves; and it was only by assuring him my feelings for him had undergone no change during his absence, that I could prevent him quitting the house in a huff. At last, however, after a great deal of coaxing on my part—for I found when he threatened to leave me for ever, I really did like the man much more than I had imagined—I completely quieted all his suspicions, and we parted better friends than we had ever been.

After Adolphus' departure, I ran and told Mamma what had happened. She was delighted, and said that she had never given Mr. Gee credit for so much affection for me. However, I needn't alarm myself about the rivals meeting, for nothing was easier than to keep the two apart, by always telling Mr. Gee we should be out, on those evenings when we knew Mr. Dossey was coming, and tell Mr. Dossey the same whenever Mr. Gee was going to be with us.

But, alas! matters were not destined to go on quite so pleasantly, and between the two stools I was very nearly coming to the ground. For, one afternoon, while I was dressing to go out with Mamma, Mary brought me up Mr. Dossey's card, and told me he was in the drawing-room. I sent word down I would be with him directly. As ill-luck would have it, who should knock at the door about two minutes afterwards, but Mr. Gee, and as I had told Mary I should be down in a minute, of course it was too much trouble for my lady to come all the way up stairs again to apprise me of his arrival, but she must let Clayton (our man servant) show Adolphus straight up into the same room as Evelyn. And a pretty scene ensued—as I afterwards learnt from Mr. Dossey himself—who, of course, had no more idea that he was in the company of Mr. Gee, than Mr. Gee knew he was face to face with Mr. Dossey.

After the gentlemen had informed each other that it was extraordinarily fine weather for the time of year, the conversation very naturally turned towards me, and they both agreed that my portrait—which was over the sofa—didn't do half justice to me.



“Miss de Roos is a remarkably fine girl,” observed Mr. Gee, whose language was very different to strangers to what it was to his friends. “She certainly has got a first-rate pair of eyes of her own, hasn’t she?”

“Extremely so—a—,” replied Mr. Dossey, who prided himself on a slight drawl. “He will, indeed, be a fortunate being—a—who is blessed with the hand of the lady—a—.”

“You think he will, eh?” asked Mr. Gee, smiling at the clergyman—“Well, so do I,”—and pulling up his shirt-collar, he added—“and what’s more, I rayther calculate I know the lucky dog who’s to have her.”

“Indeed! you surprise me—a—,” simpered Mr. Dossey, of course thinking he was “the lucky dog” Gee referred to. “Then I suppose Mrs. De Roos—a—has spoken to you—a—on the interesting subject—a—?”

“Why no, the Old Girl has not exactly done as much as that yet, though matters certainly have gone very far,” answered Adolphus. “But of course any one with the least ‘nouse,’ can see when a girl’s in love with a fellow.”

“What, then, you have noticed her attachment—a—?” returned Mr. Dossey; “I can assure you, sir—a—I myself have had my doubts—a—.”

“Ah! of course, it isn’t likely that you should be able to judge as well as myself,” replied Mr. Gee. “You don’t know, I suppose, whether the Father would be likely to have any objection to the match, do you?”

“I have not yet addressed him on that point—a—,” answered Mr. Dossey; “though I purpose speaking to him shortly on the subject—a—; but it is far from a pleasant task—a—, I can assure you.”

“Far from pleasant! So I should think it would be for *you*.” said Mr. Gee, nettled at what he thought extreme officiousness on the part of Mr. Dossey. “I should say, now, it would become you much better, if you were to keep quiet in the back ground, and leave that part of the business to *me*.”

“You are very considerate, sir—a—,” answered Mr. Dossey. “Perhaps it *would* look more respectful—a—, it the party himself was to ask the Old Gentleman’s consent—a—, instead of allowing a comparative stranger—a—to interfere in the business—a—.”

“Of course it would,” replied Mr. Gee; “what the deuce has any other person, but the man himself, got to do with it? But never fear, the ‘Governor’ will give his consent fast enough.”

“I dare say—a—,” said Mr. Dossey; “especially as the girl has no property—a—; although she has excellent expectations—a—, and of course the family would be glad to get her—a—comfortably settled.”

“Yes; I think it will be a very decent match for her,” remarked Mr. Gee. “What do you think—eh?”

“Why—a—,” said Mr. Dossey, with a smile; “that is—a—really such—a—an awkward question—a—for me to answer—a—.”

“Oh, I understand!” replied Mr. Gee; “you don’t like to speak out before *me*! And yet, perhaps, you would hardly believe it, but at one time I really thought it was only a little flirtation on the girl’s part.”

“Dear me, how singular!” observed Mr. Dossey.

“Yes! but it’s all right now, you may rest assured,” continued Mr. Gee; “for the other day I had some very serious conversation with her on the tender point.”

“And she confessed to you—a—that she really was in love?” asked Mr. Dossey. “Well, she has never acknowledged—a—as much to me—a——”

“Of course not,” returned Gee. “Why, you’d never expect that the girl would go breaking the subject to *you*—would you?”

“Well, perhaps it would have been rather indelicate—a—for the young lady to have taken as much upon herself—a—,” replied Mr. Dossey.

“You see, the fact of it was,” said Gee, “I suspected there was a rival in the case; and, you know, situated as I am with the family, I thought it better to inquire into the business at once.”

“Oh, indeed! And do you know—a—” observed Mr. Dossey, “I myself had my suspicions there was a lurking attachment in another quarter—a—But then, from all I could gather of that person’s character—a—he did seem such a reprobate—a—that I could hardly bring myself to believe that Miss De Roos—a—could have any regard for the fellow—a——”

“What! a reprobate, is he?” returned Mr. Gee; “and yet pretends to be outrageously religious, eh?”

“Dear me,” exclaimed Mr. Dossey; “why, I was given to understand—a—he had not the least religion in him!”

“I dare say—not the least spark of it at bottom,” responded Gee. “I’ll warrant he’s a pretty hypocrite——”

“Oh yes!” replied Mr. Dossey, “continually up before the magistrates, I hear—a——”

“Well, I’d give something to meet with the scoundrel,” said Gee, with a nod of the head.

“For my part, I would go miles to avoid the fellow—a—” remarked Mr. Dossey; “for if I was in the same room with the profligate—a—I should consider myself disgraced for life—a—They do say he’s as strong as a horse—a—and loves fighting almost as much as a bull-dog.”

“Oh, he does—does he! Come, that’s a new trait in his character to me,” observed Mr. Gee. “I should just like to have a quiet five minutes with him in this room, though.”

“I am delighted to have made the acquaintance of a gentleman—a—whose sentiments so perfectly coincide with my own—a—,” said Mr. Dossey. “And I trust this accidental meeting at the house of our mutual friend—a—may grow into a closer intimacy—a——”

“Well, I’m sure I hope so, too,” answered Mr. Gee. “I like the way in which you spoke out about that humbug.”

“I can assure you, sir—a—as you are so anxious to give him the punishment he so richly deserves—a—,” continued Mr. Dossey, “if ever I happen to meet him—a—I shall only be too happy to bring you face to face with him.”

“Well done our side!” cried Mr. Gee. “Give us your hand, my boy! I’m proud to know you.”

“And they kept on shaking hands until I—who had only a moment before learned they were together, and was nearly frightened out of my life at the idea of their meeting—entered the drawing-room.

Seeing the two gentlemen on such friendly terms, I immediately imagined that the one had discovered some old friend or schoolfellow in the other. Accordingly, smiling with delight to find the dreaded collision had taken so apparently amicable a turn, I advanced towards them, and said to

Adolphus—"Dear me, Mr. Gee, I had no idea you were acquainted with Mr. Dossey!"

The words were no sooner out of my mouth, than back they both started, as if electrified.

"Gee!" screamed Dossey.

"Dossey!" roared Gee.

And immediately the Reverend Evelyn, who luckily had his hat in his hand, made towards the door as fast as he could, and was out of the house before the Honourable Adolphus, who immediately set off in pursuit of him, had got down to the hat-stand. When I ran to the window, and stepped into the balcony, I saw Mr. Gee tearing down the street as hard as he could scamper, while Mr. Dossey was cautiously emerging from under the area steps of the next house to ours—where he had been secreting himself, and the gate of which he had providentially found open.

I flew up stairs to Mamma, and having informed her of my dreadful mistake, and the frightful scene that followed, I told her I was convinced it would lead to bloodshed, and finished with a fit of hysterics.

When I came to, Mamma assured me that my alarms were quite childish, and that it was only my ignorance of the world which led me to see misery in that which she knew could but lead to happiness. The fact was, that up to that time, she had—from an over sensitiveness on her part—felt a natural delicacy about speaking to either of the gentlemen concerning the nature of their intentions towards me. But fortunately *now*, she felt it her duty, as a mother, to take the business into her own hands, and to see both of the parties, and learn from them what their intentions really were. As for the little jealousy about which I had so needlessly alarmed myself, why that ought to show me what a high value each of the gentlemen placed upon my affections. So, without more ado, she would go on directly, first to Mr. Dossey's residence, and then to Mr. Gee's, and—without compromising either herself or me—ascertain which was disposed to make me the most eligible offer.

"I have come to you, Mr. Dossey," said Mamma, on being shown into that gentleman's library, "at the earnest request of my poor dear daughter, Charlotte, who has told me of the unfortunate *rencontre* that has occurred this afternoon at our

house. Of course I need not tell you, my dear Mr. Dossey, that it has had the most dreadful effect upon Charlotte's nerves, or that I have left my suffering child in bed. But she entreated me, in such strong terms, to come on to you, and extract a promise from you, as a man of peace, that there shall be no blood spilt in this unhappy business, that I had not the heart to refuse her. Oh! Mr. Dossey, it would indeed be the death of my poor girl, if she thought that even a hair of your adored head should be hurt through any affection—however slight—you may entertain for her. Oh! Mr. Dossey, let me, as a fond—fond mother, implore of you to grant me this trifling favour."

"My much respected Madam," answered Mr. Dossey, who grew bold when he saw he could make a favour of foregoing the duel which he had never dreamt of till then, "My much respected Madam,—a—Miss de Roos may rest assured—a—however much my feelings might prompt me to seek satisfaction—a—for the insults I have had heaped upon me by *that man*—a—I met at your house this afternoon—a—still my cloth, and a sense of my mission here, Madam, would alone be sufficient to restrain me—a—. It is lucky for *this* Mr. Gee that I have learned to love my enemies,—a—or I certainly should not have slept in my bed till—a—but let that pass."

"Oh, Mr. Dossey," exclaimed Mamma, seizing his hand, "how can I ever thank you sufficiently for this noble sacrifice? Charlotte will, I know, live only to bless you for it. Indeed—indeed, Mr. Dossey, you cannot tell how deeply—madly, the innocent, artless girl loves you, and it was only to satisfy her of your safety that I came hither."

"My dear Madam—a—I am obliged to Miss de Roos for her consideration for me—a—" replied Mr. Dossey, coolly; "but thank heaven! I know my duty to my erring fellow-creatures—a—well enough to be able to subdue—a—that raging lion Passion, when it is roused within me—a—. Indeed, it was but a knowledge of the fearful acts—a—which even the best of us in our moments of temper are often led to commit—a—that made me fly—ay, fly like a coward, Madam,—a—from the presence of that exasperating man."

"Yes! I will allow he is an exasperating man," responded Mamma; "still I am sure that your better judgment

when you reflect calmly upon all the circumstances of the case, will tell you that his conduct—reprehensible as it seems to have been towards yourself—is not altogether inexcusable towards my daughter.”

“Indeed, Madam! How so?” returned the Reverend Gentleman, with *hauteur*.

“You should remember, Mr. Dossey,” continued Mamma, “that however much you may have loved my daughter—and however much she in her heart may have wished you to love her—still, as yet, you have never by any decided step, given Charlotte to understand that you were desirous of claiming the heart—you had only to speak—to command.”

“Well, Madam,” he answered, “perhaps I *have* been remiss in that respect—a—.”

“Remiss, Mr. Dossey! You have been cruel,” returned Mamma, emboldened by the confession she had extracted from the Reverend Gentleman: “I alone know how much she has adored you for your genius and virtue. But would you not have called it presumption on her part, had she for one moment fancied that her humble charms could have kindled a flame in your noble bosom? I know it would only distress *you*—who care not for worldly praise—were I to tell you that she loved you for those poetic talents which she worships, and which have for ever associated your name with the wise and good. Nor will I wound your natural humility, by telling you how she has feasted over the eloquence of those discourses of yours which have drawn crowds of admiring nobles to listen to them. Nor will I offend your modesty by informing you how your exquisitely beautiful Epic has enchanted her day by day, or how she is always repeating that divine passage of yours in the fourth Book, which is indelibly engraven on *my* heart as well as *hers*, and which begins— dear me, ’tut-’tut—well, that is strange—I shall forget my own name next. But you must pardon me. This excitement, you see, is too much for me.”

“My dear lady,” answered Mr. Dossey, “I feel the force of your observations—a—that is, the force of such of them at least—a—as refer to my conduct to your daughter—a—the others I pass by as mere vanities—a—. Still, as I cannot deny the truth of all you have said—a—I will endeavour to make some reparation at this, the eleventh hour, for my past

neglect—a—and if you will excuse me for a few minutes—a—I will write a letter on the subject to Miss De Roos—a—. In the mean time, perhaps, you would kindly endeavour—a—to amuse yourself with a copy of my ‘Paradise Found’—a—. It may enable you to refresh your memory about that passage in the fourth Book—a—which Miss De Roos was so good as to admire—a—.”

All the time the Reverend Gentleman was writing, Mamma kept bursting out, exclaiming impulsively as she perused the volume, “Beautiful! Beautiful!” Then Mr. Dossey would look up, and smilingly ask which Book of the Poem she was reading, and on being informed which it was, he would say—“Yes, that—a—has been very much quoted—a—,” and then continue writing.

At last the letter was finished and carefully sealed, and Mamma, taking it, returned home full of joy.

“Look here, Charlotte, my dear,” she said, holding up the note, “do you know the hand-writing? Now didn’t I tell you—you foolish thing—this morning’s adventure was the luckiest accident that could have happened to you? And here’s a written proposal from Mr. Dossey, who, of course, couldn’t help allowing that he had been very much to blame in not making you an offer before. Now let’s hear what my dear son-in-law, that is to be, says, for I’m dying to know all about it.”

On opening the letter, who can picture our surprise at finding that the Reverend Gentleman, after confessing he had been culpably remiss in never having openly declared his passion to me before, and acknowledging that great excuse was therefore to be made for Mr. Gee’s conduct that morning, proceeded, in the most magnanimous way, at once to resign all claim to my hand and heart—however much he prized them—in favour of that gentleman; for Mr. Dossey felt it was but a sacrifice he was in duty called upon to make, Mr. Gee having been a prior friend and candidate for that inestimable honour.

I never saw anybody in such a passion as Mamma at first. She said it was very well to make a virtue of giving me up, but she knew well enough what it was. The poor weak thing’s vanity had been hurt at the idea of any person being considered in the light of a rival to his own dearly beloved

self, and of course he was but too glad to creep through any moral loop-hole he could find. All she wished to goodness was, that the man had only let fall some hint of what he intended to do, and then he would not have got her to waste her time over his sleepy "PARADISE FOUND," which she had always thought as dry as eating so much bran. However, it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, she added; and to tell the truth, she was delighted Mr. Dossey had resigned me in favour of Mr. Gee, for, of course, now that gentleman couldn't well help himself, and must make me a proposal then and there. What, she would ask me, was Dossey, compared to Gee? Why, the one was a mere nobody—while, at any rate, Mr. Gee had got some of the best blood in the land in his veins, and stood a very good chance of becoming one day a Peer of the Realm.

As there was still time before dinner for Mamma to go down to the Albany, and have an interview with Mr. Gee on the subject, she sent Clayton for a cab, and started off, telling me that I should be Lady Fortiwinx before many years were over my head.

Luckily Mr. Gee was in, and received Mamma most politely.

She then proceeded to tell him how shocked she had been to hear of what had occurred at our house that morning, and how, immediately on being informed of it, she had made it a duty to visit Mr. Dossey, and get him to write a letter apologizing for his conduct, and undertaking to forego any claim the Reverend Gentleman might fancy he had upon my affections.

When Adolphus had read the note which Mamma had laid before him, he said it was a noble act on Dossey's part, especially as he could see, from the wording of the epistle, it had cost the Reverend Gentleman a severe struggle to do so. Really it placed him very awkwardly, and he didn't know how to act.

Mamma observing that Dossey's relinquishment of me had not the apparent effect on Mr. Gee she had anticipated, grew alarmed lest he too should affect the generous, and both with equal magnanimity insist upon giving me up to each other—while I, though possessed of a couple of suitors, who declared they were dying with love for me, should be



forced still to remain single, through their both being ready to make any sacrifice for me, but marry me.

Accordingly, Mamma said she was surprised to hear that a man of Mr. Gee's excellent good sense should be so easily duped, by such a transparent show of feeling on the part of Mr. Dossey—when, with half an eye, anybody who knew him could plainly perceive that he only had been prompted by a dread lest Mr. Gee's well known, fine manly spirit, should demand an immediate satisfaction, for his daring to aspire to the same hand as his noble rival.

"What!" answered Mr. Gee, "then you think this is merely written in fear of me?"

"Most decidedly," returned Mamma.

"And that this man's dread of my vengeance," continued Adolphus, "was the real cause of his consenting to relinquish all claims upon the object of his love?"

"Oh! I'm perfectly satisfied of it, and if you had seen him yourself, you, with your natural quickness, would have been the first to have been convinced of it," added Mamma.

"Well then, I'll tell you what I think I ought to do, Mrs. de Roos."

"Yes, my dear Sir, what is it?" eagerly inquired Mamma.

"Why send you back to him, with a solemn assurance from me that he need have no cause of alarm, as from this time forth, I promise to withdraw whatever pretension I may have at one time conceived I had to the hand of Miss de Roos."

"Ah! that is so like your noble nature," said Mamma, biting her lips with annoyance, to find herself again foiled; "but don't you think you ought to consider my daughter's feelings, rather than those of such a gentleman as Mr. Dossey? I can assure you, Charlotte never had any real regard for the man."

"Pardon me, Madam," he replied, quite coolly; "but I think, from the warm terms in which Mr. Dossey speaks of your daughter in his letter, it is very evident he must have received *some* encouragement from the lady."

"Then I am to understand, I suppose," said Mamma, with extreme sarcasm, "that the *Honourable* Mr. Gee's opinion of the young lady whose affection he *once* sought, is *such*, that he *now* thinks *her capable* of forgetting her former feelings, as easily as *some people* seem to forget *theirs*?"

“No, indeed, my dear Mrs. de Roos, you misunderstand me,” he replied; “you see I do not blame your daughter in any way, but I feel I have been as remiss as the Reverend Mr. Dossey, if not more so. I ought to have spoken my mind in more definite terms to your daughter, if I had expected and hoped to have secured her affections. If mine was a prior engagement, at least it required a prior offer. My dear Madam, if during my stay at Brighton, I had once thought that Miss de Roos was so eager to obtain a husband, I should certainly have acted in a very different way from what I have done.”

“But, my dear Mr. Gee,” expostulated Mamma; “could you not, with your natural good sense, easily perceive—even in the slight interview you had with Mr. Dossey—that he was so eaten up with vanity, that he would be the very man to cajole himself into the belief that mere civility on the part of a lady, was positive admiration of him?”

“It may be so, Madam,” answered Mr. Gee; “but you really must excuse my attempting to separate two confiding hearts—one of whom asks for a “Definition of Love,” and the other one writes impassioned lines in the lady’s Album to explain it.”

Then Mr. Gee rose from his seat, and Mamma, seeing that it was useless her pressing the point, rose likewise, and—with a most dignified curtsey—took her departure.

On Mamma’s reaching home, I could read in her face that she had not been quite so successful as she had anticipated. Indeed, it was extraordinary how downcast she looked. When I inquired what was the result of her interview with Mr. Gee, she related to me all that had occurred, and concluded with a long tirade against man in general, and Messrs. Gee and Dossey in particular.

I soon saw what a little silly I had been. It was plain that Gee had loved me, and I couldn’t help feeling he had too good a cause of complaint, to give me any hope of ever regaining his esteem. It made me shudder, too, when I thought of the encouragement I had given to the addresses of Mr. Dossey. How like it seemed to the beginning of the fulfilment of Papa’s words—“that my whole life would be a snare—a trick, and—a lie.” And yet, the next moment, I felt the blood tingling through my frame, at the idea of being

flung aside by the very two gentlemen I had stooped almost to court; and—though I knew I half deserved my fate—still my vanity was so strong, that I was ready to adopt any means which seemed to hold out a prospect of again bringing them to my feet.

Mamma, too, rather inflamed than allayed my desire for revenge. We both of us sat all the next morning without speaking a word; thinking how we could devise some plan by which to get at least one of them back, and so mortify the pride of the other. Mamma assured me that it was hopeless, and foolish trying to produce any effect upon Gee. Though for myself, I was far more anxious to work an alteration in *his* feelings than in those of Mr. Dossey.

At length Mamma persuaded me—if I only wrote to Mr. Dossey one of those beautiful affecting letters which I knew so well how to write—that his egregious vanity would be so pleased that he would be certain to be caught by it, and come back again—all penitence to me. Then again this would be such a nice annoyance to that Mr. Gee, to think a mere mushroom of a Clergyman had been preferred to him who was closely connected with one of the oldest titles in the kingdom.

I sat down and wrote. Mamma looked over my shoulder, and kept giving me hints as to what I should say. First, that formal way of beginning would never do—then this expression wasn't strong enough—and then I should ruin all if I didn't throw my whole soul into the letter and make the man believe I was brokenhearted without him. If I tore up one draft I must have torn up half a dozen at least. Until at last, finding it was useless my attempting the task, I threw down my pen and told Mamma I could *not* do it. Then she sat down to the desk, asking me where my pride was that I allowed myself to be cast aside—like an old plaything. Snatching up the pen she soon scribbled off an impassioned note to Mr. Dossey—in which I was made to confess such intense admiration and love for the Reverend Gentleman, that my cheeks were burning with shame at myself all the while I copied it.

When I had written—directed, and—sealed it, I couldn't help begging and praying of Mamma—as she loved me—not to take it. But she had such power over me, that one word from her was quite enough to upset all my strongest arguments. Besides, I could see *she* was much more angry

than even *I* was, at having been foiled in her artifices—and that she was determined—at any sacrifice—not to be beaten in her machinations.

As she was putting on her bonnet to go and deliver this wicked letter in person, I was half tempted to run in and tell Papa—who was still in his study—of all that had taken place. But then I knew so well that he would throw my own words in my teeth, and remind me of his prophecies, that I hadn't the courage to consult him on the matter. It was impossible to help remembering, that a little more than six months ago I had told him to believe in my virtue and honour—and was it strange that I should want the heart to be the first to tell him I had become the very trickster he had predicted. And yet I knew he would be kind to me, and be sure to give me good counsel. But my better resolves came too late. Mamma returned to the room ready dressed, and in another minute had left the house with my letter to Mr. Dossey in her hand.

Whilst I was still seated in the parlour, with my eyes fixed on the fire, lost in a wretched reverie, I was suddenly startled by a loud double knock at the door. It couldn't be Mamma returned so soon—it was too early for visitors—and too late to be any person to see Papa—for he had left a good half hour at least.

In a minute or two the servant relieved my suspense, by announcing—to my dismay—The Honourable Mr. Gee.

“Charlotte!” he said, advancing towards me, “I was unjustly harsh to your mother when I saw her, yesterday, and said things to her about you which I have called to-day to ask your forgiveness for.”

This he spoke in so different a voice and so unusual a manner, that he quite frightened me. I was so unprepared, too, for his generosity—so heart-broken at the remembrance of what I'd done—that I could not say a word to him in reply, and merely stretched out my hand for him to shake, as a token that I still wished to be friends with him.

“Come, now,” he added, as I turned my head away to hide my tears; “I have hurt you, I see—and wronged you, I know. Is it not so, my little one?”

Still my tears would not allow me to speak to him.

“I have never yet confessed to you, Charlotte, the love I bore you,” he continued; “and maybe this has led you to

fancy I was only trifling—where, indeed, I wished to be serious! So all I want to learn from you is—in plain terms—do you love Mr. Dossey?”

“By Heaven, I do *not*!” I said quickly, and should have said more, only he shook me by the hand so heartily, that I had not the courage to tell him the rest.

“There, I knew you didn’t!” he answered. “This morning I could not help recollecting, Charlotte, what you said to me in the drawing-room—a little better than a week ago—when I questioned you about Dossey; and I felt convinced—from what you told me then—it could be only the fellow’s overweening conceit that made him fancy my little one was sighing for him. Wasn’t that it, Lotty—eh?”

“Yes—that is—perhaps it was partly my fault,” I stammered out.

“That is, you were laughing at him, and he thought you were in earnest—ain’t I right?” he asked.

But every word he spoke on the subject struck so deep into my heart, that I could *not* answer him; and indeed my whole thoughts were upon *that letter*. All I hoped and prayed for was—that Mr. Dossey was not vain simpleton enough to be caught by the trick. I longed to throw myself at Adolphus’s feet, and confess the whole to him. But I knew he would want to see the note; and if he *did* see it—he *must* hate me. Besides, one hope was left. Mr. Dossey might be from home when Mamma called, and she would return with it unopened.

“Come, come, Lotty,” he said, attributing all my grief to the reflections he had cast upon me, “you mustn’t think any more of what I said in a moment of *pique*. You see that fellow Dossey had so put me out,—and your mother happened to call before I had time to cool down,—or else I’m sure I never should have thought so meanly of you as to have supposed you guilty of the conduct I attributed to you.”

“No, Adolphus, it isn’t *that*. I might have felt hurt at the idea of parting with you for ever, but—a—but—a—,” again the confession was on the tip of my tongue, and again I could not stammer it out.

“There, don’t let me have any more of those buts,” he answered, smiling. “I tell you once for all, I shouldn’t have given *you* up, if I hadn’t thought that you had first discarded *me*. Only you see, my dear girl, I never knew I loved you until an-

other had made me jealous—and then, I will confess, I felt stung at the idea of being distanced by a fellow like that Dossey.”

“Oh! that I only dare tell you all!” I murmured, hiding my face in my hands.

“Dare tell me *what*?” he asked, in a half tetchy tone. “What is this mystery? If we are to be as one, Lotty, don’t let us begin by having secrets from one another. Does it relate to Dossey—that is all I want to know?”

“It does, it does,” I cried; and I was about to rise and throw myself at his feet, and tell him all I had done, when a loud knock at the door transfixed me to my seat; but Mr. Gee, turning his head towards the window, exclaimed, with an oath, “Why, there’s that scoundrel Dossey coming in with your mother.” Then fixing his eyes intently on me, he said from between his teeth, “Charlotte! what is the meaning of all this?”

In a second they were in the room. Mr. Dossey was not more astonished at the presence of Mr. Gee than was Mamma. But Gee advancing to the middle of the room, said, in a quiet tone, “Mr. Dossey, I am afraid we are both being tricked here. Now, sir, a word with you. As a man of honour—what brings you to this house again?”

On this, the Reverend Gentleman drawing my accursed letter from his pocket, handed it, without a word, to Mr. Gee—who read it, and then gave one look at me. “And the young lady who wrote you this impassioned note,” he said, “has just sworn to me, Sir, by heaven, she loved you not.”

Then, taking his hat, he bowed, and left the room, saying, “Ladies, I wish you a very good day.”

In a minute, Mr. Dossey also left, wishing us a very good day.

Mamma and I remained silent for a quarter of an hour, at least, ashamed even to look at each other. At last, she said, “Was this your doing? How came Mr. Gee here?”

“He came by his own generous impulses, Mother,” I replied, with passion. “He came to offer me his hand and heart! and you came bringing the token of the hand and heart I had to give him. He came here thinking me all purity; you came here showing him how foul a creature you had made me. Yes, *Mother*, you—you who should have watched over me and guided me to good—you who were first to teach me to lie in those very things in which truth alone is—chastity.

“Oh! Mother! Mother! what will become of me?”

## OFFER THE FIFTH.

“WHAT WILL BECOME OF ME?” I SAID AT THE END OF THE LAST CHAPTER, AND LITTLE DID I THEN THINK THAT THE FOLLOWING EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS WERE ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE. I’M SURE WHEN FIRST WE WERE INTRODUCED TO MR. SERTINGLEY, WE ALL OF US THOUGHT HIM A PERFECT GENTLEMAN; BUT ALAS! MAN IS SUCH AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE RIDDLE, THAT THE BEST WAY IS TO GIVE HIM UP.

MAMMA and I didn’t say a word to each other for several days after that awkward and disagreeable affair I described in my last offer. We were so distant and polite, and respectful to one another—“I always “Ma’aming” her, and she always “Missing” me—that any one would have thought we had only just been introduced to one another. Papa seeing that there was some difference between us, wanted to know what had occurred, but, of course, Mamma didn’t tell him the truth, for her own sake; and, for myself, now it was all over, I’m sure I was not going to enlighten him on the subject. Besides, I didn’t take this affair so much to heart as I did the one with Mr. Lacy. I was no longer a silly child; and a pretty thing it would be to have that Mr. Gee, hearing I was dying with a broken heart, indeed, for his sake! So I kept continually assuring myself I never did care much about him. For my part, when I came to think about it, I couldn’t help wondering how I could ever have been silly enough to have seen anything at all out of the way in the good-looking fellow, and, handsome as I might have thought him at one time, I hated him now.

However, Mamma and I didn’t remain in the sulks very long, and when we did make it up, she told me she had determined in her own mind upon one thing, and that was, to be even with that Mr. Gee, and take very good care to let him know we were neither of us worms, to be trodden upon by him. She had been turning the matter over and over, and had come to the conclusion, that the best way to be revenged upon the gentleman was, for her to go down to Lord Fortinwx, and let his lordship know what a pretty sort of a person he had got for a brother. She’d tell him the whole story,

and take very good care that the story should lose nothing in the telling. Besides, even supposing that the dear old nobleman did not turn his back upon that Mr. Gee, at least it would enable her to make his lordship's acquaintance. Could she, as a mother, she asked me, allow that bad, bad man to trifle with the best feelings of her poor dear daughter, without so much as stirring a foot to have the villain punished, especially when it might be the means of introducing us to a circle in which she had long wished to move. Moreover, who could presume to look into the book of fate, and say what it might not lead to. Perhaps I might become Lady Fortiwinx—stranger things than that had happened, and did happen every day. Then the poor despised Charlotte de Roos, who wasn't good enough for a certain gentleman we knew, might have the satisfaction of cutting the wretch out of the title, by presenting his lordship with a dear little innocent babe, that would live to be a blessing to its dear mother, and a death-blow to the ambition of that Honourable Mr. Gee—and, goodness knew, nothing on earth would give her greater pleasure.

Accordingly, Mamma booked an inside place in the coach to Oxford, and started off as soon as possible for his Lordship's seat in Witney.

When she got there, she was quite taken with Lord Fortiwinx; for though she knew he was just upon sixty, still she declared he looked, and was dressed, quite like a young blood. His hair was so beautifully curled, and the parting was so natural, that if it hadn't been for a few locks of grey just peeping out at the back of his neck, and the colour being so intensely black, she should have given him credit for possessing one of the finest "chevelures" in the world. As for his teeth, they were the whitest and most regular she had ever beheld! If they had belonged to an African, they couldn't have sparkled more than they did. Only the worst of it was, that when the dear old thing laughed, he would let her see the two little gold prongs at each corner of his mouth. The colour on his cheeks, too, was divine! At first, she was convinced that it was the beautiful hue of health, and the rich reward of a youth well spent; but when she looked at him again, and saw how yellow he was under his poor eyes, it was



as plain as plain could be, that though he looked as healthy as a hay-maker, still he was naturally as bilious as a methodist preacher. Again, his whiskers were so regular and so jetty, that she couldn't help wondering how, at his time of life, he could be blessed with so black a pair. Though she wasn't long in solving the problem; for when she saw them in the sun, they were of as many colours as the silver side of a boiled round of beef, and moreover they were as red as mahogany at the roots.

The dressing gown he had on was made of the loveliest black Genoa velvet, lined all throughout with crimson silk, and fastened round the waist with a gold bell-pull; while his trousers were of the same rich material as his *robe de chambre*, and made to fasten round the ankle, in the Turkish style; and to complete the costume, he wore on his feet a pair of red morocco slippers, with the toes turned up, like a pair of skates.

All round his rooms were the most lovely oil paintings. Some of them of nymphs bathing, or Venuses reposing, or Dianas hunting, and other heathen goddesses, in the light costume of the skies; and all showing how warm an admirer his dear old lordship was of the beauty of the female form. The statues, too, were the loveliest things she had ever beheld! No nasty, ugly, cross-looking, bearded old sages, whose wisdom seemed to lie in not shaving; but the most beautiful figures of Eves, and Psyches, and Graces,—indeed, everything to show his exquisite taste. Even on the mantel-piece, there were two pets of little images of the principal dancers at the opera, in biscuit ware; and here and there, against the walls, was a coloured lithograph of some handsome actress, as she appeared in one of the favourite burlesques, which, from the writing in the corner, had been sent to him, with her compliments.

The table was strewn with the "Books of Beauty," and the "Flowers of Loveliness," and "Byron's Beauties;" together with a portfolio, which was filled with pictures of the "Pets of the Ballet," and heads of pretty laundresses, and handsome cigar women, and lovely pastry-cook girls, and some French ones, very beautifully finished, of "Le Coucher," and "Le Lever," and "L'Innocence," and "La Confession," and "La Belle Esclave."

When Mamma was ushered into his lordship's presence, she found him seated in an easy chair before the fire, reading one of George Sand's highly moral and particularly exciting French romances, and with a box of dinner-pills and a glass of water by his side on the table. Of course he received Mamma—who is a remarkably fine-looking woman—with the greatest courtesy; and she said she hadn't been in his presence more than five minutes, before he complimented her upon her appearance by some classical allusion to the heathen goddesses, and dexterously pretending to be astonished almost to incredulity when she informed him that she was the mother of a daughter as old as myself. Throughout the conversation, whenever an opportunity presented itself, he would manage to drag in improbable anecdotes, which only tended to prove what an extraordinary man he was, and how he was admired by everybody, either for his extreme honour or his prepossessing appearance.

When Mamma had given him a highly coloured sketch of Mr. Gee's behaviour to me, in which she took care to paint me as angel, and Adolphus as a demon, the poor old gentleman ordered the servant to put some coals on the fire, and declared that he was moved almost to tears to find that a scion of his noble house should have so demeaned himself to beauty and innocence, and that he should consider it a blot on his hitherto unsullied escutcheon for the rest of his life.

“Ah! *beauteous madam*,” he said, with a smile, “it cuts me to the core to think that one who claims kindred to myself should have shown so little allegiance to loveliness,—and lovely I know the fair lady must be, coming from such a source,—for where the flower is *beauteous*, the bud is *beauteous* also,” he added, with an elegant bow and a sweet smile.

Mamma, in return for this, blushed, simpered, and at last replied—“Yes, my Lord, most of our kind friends have allowed that my daughter is very lovely, but I fear that now the bud you speak of is unfolding its fresher beauties, the fading flower must droop its head.”

Lord Fortiwinx gesticulated his dissent, and said, with a bland smile—“Your exquisite modesty, Madam, blinds you to your own excellence. But I can well appreciate your

feelings; for I remember, shortly after the Peace, being in France, and as I am passionately fond of music—indeed, I am considered to have a natural genius that way—I went, one Sabbath to hear the singing at the royal chapel at Versailles. After divine service, I drew aside to allow the Queen, who had formed part of the congregation, to pass, when her Majesty, being struck with my appearance, I suppose—for I was generally allowed to be not altogether ill-favoured at that time—she, in the most pleasing way, approached me, saying—‘I perceive, monsieur, by the classicality of your features and the manliness of your bearing, that you are an Englishman.’—‘Madam,’ I replied, with a bow of profound respect—“I regret to state that I have not the good fortune to be the happy subject of so beautiful a Queen.”—‘Monsieur,’ her Majesty replied, ‘your country is honoured by your belonging to it; for I see you are a perfect gentleman.’ And so unconscious was I of my own attractions, that I can assure you, my charming Mrs. de Roos, that I blushed up to my eyes at receiving so generous a compliment from so illustrious a personage.—But let us return to your daughter, Madam. I see you have been sadly distressed by Mr. Gee’s heartless conduct to the lovely young lady.”

“Yes, my Lord,” answered Mamma; “I was sure your highly sensitive nature would enable you to understand what my feelings were on finding that my little rose, after being nursed in the bosom of a gentleman for awhile, should be flung aside to wither, unnoticed and uncared for!”

“And that man,” added his Lordship, “you tell me, Mrs. de Roos, is my brother. Indeed, Madam, I blush to own him as such!—Is your daughter young?” he asked, his eyes glistening as he made the inquiry.

“Scarcely eighteen!” replied Mamma. “And if you saw her, I’m sure you’d pity her from the very bottom of your heart. Poor child! I can assure you her bright and exquisitely expressive eyes are bathed in tears from morning till night.”

“The villain!” exclaimed his Lordship, with feigned emotion, and tapping the table with his fingers, to make his rings sparkle in the light. “You cannot tell how many a pang that brother of mine has caused me before this, my

dear madam.—I think you said your poor, dear young lady's eyes were black and full?" he asked, with evident interest.

"Yes, your Lordship," answered Mamma, "they are extremely black, and full of fire,—yet beaming with tenderness.—But I fear it will be a long, long time, before she gets over this sad affair. If your Lordship knew of what an affectionate and confiding a nature she is, I'm sure you could not, but be deeply moved, to see her poor pretty cheeks blushing all over, from very agitation."

"I am sure I should, Madam," responded Lord Fortiwinx; "but I will not rest in my bed until I bring the treacherous disturber of the fair lady's peace to account for his villany.—Poor dear; evidently a girl of very deep feelings, and I have no doubt, an exquisite figure, too?" he continued, looking anxiously at Mamma for a reply.

"She is generally considered, my Lord, to have been remarkably well favoured in that respect," replied Mamma; "perhaps a little inclined to be stout, though I fear this early grief will sadly reduce the pleasing rotundity of her form."

"Let us hope not, Madam," answered his Lordship, with real emotion. "I shall not sit easy until I have obtained some redress for the lovely young creature. It will not be long before I hear the tale from her own beautiful little mouth—for beautiful and little I am sure it must be."

"It is, your Lordship," replied Mamma. "Even her greatest enemy must allow that,—if, indeed, a girl of her remarkably sweet temper can have such a thing as an enemy in the world. I knew your Lordship would befriend my poor Charlotte. The exquisite generosity of your sympathy, your beautiful sense and regard for justice, your well-known spirit of chivalry, and, above all, your reverence of beauty, assured me you would protect an injured lady, even though your own brother were the injurer."

"You do me honour, Madam," answered his Lordship, bowing, "in having formed so high an estimate of my humble character. Yes, Madam! I have always been the devoted slave and admirer of lovely woman! I am ever ready to avenge and protect the charming sex. I remember once, during the Bath season, just after the balls had commenced, being at the Assembly Rooms; and as I was paying my ad-

dresses to the beautiful and accomplished Miss Vavaseur—then the belle of the season,—I was much annoyed at perceiving that, after having danced three quadrilles running with the chief of the Cherokee Indians—who were all the rage at that time—she stood up for a waltz with him. On this, being accounted one of the best waltzers of the day, I went up to the Indian Chief, and said, ‘Sir, perhaps you are not aware, that it is the custom of this country, that, after a gentleman has been honoured with the hand of a lady for one dance, he should conduct her to her seat, and allow other candidates for that honour a similar gratification.’ The chief looked at me sternly, and muttered something in his own language, a knowledge of which I did not number among my accomplishments. Being generally allowed to be one of the best shots of my time, I was not at all alarmed, but coolly replied, ‘If, sir, you are desirous of construing my remonstrance into an insult, I shall be delighted to afford you any satisfaction—at any time—or at any place—either with pistols or with swords (for I was famed for my fencing)—ay, or with bow and arrow, if you please;’ for I was an equally expert archer. This brought the brave Chief to his senses, and, seizing my hand, he told me, ‘That the Thundercloud,’ (meaning himself) ‘was gladdened at the courage of the pale-face’ (meaning me)—‘and that he was proud to make my acquaintance, for I was a perfect gentleman.’”

Mamma, who, during this not very probable anecdote, had been exclaiming, “Indeed!” and “Bless me!” and “I should never have believed it!” with great emotion, here rose to depart. Whereupon his Lordship assured her that it would not be long before he demanded of Mr. Gee an explanation of his unmanly conduct; adding, that however he might regret the circumstance which had led to this introduction, still he was much indebted to it, for having afforded him the exquisite pleasure of making the acquaintance of so charming a lady as Mamma was.

As I afterwards learnt from a little bird that came and whispered it all in my ear, Mamma had no sooner taken her departure, than Lord Fortiwinx rang the bell, and requested to see Mr. Sertingley, who—being a poor relation of the late Lady Fortiwinx—was a protégé of his Lordship’s, and occasionally acted as his secretary.

“I wish, you, Frederick,” said the old beau, as soon as Mr. Sertingley had entered the room, “to prepare to go to town on a little private business that I want you to look into for me. The fact of it is, Mr. Gee has been playing the fool with some girl in town; and the mother—certainly a remarkably fine woman—has been down here complaining of his conduct. As the honour of the family seems to be a little compromised, I should like you to go to town and pretend, you know, to redress their wrongs—you see; or, indeed, do anything you like, just to hush it up. It would never do to have that fellow Gee in the papers again.”

“I perfectly agree with your Lordship,” answered Mr. Sertingley, who was the most agreeable of gentlemen; for he was always perfectly agreeing with everybody on every subject.

“Of course, it would never do for me,” continued his Lordship, “to be continually interfering about all the young ladies that Mr. Gee chooses to deceive; and I shouldn’t do it in this case, indeed, only the mother, who, as I said before, is a remarkably fine woman, has given me such a glowing description of her daughter’s charms, that I should like you yourself to go up to town and let me know the real facts of the case, and whether the girl is anything like what the mother makes out; for if she is only half as beautiful as she says she is, I shall consider it my duty to go up to London and see about it myself. Don’t you think that’s the best way, Frederick?”

“I perfectly agree with your Lordship,” replied Mr. Sertingley, with a profound shake of the head.

“And, to tell you the truth, what makes me the more eager to look into the merits of the case is, that that hair-brained brother of mine has certainly got consummate good taste of his own.”

“Oh, certainly,” said Mr. Sertingley, with evident emotion; “I perfectly agree with your Lordship in that respect.”

“And besides,” added Lord Fortiwinx, “it does strike me as a downright piece of villany, for a man, calling himself a gentleman, to trifle with the affections of a fond, young, and confiding creature—especially if she is possessed of such divine attractions.”

“I take precisely the same view of the case as your Lord-

ship," replied the *complaisant* Mr. Sertingley; "indeed, there is no contradicting what your Lordship says."

"But, Frederick, we must be very careful of one thing," continued the old beau; "you know the old proverb tells us, that all mothers are prone to think their own geese, swans; and if it should turn out that Mrs. De Roos has been enlisting my sympathies for a mere ordinary-looking girl, why, of course, you will understand as well as I do, that I should consider Mr. Gee not at all to blame for his conduct."

"Just so, your lordship," said Mr. Frederick, lifting up his hands; "no more should I; and no more would any one, indeed, for the matter of that."

"But do not let us think so unfavourably of our fellow-creatures as to think that this mother has been rousing the best feelings of my nature, in favour of a girl that one wouldn't stir a foot for. But it cannot be. The mother, though far from a chicken, has still beauty enough left to tell you that she certainly must have been a very charming creature in her younger days; and if the daughter only takes after her, the sweet little angel is exactly the poor, dear, trusting soul that I should like to befriend and protect."

Mr. Sertingley paused for a moment, and bit his lips, as if in profound meditation; and then, shaking his forefinger, said, with great emphasis, "Very true, your Lordship—*very* true; I'm precisely of the same way of thinking."

"However, Frederick, to prevent mistakes," added his Lordship, "and so as to enable me to judge for myself, I think it would be better if you could, by any ingenious means, manage to obtain a Daguerreotype of the girl; for, Heaven knows! if she looks well then, she must be very beautiful indeed!"

"Ye—s—s—s, to be sure," replied Mr. Sertingley, in a deep whisper, and throwing himself back in his chair, as if struck with the novelty and truth of the remark—"I perfectly agree with your Lordship on this point. But, supposing the lady turns out to be far from prepossessing in her appearance, would your Lordship wish me to send you her portrait, then?"

"Why, of course not," returned Lord Fortiwinx, angrily. "What, on earth should I want with it? You don't sup-

pose I'm going to trouble my head for one moment about the creature if that's the case? Do you fancy I'm such an old fool as that."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Sertingley, intending to refer to the previous part, and not the conclusion of his Lordship's remark; "I'm exactly of that way of thinking."

"Hang it, sir," answered Lord Fortiwinx, rising, "do you mean to insult me?"

At this Mr. Sertingley, who was very nervous, grew so confused, that he stammered out, "Just so, my Lord, there's no denying what you say."

"Leave the room this minute, sir," said his Lordship, seeing Mr. Sertingley's confusion, "and prepare to go to London immediately. You're a stupid booby, sir, and don't know what you're saying."

True to the last, Mr. Sertingley quitted the apartment, exclaiming, "Very good, your Lordship, I perfectly agree with you."

In a few days, Mr. Sertingley was with us, bringing a letter of introduction to Mamma, who was not long in finding out that he was related to Lord Fortiwinx, and was a young man of very good expectations at his Lordship's death. This, of course, made her particularly gracious to the agreeable gentleman; and, from his always agreeing with Mamma in the view she took of Mr. Gee's conduct, and, indeed, every other point as well, they soon grew to be the best of friends. Mamma was continually impressing upon me what an amiable young man he was, and that Lord Fortiwinx was so attached to him, that his Lordship would be certain to leave him a considerable portion of his immense property in his will; and that she was sure the gentleman was violently smitten, or he wouldn't be there every evening, as he was.

As for myself, I must confess that though I was not particularly struck with Mr. Sertingley at first sight, still when I came to know him better, his manner was so affable, and he was always so thoroughly of the same opinion as myself, that I found him win more and more upon me every day. Appearances certainly were not very much in his favour, though, to do him justice, they did not go very much against him. Not being stout, he looked much taller than he really was, and being always dressed in black, quite plain, and having a



fair complexion, he had a very gentlemanly look. He was so polite too, and apparently so much interested in the slightest thing that happened to you, and so particularly careful lest you should catch cold, and so anxious always to oblige one, that I'm sure no one could have helped liking the man after they had seen him once or twice. If you let fall your handkerchief, he was delighted at the opportunity of picking it up; if you wanted to wind off some silk, he was enchanted to be permitted to hold the skein for you; if you came into the room, it seemed to be the proudest moment of his life to hand you a chair; if he accompanied you to the theatre, nothing seemed to give him so much pleasure as to be allowed to put on your shawl; at tea, too, he was in his glory if he could only have the chance of taking your empty cup; while at dinner he would carve up a whole chicken without ever taking his fork out of it; and at desert he was especially delighted if you would allow him to crack nuts, or peel apples, or cut oranges—and the way in which the dear man would make them into wine glasses or baskets was remarkably surprising—never once touching them with his fingers. Then, again, his small-talk was positively charming; he always knew the plot of the last new novel by heart; or else he had some witticism to tell you, which was going the round of the Clubs; or the latest astonishing discovery in science; or some delightful bit of scandal of some poor dear in high life. Then he had travelled a great deal with Lord Fortiwinx, and would give you descriptions of the costumes or scenery of the different countries, or relate to you some romantic anecdote of an adventure he had had with the guerillas at some road-side inn; or else give you an account of the unsuccessful attempt he had made at the ascension of Mont Blanc. He was a bit of an antiquary, too, and it was quite delightful to walk out with him in the streets, for he was always telling you what old building once stood here, and what institution once stood there, and how such and such a place was the site of such and such a palace, and how such and such a person had been born in such and such a house.

Then he had a smattering of chemistry, besides, and would inform you of the best thing to take grease spots out of silk, and how to change a red rose into a white one, or else how to clean white kid gloves without smell, or how to preserve

furs from moths. Moreover, he was a little bit of a musician into the bargain, and could play the flute, and used to accompany me with it on the piano. Added to this, he could draw very nicely, and would stamp in moonlight scenes or tombstones on cardboard for my album.

Nor was Papa less pleased with him than ourselves, for he would sit and talk with the old gentleman after dinner about political economy, and discussing the doctrines of demand and supply, till the coffee was nearly cold in the drawing-room. So, really and truly, we could have known him scarcely a week before we all of us agreed that Mr. Sertingley was a most amiable person, and a perfect gentleman. Then, what with hearing Mamma and Papa always speaking of him in such high terms, and that Fanny always saying he was such a nice man—though I must confess I did not like hearing him praised by her,—and what with our always playing music, or going out walking, together, and what with his polite attention to me, and his extreme sympathy and care for me, and hearing Mamma always telling him that she looked upon him as one of the family, I very soon got to think him one of the nicest, and most obliging and kind-hearted personages I had ever met, and found myself speaking of him to Mamma as Frederick.

I know he liked me, too, because whenever he called, he always brought a beautiful pet of a bouquet. Then, again, when Mamma took him to the Bosanquet's evening party, I declare he wanted to dance all the evening with me, and when I told him that I really must, just for the look of the thing, stand up for a quadrille with somebody else, I declare he never took his eyes off me until the set was finished, and then he followed me about, like a footman. Moreover, at first he wanted to have my Daguerreotype taken, though afterwards for some reason I didn't understand *then*, he kept putting it off, and putting it off, until at last he had the impudence to propose the same thing to Fanny, which put me in such a puff, that I told him we would neither of us sit for the nasty dingy likenesses, which of course, everybody says, can't help being a perfect resemblance of you.

To make a long story short, it wasn't many days after this, before, finding me walking alone in the enclosure of our Cres-

cent, he, in a most complimentary manner, told me that life would be a burthen to him without me, and requested to be allowed to hope that he was not altogether displeasing to me, and a pack of other highly flattering nonsense, that put me in such a flurry, that I'm sure I can't remember what it was now. All I recollect is, that the creature took my hand and kept squeezing it so hard, that it was as much as ever I could do to get my fingers apart, when he let it go, and that he attempted to put his other arm round my waist, but of course I told him that I could not allow anything of the kind, and begged of him to remember that we were out in the public streets, and that some of the neighbours would be certain to see us.

When I told Mamma what had occurred, I naturally expected that she would have been delighted; but, bless me, no! "I had been very imprudent and hasty, I had; and she gave me credit for more discretion, she did. Had I so much as set eyes upon Lord Fortiwinx yet, she would ask me? and did I know whether he would consent or not? Wasn't I as well aware as she was, that Mr. Sertingley was entirely dependent upon his Lordship's bounty, and a pretty state I should be in, if the dear old nobleman, should happen to take an aversion to me, and set his face against the alliance. What, she would like me to inform her, should I do then? Mr. Sertingley, no doubt, was a very amiable and polite man, and perhaps, precisely the person to make me happy, but he was a beggar—yes, a thorough beggar—that was, if his lordship should take it into his head to turn his back upon him. And if he did, was I such a silly as to fancy that Mr. Sertingley's amiability would be sufficient for me to live upon? Would his politeness pay my house rent, or his good temper put a leg of mutton on my table, or did I think that I could get my coals and candles, and washing done, for nothing, because he had got a gentlemanly exterior. These were hard truths, still they *were* truths, and it was her duty to tell them to me, *hard* as they were. It really seemed to her as if young ladies, now-a-days, only thought of getting married, and never troubled their heads as to how they were to live and pay their way afterwards. Besides, who—as she said before, and would say again—who could tell what might happen when his lordship saw me? She would just, for one moment, ask

me, should I ever forgive myself, if he took a fancy to me, and I had to refuse him, because I had been in such a particular hurry to accept his trumpery secretary?"

This put me out so, that I couldn't help telling Mamma that my affair with Mr. Gee had taught me such a lesson, that I had made up my mind not to scheme any more, and as I liked Mr. Sertingley, and had confessed as much to him, I would be as good as my word, and if he *was* poor, share his poverty with him.

"Very well, Miss—very well, go your own way," replied Mamma; "only please to remember this, that when *Mrs. Sertingley* finds herself and children starving, don't let her come to me to seek for any assistance; for if she does, she mustn't fancy me hard-hearted, if I shut the door in her face, and let her and her amiable husband and family die of want."

"But you know there's no chance of that," I answered. "You always will go to extremes, Mamma."

"Extremes!—oh yes, extremes! certainly," returned Mamma, with an air of offended innocence. "And there's no chance of such a thing occurring—of course, there isn't. I've no doubt you think your father would be stupid enough to keep you and a great hulking amiable husband, riding about in carriages, and doing nothing for your living all your days. But I think I know your father better than that, Miss; and, once for all, I tell you, Charlotte, that you have nothing to expect from us. As you make your bed, so you must lie upon it: if it be one of roses, I can only say I shall be delighted for your sake; but if it be one of thorns, you must bear it as you best can, for it won't in any way concern me. However, thank goodness! your gentlemanly Mr. Sertingley has to go back to his *master* before the week's out, and absence, perhaps, may have the happy effect of cooling him down; so I trust that you will in no way encourage his attentions until we learn what Lord Fortiwinx's views may be."

After this, Mamma never left me alone with Mr. Sertingley for a moment; and as she took care to be present when the time came for his departure, our leave-taking was not so affectionate as it might otherwise have been.

On reaching Witney, there was a pretty scene between

his Lordship and Frederick—for he was afterwards obliged to confess the whole to me, as the reader will shortly see. Of course, his lordship was all anxiety to learn from him what kind of a lady I was, and to know what on earth could have kept Mr. Sertingley so long in town, and didn't hesitate to say that his conduct appeared very strange.

Nor did Frederick hesitate to agree perfectly with his Lordship; but he said, in explanation, that the facts of the case were of such a complicated nature, that he did not like to form any opinion, until he had thoroughly sifted the whole affair.

“Sifted the affair!” exclaimed Lord Fortiwinx, in a passion; “I didn't send you up to town for that, sir. You've got a pair of eyes in your head, and could have told, I suppose, at first sight, whether the girl was good-looking or not, and could, at least, have written me word by the next post, to say whether she was worth troubling one's head about—couldn't you, sir?”

“Certainly, my Lord, there's no denying what you say,” replied Mr. Sertingley, a little alarmed at his lordship's manner; “but the fact is, my Lord, Miss de Roos was absent from home when first I got there, and as I expected every day to be favoured with an interview, I did not like to trouble your Lordship with a useless letter, especially as I could only have told you that I had hopes, from the extreme beauty, grace of deportment, and elegance of accomplishments of her younger sister, Miss Fanny de Roos, that the lady herself would be a model of female perfection.”

“Oh! what, got a beautiful little sister Fanny—eh, Frederick?” said his Lordship, forgetting his ill temper.

“Even your Lordship can form no idea of the exquisite nature of Miss Fanny's charms,” responded Mr. Frederick. “Eyes melting with love, lips like the rosy lining of the shell, and a figure that Reubens would have given worlds to have studied.”

“Sweet little innocent!” ejaculated his lordship, quite roused by the description. “But I knew, from a glance at the mother, what the girls must be. Gad! it seems to be quite a preserve for beauty! Well, my dear Frederick, and

Miss de Roos, of course she's more lovely still? charms more mature, and beauty more made out, form rounder, and all that sort of thing, eh?"

"I can assure your Lordship she is nothing to Fanny," answered Mr. Sertingley, trying to keep off all description of my personal attractions as much as possible. "Fanny is divine—a little, blue-eyed angel, dropped from the skies. Oh! if your Lordship could only see her rich auburn tresses, like threads of red gold glistening in the sun, her cheeks like ripe peaches, her teeth like pearls in coral; I'm sure one so noted for taste as your Lordship would think her a second Hebe."

"But leave Fanny alone for the present," continued his Lordship; "and let me know something about the other one."

"Certainly, your Lordship," answered Mr. Sertingley; "but you can have no idea of what a divinity the young lady is."

"Dear me, dear me," replied Lord Fortiwinx; "what, Miss de Roos is so beautiful?"

"Pardon me, your Lordship, I was referring to Fanny," said the indefatigable Frederick.

"Why, sir, you seem to have gone raving mad about Miss Fanny," replied his Lordship; "I sent you to town, sir, to bring me back an account of Miss de Roos, and all I hear from you is a wild, romantic rhapsody upon Miss Fanny!"

"Very true—very true; there is no contradicting what your Lordship says," replied Mr. Sertingley, finding, from his Lordship's tetchiness, that he had rather overshot the mark. "But you see, your Lordship, she is so immeasurably superior to the other lady, that I thought that a description of her would please you more than any account—however flattering—I could give you of the personal appearance of Miss de Roos."

"It's very strange, then," returned his lordship, growing suspicious; "that Mr. Gee—who certainly is far from a bad judge of beauty—should have been taken with the plainer of the two."

"I am precisely of the same way of thinking, my lord," answered Mr. Sertingley, a little alarmed; "but I believe that circumstance can be easily accounted for, by the fact that Miss Fanny was at school at the time Mr. Gee visited

the family, or else I am certain a man of his taste wouldn't have hesitated for a moment between the young ladies; indeed, for myself, I can't imagine any one having two opinions in the matter, and besides, I think I've heard your lordship say that Mr. Gee preferred dark beauties to blondes."

"Well, sir, and so do I," returned his Lordship. "So, Miss De Roos is dark—perhaps you will be so kind as to let me know that much, for as yet your head has been so full of her sister, that you haven't condescended to supply me with the least information concerning her."

"Your Lordship is very right—very right," replied Mr. Sertingley; "but really the young lady is so very ordinary in her appearance, that when I first saw her—it was after her sister, certainly—I was quite astonished to find her so—I think I may almost say plain."

"Plain! it's very odd," answered his Lordship, still more suspicious. "That's very extraordinary. The mother, too, such a fine woman."

"Certainly, your lordship," replied Frederick; "but Miss De Roos takes after the father—indeed, is afflicted with a strong likeness to him."

"What! do you mean to say she's downright ugly, then?" asked Lord Fortiwinx.

"Pardon me, your Lordship; I would not, on any account, insinuate anything of the kind," returned Mr. Sertingley, considerably embarrassed—"What I meant was, that the young lady is certainly far from handsome; yet I should not like your lordship to understand from that that she is downright ugly. Her figure, which is decidedly the best part about her, is not good, though it certainly is not bad—her eyes, though not of a pleasing colour, I must confess have some expression—her complexion, though it is not of that beautiful blending of the lily and the rose, which your lordship so much admires, still I don't think her greatest enemy could call it sallow. Indeed, to be frank, and to do both you and the young lady justice, I should say that she is—just passable."

"Then what the deuce can Gee have seen in the girl to be so smitten with her?" asked his Lordship.

"Why, certainly, my Lord, that is singular. It must have been her graceful manner, together with the powers of her

mind," answered Mr. Sertingley, who knew his lordship's aversion to women of mind: "for she certainly is a remarkably clever girl—indeed, almost as intellectual a woman as I have ever had the pleasure of speaking to."

"Pleasure!" exclaimed his lordship, throwing up his hands. "Ugh!—pleasure do you call it? There, that's enough! She's intellectual, is she? Then I'll be sworn she isn't beautiful. I know the style of creature, if she's what they call a superior woman. Hair dragged right off her forehead, like a red Indian—wears blue spectacles—and has a complexion as yellow as rhubarb—very philanthropic and very bilious—loves her whole species, and growls at everybody about her."

"Your Lordship is too severe upon the young lady," said Mr. Sertingley, after he had finished his forced convulsions at his lordship's satire. "Really you do not do her justice. I can assure you hers is real talent, not a mere affectation of it, to gild her plainness. She would talk astronomy to you by the hour."

"Would she?—not if I know it. Still if she is so intellectual," exclaimed his Lordship, whose suspicions were not altogether allayed—"how came it that Mr. Gee could have been so charmed with her—for he's no more attached to intellect than I am?"

"That, certainly, is very true, your Lordship," replied Mr. Sertingley, delighted at the turn the conversation had taken. "But the young lady has such a charming way with her—indeed, there is a *je-ne-sais-quoi* about her—you understand what I mean, your Lordship?"

"No, hang me if I do," returned Lord Fortiwinx.

"Why, a peculiar something in her manner and expression," continued Mr. Sertingley; "such a frankness of disposition, and elegance of language, that I can assure your Lordship, that though I was far from pleased with the lady at first sight, still, I'd not been in her company more than three times, before I began to experience that she was enslaving me in just such a way as I've no doubt she enchanted Mr. Gee."

"Oh, indeed!" said the old beau, half musing to himself, "that is it. So, she has smitten you, has she?"

"Why, the fact is, your Lordship," returned the abashed



Frederick; "I saw at a glance that she was not the kind of person to please you, and as you yourself have often been so kind as to say you should like to see me comfortably settled in life, I thought that although Miss De Roos could never expect to gain your admiring glance, still she would do very well for one so humble as myself."

"Hem! very modest of you, I'm sure," muttered his lordship. "Well?"

"Again, it was such a nice, amiable, and respectable family," continued Mr. Sertingley, "and though the girls have no immediate property, still, from the manner in which the father lives, and the extent of his practice, I have no doubt he would leave them both very well off at his death."

"But if Miss Fanny is so much more beautiful, why not have taken her?" asked Lord Fortiwinx, slyly.

"Oh, your Lordship," replied Mr. Frederick, bowing, "I did not dare to think for one moment of looking with approbation upon one whom I felt satisfied your lordship would be so pleased with. Besides, she is the younger daughter, and would not expect to have so large a share of her father's wealth as her elder sister."

"Very prudent of you, Frederick," added his Lordship. "I'm glad to see you show so much discretion." Then, after thinking awhile, he continued, sneering, "But come, as you say you should like to marry into the family, and as it is only out of consideration to me that you take the elder sister—and as, from the very glowing description you have given me of Fanny's charms, it is very plain to see you have been a little bit touched in that quarter; and, as I don't like blondes, why, I'll be equally generous to you, and give you not only my free permission to marry Miss Fanny, but also promise, out of my own pocket, to make up any little difference there might be in the girl's expectations; for I should not like you to be influenced by any mercenary views in the matter."

"Your Lordship is, I'm sure—is extremely good, eh, eh!" exclaimed Mr. Frederick, considerably alarmed at his Lordship's whim.

"There, there, my boy, let me have no professions of gratitude," interrupted the cunning old beau, smiling at the success of his plan. "I promised your poor aunt, the late

Lady Fortiwinx, who, thank heaven, is now in a better place, that I would see you comfortably provided for; so you may go back to town, and arrange it all with Miss Fanny, and I'll be with you shortly afterwards, and make it all right with the father."

Frederick endeavoured to explain; but Lord Fortiwinx roguishly pretended to construe his embarrassment into an over sense of gratitude; and, at last, told him, half laughing to himself, that he wouldn't hear a word on the subject, for he felt convinced that he had only done what was right, and that such a profusion of thanks was really annoying to him.

Poor Mr. Sertingley came up to me in a most dreadful state of mind; and, as I saw something was troubling him, I kept continually inquiring what made him appear so low-spirited and unhappy. At last, when he had put it off as long as ever he could, he told me, that on the morrow he expected Lord Fortiwinx to be in town, and said that he felt it was his duty no longer to keep from me the knowledge of a certain circumstance, of which his love for me had been the sole cause. Then, after a great deal of coaxing, and assuring him that, whatever the circumstance might be, my love for him would make me overlook it, I at last extracted from him, bit by bit, a complete confession of all that had occurred between him and that horrid old Lord Fortiwinx. Of course, he kept endeavouring to explain it all as he went on, and reminding me that nothing but his extreme admiration of me could have made him paint me in such dingy colours; and though, of course, I was in his eyes an angel, still, knowing his Lordship's love of beauty, he had been obliged to make me out to him a very ordinary mortal. But when my gentleman told me how highly he had been obliged to extol that Miss Fanny, in order, of course—oh, yes!—to make his Lordship think her everything, and poor me nothing, I couldn't bear it any longer; but told him very plainly, that I didn't see—even though he had thought it requisite to cry me down—that there was any positive necessity for his crying Miss *Fanny* up to the skies, in the very passionate way he appeared to have done. And on his proceeding to tell me of the pretty scrape he had got into through it, and that his Lordship had given his consent to Frederick's union with

that very beautiful and charming little hoyden of a sister of mine, "with lips like the rosy lining of the shell"—indeed, I told him that it served him perfectly right, and that, perhaps, he had much better transfer his affections to the young lady he seemed to think so highly of, and, on no account, allow poor mere passable me, with my not a bad, but not a good figure, to stand for one moment in his way.

"But Charlotte, my love, though I perfectly agree with you," expostulated the agreeable crocodile, "that it was very imprudent of me to give his Lordship so glowing a description of your sister—whom, believe me, I love only for your sake; still, you must admit, my darling, that I did it all for the best; and though I cannot help allowing, with you, that my folly deserved the punishment it has met with, yet I am sure you will not be hard-hearted enough to refuse me a helping hand to extricate myself."

"Really, I cannot see of what use I can be in this matter," I answered, with extreme outward civility, but great inward rage. "Upon my word, it seems to me that I have nothing to do with it. His Lordship has given you his consent to marry Miss Fanny, who is certainly a very charming young lady; and it appears to me, that all that remains to be done is to get her to accept you; and the only way that I see for me to help you, is to intercede with her on your behalf; and that, I'm sure I shall be delighted to do;—indeed, will go directly, if you wish," I added, rising.

"No, Charlotte," he said, stopping me; "it is easy to see that you are offended. Indeed, I do not care for Fanny, but love only you. You were the paragon whom I was painting, though I christened the picture Fanny."

"Offended! Well, that is amusing. Offended!" I exclaimed, with my blandest smile, though I would have given the world to have had a good cry. "Indeed, I don't know why I should be offended.—Oh, yes! certainly, I'm perfectly convinced you meant the picture for me, only it is very strange, I wasn't aware that I had got auburn tresses, like threads of red gold, before. But there's a young lady not a hundred miles from here that I know has,—perhaps, you would like me to go and call her?"

"Charlotte! Charlotte!" the insinuating storyteller con-

tinued; "you know as well as I do the reason of my deceiving his Lordship, and that it was solely done to secure you to myself—you, whom I prize beyond everything in the world."

"Thank you, Mr. Sertingley," I replied, with a very stiff bow: "I'm sure it's very kind of you, and it says a great deal for your generosity, to set so high a value on a poor creature who is just passable."

"I know your natural good sense will make you think better of this by-and-by, Charlotte," said the complacent Mr. Sertingley, whom there was no putting out of temper. "I may have annoyed you by what I have done, but I'm satisfied that, when you consider it calmly by yourself, you will see that I was only actuated by the best of motives to yourself. And now, come, I have but one request to make. Once for all I assure you, on my honour, I have no more regard for Miss Fanny than that she is the sister of one, whom I love to idolatry; so after this assurance, promise me that you will not be offended by my appearing to be more attentive to Miss Fanny than yourself in the presence of Lord Fortiwinx. Come now, promise me this, like a good sensible girl."

"Oh yes, I'll promise, certainly," I answered, as bitterly as I could. "Pray don't consider me for a moment; so I beg of you not to stand upon any ceremony with me. I can assure you, Mr. Sertingley, it will make no difference to me, and I dare say will not be very disagreeable to her. So, you see, you have my perfect consent."

"Well, Lotty, I shall take you at your word," he had the impudence to say, though anybody might have seen, that I didn't mean what I was saying. "For I am satisfied, that when it is all over, you will be the first to laugh at your foolish jealousy. And now about mine——"

"Yours, sir?" I said, drawing myself up with extreme indignation; "I am not aware that *my* conduct has been in any way open to suspicion."

"No, Lotty; nor will it, I am certain, ever be with *me*," he replied, considerably abashed. "But yours is the very beauty to win his Lordship, and should he become enamoured of you, you'd be lost to me for ever. So give me your word,

dearest, that when he comes, you will do all you can to make yourself as unamiable as you can; and, if possible, so to disguise yourself as to look almost as unattractive as I have painted you to him. Remember, for both our sakes, that I am entirely dependent upon him."

"Oh yes, certainly," I said, with coolness; "I give you my word, Mr. Sertingley, I will, *if possible*."

"There's a good, kind girl," he returned, "and now that I have your assurance, that you will aid me in this my dilemma, let us change the subject, and talk of more pleasant things."

Then he went on chattering a pack of fine things that I didn't pay the least attention to, but only answered "Yes," or "No," or "Dear me, how singular," until at length, seeing that I was rather difficult to please, he left, thanking me for my promised assistance, and reminding me that everything depended upon me.

"Does it?" I said, to myself, as soon as he had left; "then I'll take good care and teach you, Mr. Sertingley, to remember, and let his Lordship see, that Miss de Roos is something more than passable," and I looked at myself in the glass, and flung my ringlets back over my shoulders. "And the beauty of it is, too," I continued, smiling to myself, "that I can see a pretty storm brewing for Mr. Frederick in another quarter." For, of course, I wasn't going to tell him that there was another person in the case, whose permission he ought to ask, before he pretended to pay his addresses to Miss Fanny. And I should be very much mistaken if, when her lover, Mr. Brooke, found the agreeable Mr. Sertingley making believe to be violently attached to his darling Fanny, he didn't make my fine gentleman suffer for his duplicity. And it would only be serving him perfectly right—so it would.

## OFFER THE SIXTH.

I DARE SAY MANY OF MY READERS WILL SAY THIS IS NO OFFER AT ALL, STILL AS I KNOW FOR A POSITIVE FACT THAT LORD FORTIWINX INTENDED TO MAKE ME A PROPOSAL, OF COURSE IT IS BUT RIGHT THAT I SHOULD MENTION HIM AMONG MY OTHER SUITORS. BESIDES, IT IS SOMETHING FOR A LADY TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT SHE HAS NUMBERED NOBLEMEN AMONG HER OTHER ADMIRERS, AND THEREFORE I'M SURE I'M NOT GOING TO OMIT GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF IT HERE.

A NICE scene there was altogether when Lord Fortiwinx did come to town. I was so determined to show his Lordship whether I was merely passable or not, that I let down my back hair and did it all in ringlets, till they covered nearly the whole of my shoulders. Then I put on my pink brocaded silk evening dress, which was very full in the skirt, and fitted me so beautifully, that his Lordship would soon see whether my figure was "neither a good nor a bad one," indeed. And when at last I had finished beautifying myself, I took three large lumps of sugar, moistened in Eau de Cologne, to brighten up my eyes a bit, and so prove to Lord Fortiwinx whether they were the same dull things that Mr. Sertingley had made them out; and all the way down stairs I kept biting my lips, to make them red, and rubbing my cheeks to improve my colour, just to show his Lordship whether my complexion was of that beautiful mingling of the rose and the lily or not, which he so much admired.

When I entered the room, I could see the charming effect I created, not only upon Lord Fortiwinx, but also on Mr. Frederick, who went as white as Irish linen, while his Lordship looked at him as black as bombasin, as much as to say, so this is the young lady that you gave me to understand was a mere ordinary-looking creature; oh! you wicked, good-for-nothing story, you. Bless me, too, if that proud Miss Kate Beauchamp—whom Mamma had asked to meet Lord Fortiwinx, just because she happens to be highly connected—didn't look as cross as two sticks when she saw the dear old nobleman smile so graciously on being introduced to me, and

heard him pay me one of his sweet, pretty, mythological compliments. And there was Mr. Frederick frowning away at me directly his Lordship's back was turned; though, whenever the old gentleman happened to turn round, of course Mr. Sertingley was pretending, I have no doubt he called it, to make himself as agreeable as possible to that Miss Fanny. But it was so beautiful, for I wasn't going to see the wretch, after he had offered to me, making love to my own sister before my very eyes, without taking the least notice of it; so to be even with him, and make him just as jealous as he was making me, I made a dead set at his dear old Lordship, and kept giving him compliment for compliment, and laughing and flirting away with the conceited old thing, in such a way, that Mamma—just after I had finished singing my French "*Roman*" of "*La Fidèle Bergère*"—couldn't help whispering, as I passed by her, "Oh, you pet!" and Mr. Frederick, either out of spite, or because he found Miss Fanny so much more amiable than myself, redoubled his attentions to her. As luck would have it, just as Mr. Sertingley was saying something particularly sweet to that sister of mine, who should march in but Mr. Brooke; and seeing his dearest angel seated on the sofa close to Mr. Frederick, he sat himself down, in a huff, next Miss Beauchamp, and began paying violent court to her. Then, oh dear! wasn't it beautiful! there were the whole six of us, as ill-tempered as railway clerks, and all pretending to be as amiable as servants coming after a place. Lord Fortiwinx, I could see, was as savage as savage could be with Mr. Frederick, for having deceived him in the shameful way he had, and kept flattering me loud enough for him to hear, and so as to let him know that he saw through all his horrid duplicity; while Mr. Frederick, half to make his Lordship fancy that Fanny was the idol of his heart, and half out of spite to me, kept smiling and looking at that young lady in a way that made me feel as if I could have boxed his ears. But the more he went on with that sister of mine, the more I was determined to be even with him, and the more I went on with Lord Fortiwinx,—now asking his opinion on one of the beauties in the last year's "*Flowers of Loveliness*," and as I leant over his shoulder, allowing my ringlets just to brush

against the side of his face,—and now asking him if he understood the language of flowers, and getting him to say a host of fine things to me, in roses, and lilies, and violets, and pansies. And the faster I flirted with his Lordship, the faster Mr. Frederick flirted with Miss Fanny; who, being tremendously put out at observing Mr. Brooke hand-and-glove with Miss Beauchamp, was in such a way, that I could see she was determined to make him suffer for it; and the oftener he kept laughing and whispering with Miss Kate, the oftener she kept laughing and whispering with Mr. Sertingley. All the time, too, Fanny kept frowning at Miss Beauchamp, for daring to engross the whole attention of her darling Mr. Brooke; but the more she looked daggers at Miss Kate, the more did Miss Kate look daggers at her. So that when Mamma came to each of us round the room, and hoped that we were all enjoying ourselves, of course we every one of us declared that “we were never so much amused in all our lives,” and “never passed such a pleasant evening before;” though I’m perfectly satisfied, if the light had gone out, we should all of us have been trying to pinch or tear one another to pieces in the dark.

But the worst of it all was, that I did get so jealous of Mr. Frederick, and consequently so persevering in my attentions to Lord Fortiwinx, that however much he might have been taken with me at first, I declare, he kept getting cooler and cooler, as I kept endeavouring to make myself more and more attractive to him; until at last, I do verily believe that my amiable artifices, and continual compliments upon his youthful appearance, became quite offensive to him; for, if he didn’t get up from his chair, and march right over to the other end of the room. And when I saw this made that Mr. Frederick change his stupid frowns into a nasty spiteful smile at me, I could not sit easy on my chair; so, making an excuse, I jumped up, and sailed across the carpet, with my neck up as straight as a swan’s, right past him and Miss Fanny, into the back drawing-room, after his Lordship. But no sooner was I at his elbow again, than off he tottered to Mamma, and wishing her good night, left the room with a most dignified bow to myself.



This was a general signal for leaving: and I declare, if Mr. Brooke didn't march off arm-in-arm with Miss Kate Beauchamp, without ever noticing Fanny; which was such a blow to her, that directly he had gone, I could see her biting her lips, to prevent the tears starting into her eyes, all the while she was shaking Mr. Sertingley's hand, as she wished him good night, and then away she went to her room to have a good cry.

However, I wasn't going to make quite such a silly of myself as that, so, going over to Mr. Sertingley, I sat myself down by him on the sofa, and said in the most apparently unconcerned way possible—

“I'm delighted to see, Mr. Sertingley, that you have passed such a pleasant evening. Fanny's a charming girl—isn't she? so frank and unaffected in her manner, don't you think so?”

“I perfectly agree with you, Miss de Roos,” he answered, determined not to be beaten. “I was not aware how amiable your sister was until this evening.”

“Oh, I'm so glad to hear you say so,” I replied, throwing up my hands as if in ecstasy; “for she is a dear, good pet, and I'm sure everybody that knows her must love her; don't you think so, Mr. Sertingley?”

“Precisely,—that, I can assure you, I do, Miss de Roos,” he said, in his nasty over-*complaisant* way; “and I am delighted to see that you and Lord Fortiwinx got to be such good friends. Quite a lady's man, is he not?”

“Oh yes! I perfectly agree with you,” I responded, determined to pay my gentleman off in his own coin. “Oh, I do think he is one of the nicest men I ever met with in the whole course of my life—such wit,” I continued, pretending to go into ecstasies, “such elegance, such taste, I don't think I was ever so completely taken with any gentleman at first sight before. I'm sure I shall do nothing but dream of him all night. Don't you think he's very handsome?”

“As for Miss Fanny,” he exclaimed, getting so angry that he wouldn't even answer my question, and determined to make me as savage with him as he was with me, “I can assure you, Miss de Roos, she has so charmed me, that I am certain that I shall do nothing but think of her for months to come,

and always look back upon this evening as the happiest I have ever known Oh! she is a perfect little fairy!"

"Lord Fortiwinx," I ejaculated, lifting up my eyes, "is to me an angel! Any one to be in his company half an hour must, I am sure, adore him; and is it not wonderful how well he carries his years? Really, any one, to look at him, would think he wasn't a day more than thirty. For myself, I should consider it the proudest moment of my life, if I could in any way contribute to his happiness."

This, I could see, by the quivering in the corner of his eye, was almost more than he could bear; and he only answered, "Indeed, I'm delighted to hear you say so. However, as it is growing late, I will not keep you up any longer, Miss de Roos; and perhaps you would be so kind as to tell your charming sister in the morning, that I will call to-morrow with the tickets I spoke of, and that if she and her respected Mamma would honour me so far as to allow me to accompany them, I shall consider myself the most enviable of mortals."

"I will make a point of doing so, Mr. Sertingley," I replied, with extreme civility, "and I'm sure it's very good of you:" though I felt that if he didn't go directly I should burst out crying, and then I should never afterwards forgive myself for my weakness; so I merely added, "and if I should see Mr. Brooke—you know Mr. Brooke, to whom my sister is engaged?—would you like me to tell him what you say as well?"

This made him colour up to his temples; and I was so glad to see I'd got the best of it, and that, if he didn't care for me, at least he did for him.

"Miss de Roos can use her own discretion in that case," was all he answered, and taking a very formal and distant farewell, he stalked out of the room.

"Good night, Mr. Sertingley," I said; and then calling him back, I wound up my victory by asking him, whether if Lord Fortiwinx should call on the morrow, as he had promised me he would,—whether he would like me still to be careful, and not to let his Lordship know how he had behaved to him.

But all the monster answered was—"I'm afraid, Madam, from the marked effect your conduct produced upon his Lord-

ship this evening, he will not keep his appointment, and you will have little chance of seeing him again. However, a written communication will be sure to reach him, and to me it is perfectly indifferent, whether the circumstance is kept secret from him or not."

This, I may say, was almost the conclusion of my love affair with Mr. Sertingley; for when he called the next day, I was so cool and distant to him, that he could easily see from my manner that he had no hopes of conciliating me. So to spite me, the mean thing—knowing my jealousy of his flirtations with Miss Fanny—must needs set to work, paying her all the attention he could, till at last, what with my always treating him with such contempt, and what with Miss Fanny's always being so civil to him, it was quite plain, that he got to hate me worse and worse, and to like that sister of mine better and better every day; so, as it wasn't in my nature to bear this, I took good care, whenever his Lordship called—which, from what occurred afterwards, it was clear he did only to see the same fascinating young lady, and not myself—I was so resolved to make a conquest of him, and so become, if possible, the wife of Mr. Frederick's noble master, instead of the paltry Mr. Frederick himself, that I used every art I could possibly think of to win his favours. But oh dear no, for the more I strove to fascinate that disgusting old Lord Fortiwinx, the more he seemed to dislike me, and the more to admire the simplicity of that milk-and-water sister of mine, who has scarcely a word to say for herself, and is such a downright silly, that it has always been a wonder to me what on earth people do see in the child. It was so horrid, too, and did shock my better feelings so, to see a mere girl, with no less than three suitors, all ready to eat one another for her sake, and she pretending to love her sweet Mr. Brooke better than all, and making believe to blush up to her eyes, whenever the other two whispered their nonsense to her, and yet having the impudence to declare—whenever I felt myself called upon to speak to her on her shameful conduct—that she didn't mean to give either Mr. Sertingley or Lord Fortiwinx any encouragement.

However, if she didn't mean to do so, at least it was evi-

dent that his Lordship thought otherwise. For, of course, the conceited thing believed that his attentions were far from being disagreeable, and one fine morning—for it all came out so nicely afterwards—what does the double-faced old thing do but call in his obsequious secretary, and make believe to play the generous, in allowing Mr. Sertingley to marry me—marry me, indeed, as if *I* had nothing at all to do with it!

“My dear Frederick, I wish to have some very serious conversation with you,” said the polite old hypocrite. “I have been thinking over your proposed connexion with the family of the De Roos’s, and do you know, I fancy it would be much better to let you follow your own views, and to allow you to marry the eldest daughter, as you first requested my permission to do.”

“Your Lordship is very good, I’m sure,” replied Mr. Frederick, nicely caught in his own net; “and, strange to say, I was about to take the liberty of speaking to your Lordship on the same subject, and to inform you, that upon weighing well over all you had said to me on the matter at our first interview, I felt there was so much truth in your observations, that I at once determined not to be influenced in my choice by any pecuniary considerations, and made up my mind to pay my addresses to the beauteous Miss Fanny, as you so generously advised me to do.”

“Then you will please to make up your mind to nothing of the sort, Mr. Sertingley,” answered his Lordship, taken aback with Frederick’s excuse. “You should remember, sir, that you are not in a situation to follow your inclinations in any matrimonial alliance, and that it behoves a man of your circumstances to be regulated in the choice of a wife as much by the property as by the beauty the lady may possess.”

“Yes, my Lord, I perfectly coincide with the truth of your remark,” returned the agreeable Mr. Sertingley; “but as your Lordship was generous enough to say that you would make up to me any difference there might be in the expectations of the two young ladies, I decided upon paying my addresses to the one who appeared to have the greater personal attractions.”

“When I gave that permission, sir,” replied his Lordship, “it was because I suspected that it was because you had been smitten with the very young lady, whose charms I had deputed you to judge of for me. But now, as I see that those suspicions were unfounded, and as I perfectly agree with you that Miss Charlotte de Roos is not exactly the person to make me happy, why, I’ve made up my mind to let you have her, as you at first wished.”

“Really, my lord,” said Mr. Sertingley, bowing, and rubbing his hands, “though there is no denying what you say, and you are extremely good, I’m sure, still, the fact is, I have so thoroughly carried out your Lordship’s commands with respect to Miss Fanny de Roos, that I feel myself, in a measure, compromised, for I am inclined to believe that my attentions have not been altogether disagreeable to that young lady.”

“Well, then, if that’s the only objection you have to the matter,” replied his Lordship, “you needn’t alarm yourself about that, for I don’t think that the girl cares two pins about you; for, if I’m not very much mistaken,” he added, with a nasty, conceited smile, that showed he was talking of himself, “she likes another.”

“Perfectly correct, your Lordship,” answered Mr. Sertingley, of course fancying that Lord Fortiwinx was referring to Mr. Brooke. “I have been given to understand that such was the case; but knowing, as I do, the wide difference there was between the station of the young lady and the party to whom your Lordship alludes, I felt thoroughly convinced that Miss Fanny would never make such a sacrifice of her charms as that.”

“Did you, sir!” returned his Lordship, taking Mr. Sertingley’s remark to himself, and rising with passion; “then you will please to keep your convictions on that subject to yourself, for the future, and make up your mind to marry Miss Charlotte, as you at first proposed; for this chopping and changing seems very disgusting to me!”

“But, your Lordship,” expostulated Mr. Sertingley; “it was at your own desire that I changed, and really my affections are now so entirely fixed upon Miss Fanny, that I hope and trust you will have some regard for my feelings!”

“Nonsense! Don’t talk to me about your feelings and affections, sir,” returned his Lordship, with disgust. “If you could transfer them at my bidding once, why you could do so again, without much inconvenience to yourself, I’m sure. So, henceforth, let me hear no more of this, I beg of you!”

On the night of the very same day, just as I was brushing out my back hair previous to going to bed, who should walk into my room, but Miss Fanny herself, saying that she had got something to communicate, which she didn’t think right to keep from me.

“Oh, dear me,” I said, “how moral we are getting all of a sudden—and what is it, pray?”

And, then, if she didn’t tell me that that bad, bad man, Mr. Sertingley, had come to her, while she was walking alone in the enclosure, and having told her all that had occurred that morning between himself and Lord Fortiwinx, requested to know whether she really did love another, as his Lordship had intimated, and that she had informed him, that she had long been engaged to Mr. Brooke, and at the same time asked, Mr. Sertingley, very severely, how that could in any way concern him, as she had heard that he had proposed to me——”

“Oh! that’s it, is it?” I said, putting my brush down, and looking my lady full in the face, as soon as she had finished her fine story, of which I didn’t believe a single word: “so you have managed at last to entrap my lover into a declaration, have you?”

“Entrapped, Charlotte!” exclaimed Miss Fanny, with a grand show of injured innocence; “this is very ungenerous of you. I am sure I never gave Mr. Sertingley the least encouragement.”

“Of course not,” I replied, setting to work quite coolly at my hair again. “Of course, gentlemen are always in the habit of making proposals to ladies, without having received the least encouragement. Oh yes! of course.—But, I’ll tell you what it is, Miss—you’re a wicked, bad child, and I’ve had my eye upon you, for a long time, and have noticed your coquetting in the shameful and disgusting way you have, not only with Mr. Sertingley, but with that Lord Fortiwinx,

who is old enough to be your grandfather—as you know he is—and all the time leading on that poor Mr. Brooke, by making him believe that you were desperately attached to him. Oh, you wicked—wicked thing, you——”

“Oh, Charlotte! how can you say such shocking things,” replied my beauty: “why, what on earth do you think I should want with either Lord Fortiwinx or Mr. Sertingley?”

“Want! why you wanted to pick and choose the best out of the three, like a nasty scheming girl, as you are,” I answered, almost losing my temper. “Look at the other evening, Miss, how you went on with Mr. Sertingley, when you fancied he was taken with you, and quite discarded Mr. Brooke; and I saw you again the other day, though you little thought it, turning your back upon Mr. Sertingley directly Lord Fortiwinx paid you the least attention.—But of course you meant nothing by it,—of course you didn’t want to captivate a Lord, or to take my lover away from me—oh, dear, no!”

“Now, Charlotte! Charlotte!” she answered, laying her nasty deceitful hand on my shoulder; “only do think for a moment, now; why should I want to take your lover away from you, when I’m engaged to one of my own?”

“Why? why because it would tickle your trumpery vanity, to think that you had it in your power to do so. But I’ll take care and be even with you, my Lady; and you shall see, Miss, if I don’t let Mr. Brooke know every one of your shameful tricks, and if I don’t make him turn his back upon you, my name’s not Charlotte.”

“No, Charlotte, I know you won’t do anything of the kind,” she replied.

“I will—I will,” I cried, with passion, striking the table with my hand. “I will, you may depend upon it; and if I can’t do it by fair means, I’ll do it by foul—only do it, I will—I’ll teach you, Miss, to dare to take my lover away from me.”

This had just the effect I wanted upon my lady, for she burst out crying, and declared, upon her honour, that I wronged her, and that so far from her having done anything to catch Mr. Sertingley, on the contrary, she had that very

morning scolded him well, for having dared to come and talk love to her, after he had been accepted by me.

But I told her that I didn't and wouldn't believe a syllable of her grand protestations, and to leave my room, for I didn't want to exchange another word with such a character as she was; and off my lady went; and I could hear her through the partition which separated her bed-room from mine, sobbing away so nicely, and muttering some grand stuff to herself, and making up her mind to do something or other in the morning. This put me all agog, so that I put my ear close to the wall, and listened as hard as I could, and then if I didn't hear the brazen thing declare that she would be off to Lord Fortiwinx in the morning, and throw herself upon his protection, for he had always been very kind to her; and whatever he might think of it, still, anything was better than remaining at home to have those things said of her; and if they ever came to Mr. Brooke's ears, she should never dare to look at him again.

I thought little of this at the time, of course, believing that it was merely the effects of the child's passion, and that when Fanny had slept upon it, she would be as meek as a lamb, and come begging and praying of me to forgive her in the morning. However, when we were all at breakfast, Fanny was so long before making her appearance, that Papa sent me up to her room to see after her.

When I got to her room, she was nowhere to be found; and on inquiring among the servants about her, I learnt from Susan, our under-housemaid, that she had seen her go out about an hour before Mamma came down to breakfast. Then, recollecting all I had heard her over-night threaten to do, I began to fear that she had put her rash resolves into execution; and, indeed, when I went back into the parlour again, I was in such a dreadful state, that Papa, seeing from my manner that something dreadful had happened, would make me tell him all about it. When I had finished, although he was as pale as death, he said there could be no truth in it. But when Mamma asked me whether I had ever noticed anything strange between Fanny and Lord Fortiwinx, and I told her that I was sorry to say that I felt it to be my duty to



speak to her very severely on the subject, and that this was one of the chief causes of our quarrel over-night, Papa exclaimed, with great anger, "Why didn't you speak to me, child? But there is no time to be lost: I will go straight to his Lordship; and even if we are wrong in our suspicions, as I hope to God we are! at least, it will have the effect of putting an end to all further acquaintance in that quarter."

I never saw Mamma in such a passion as she was; and she did say such things of Fanny, who, at the best, was no great favourite of hers, that Papa was actually obliged to tell her to remember that I was present, and that he was sorry that she was the first person to think her own daughter guilty, even before there was any proof of her criminality.

But Mamma would have it, that what I had said was proof enough for any person in their proper senses; and that, if it only turned out as she expected, instead of only disgracing her in my presence, she would disgrace her to the whole world, she would. What was more, she would go on after Papa, and take me with her; for he was always so stupid and indulgent with the girl, that she verily believed, that even if the facts were as plain as the sun at noon-day, he'd make out the girl was innocent; and though Papa told her that it was not a case fit for her, much less me, to appear in; still, she said that if it was too disgraceful a business for the girl's own mother to appear in it, she should like to know who could; and what was more, appear in it she would; for if he didn't choose to take her with him in the carriage, she would have a cab, and follow after him as quick as she could. Papa said, he should trust to her good sense not to do anything of the kind; and leaving word with the servant, that if Mr. Brooke, whom he expected on business, called, he should be asked in, and requested to wait until he returned, which would not be long, he jumped into the carriage and drove off.

No sooner had Mamma heard the door shut than she told me to come up stairs with her, and put on my things, for follow after she would, notwithstanding all the fine things my father chose to say.

In the meantime, Fanny, who had been much hurt at my suspicions of her overnight, had got up early, on purpose to go

over to Lord Fortiwinx, and request him to protect her from any further annoyance from his secretary, and to let him know how shamefully Sertingley had treated me. When she reached his Lordship's town residence, she learnt that he was not yet up; but, on sending in her card, and saying that her business was very urgent, his Lordship returned word that he would see her directly, if she would step into the drawing-room, and take a chair for a few minutes.

When Lord Fortiwinx entered the room, it was clear that he was wondering to himself what on earth could have brought Fanny to him; and after apologizing for having kept *her* waiting, whom he always felt proud to be allowed to wait upon, asked her to inform him in what way it was his good fortune to be able to serve her.

"I am almost afraid to tell you, even now I am with you, what brought me here," replied Fanny, blushing, and pretending to be busily occupied in buttoning her glove, "for you might think me wanting in delicacy for speaking on such a subject to you."

"Then, pray, favour me so far as to banish all such idle fears, sweet lady," said the old beau, drawing his chair close to hers, and taking her hand; "for rest assured, that I could never picture Miss Fanny de Roos as anything but the lovely incarnation of purity itself."

"I'm sure you are very kind, my lord," replied Fanny, trembling; "but the fact is, that I have come to implore that you would shield me from any further attention from Mr. Sertingley; in fact, his addresses have been the cause of dissensions between my sister and myself at home."

"What! has Mr. Sertingley been annoying you, beauteous lady?" replied his Lordship, who actually began to fancy that Fanny had come to declare her love for him, "why, it was only yesterday the scoundrel told me he had reasons to believe that his attentions were far from being disagreeable to you."

"And it was only yesterday, my lord," continued Fanny, indignantly, "that I gave him to understand just the very contrary; and, indeed, I even went so far as to confess to him—that—that—to be candid—my heart was already devoted to another."

Lord Fortiwinx, who, of course, considered this other to be no less a person than himself, indulged in his most self-satisfied smile, and said, with a squeeze of the hand, "Ah! my dear young lady, it is then as I thought, and the thrice happy fowler has caged the little dove at last;" then looking in her face, the old thing said slyly, "So, then, sweet innocent, there is one whose darts have struck the pretty target of your heart—and do I not know the fortunate archer?"

"Doubtless your Lordship is able to guess whom I mean," said Fanny, blushing again deeper than before, and of course fancying that the old wretch was referring to Mr. Brooke; "though I fear you will think me bold in revealing as much to you; but I knew that my affection could not be a secret to you, for when the heart is full, my lord, the eyes will speak."

"They will, sweet charmer; and the eloquence of yours has not been lost upon me," returned the polite Methusaleh; "each tell-tale glance has babbled of the love the lips feared openly to confess."

"If I had not thought that your lordship had some suspicions of my affection," continued Fanny, still all of a tremble, "I should never have dared to beg of you to protect me from the persecutions of Mr. Sertingley. I knew that I could speak to you as to a father."

"Ay! or by any tenderer tie, my sweetest," replied his Lordship, not over-pleased by the reference to his age. "You may rest assured that I will relieve you from all annoyance from that quarter."

"You cannot tell, my lord," answered Fanny, "what a weight you have taken from my mind; for, to tell you the truth, I have been accused—you can now understand how unjustly—of encouraging his addresses, when I knew that he was the accepted suitor of my sister."

"Indeed, you surprise me," replied his Lordship, with unfeigned emotion for once. "I was not aware of that little fact, and I promise you that it shall not pass unnoticed by me."

"And knowing this, my lord," continued Fanny, "you can judge how hateful the gentleman's advances must be to

me; and how, situated as I am, I each day dreaded lest a similar misconstruction of my conduct in another, might have the effect of separating me from one whom I would sooner die than displease."

"Kind-hearted little angel," exclaimed his Lordship. "It delights me to ecstasy to hear you say as much; though, for myself, you need never have dreaded that I should ever have been capable of judging so hastily of your innocent and ingenuous nature."

"I knew you would not, your Lordship," replied Fanny, "or else I should never have dared to come here as I have, unknown even to my parents; but the high sense I had of your honour convinced me that I might safely unburthen my feelings to you."

"Believe me, dear creature," returned his Lordship, who was growing more and more impassioned, "I am highly flattered by the generous confidence you have reposed in me," and then raising her hand, and kissing her glove, he added, "Let this chaste salute convince you that I am not unmindful of the compliment you have paid me."

Fanny, who all this time had been taking all his flattering speeches as the mere outpourings of his gallantry, no sooner felt him kiss her hand, than she grew alarmed at her situation, and rising from her chair, told him that unless she departed directly, she would be missed at home; and again thanking him for his kindness, tried to draw her hand from his. But the aged beau held it so firmly, as he kept squeezing it, and looking in her face, that she grew quite frightened at his manner, but the feeling of fear changed suddenly into one of irrepressible laughter. It seems that Lord Fortiwinx, amongst his other eccentricities, kept in his room a hideous old blue parrot. This ugly bird was in the habit of perching on his Lordship's shoulder, and on the back of his chair, and his Lordship occasionally, when he was very affectionate, used to turn round and scratch its head and play with its beak, and indulge in other endearments lavished on domestic pets in general, and parrots in particular. This old sky-blue parrot, at the moment of Fanny's visit, was perched on the top of the high-backed chair in which his Lordship was sitting. The

old beau had thrown his head slightly back, as he held Fanny's hand, and drew her towards him to prevent her going. The parrot had advanced his beak also, and wishing to exchange morning caresses with his master, had buried it among the beautiful, flowing, oily, black locks of his Lordship's hair. The head of the noble house of Fortiwinx, not liking this rather too penetrating style of endearment, lowered himself a little in his chair to escape the power of the beak, and the consequence was—ha, ha, ha! I cannot help laughing myself, it is so very absurd,—the consequence was, that he drew it right out of his wig; and, lo! there it was, suspended above him in the parrot's beak. Fanny, alarmed as she was, could not restrain herself from tittering actually in his Lordship's face; for his big bald head, which was as smooth and as shining, and had no more hair on it than a billiard ball, was so ridiculous, she said, that a Quaker even would have gone into convulsions at the sight of it. His Lordship, however, recovered his *perruque* and his self-possession in a moment, and fixing his raven locks and his features at the same time—for they had both been rather disarranged by this sudden parting between his head and his hair,—he proceeded, in the most hurried tones, to persuade Fanny to tarry with him a little longer. He put his arm round her waist, and, the poor trembling girl, frightened out of her very life, forgot in a moment the above ridiculous incident, and was ready to cry and scream with fear. Fortiwinx pressed and persuaded with increasing warmth, and Fanny was uselessly struggling to extricate herself from his embrace, when a loud double knock at the door startled them both, and his Lordship, letting go his hold, hurried to the window to see who was the unwelcome visitor.

“It is your father's carriage, by all that's unlucky!” he exclaimed, lifting the blind slightly on one side.

“My father's carriage!” shrieked Fanny, falling on her knees, “oh, my lord, my lord! do not let him find me here alone with you. Where—where—oh! where shall I go to hide myself from him? He has come to seek me; I know he has! and if he sees me I am ruined, ruined, ruined!” and she burst into a flood of tears.

“This way,” ejaculated his Lordship; “if you will only be

quick, there will be no cause for alarm, my dear lady. There, make haste through this door into the back drawing-room; there, quick, quick, for God's sake be quick! they are coming up stairs! And when you hear your father enter this apartment, you can leave by the door you see yonder, which opens on to the stairs, and leave the house without fear."

Scarcely had the old beau time to take up a book, and throw himself into an attitude and an easy chair, before the servant stepped in and announced "Doctor de Roos," who was following close at his heels. Papa closed the door himself, and then, turning to Lord Fortiwinx, in a sharp determined tone said,

"Lord Fortiwinx, I have been given to understand that my daughter Fanny is at this very moment under your roof—as a gentleman,—is it the truth?"

Lord Fortiwinx, putting down his book, and raising his pencilled eyebrows, feigned the greatest surprise. "Your daughter, Miss Fanny, under my roof, my dear sir?"

"Will your Lordship be kind enough to favour me with a direct answer to my question?" continued Papa, as firmly and sharply as before.

"Really, my dear Doctor de Roos," answered the old gallant, endeavouring to evade the question until he heard the back drawing-room door close, "I do not understand you."

"My words were intelligible enough for any one to comprehend, but those who had some reason for not doing so," replied Papa, beginning, from his Lordship's manner, to fancy that his suspicions were too well founded; "I ask you again, my lord, as a man of honour, is my child in this house? and I expect from you, as a gentleman, a positive and immediate answer."

Lord Fortiwinx, who supposed that by this time Fanny must have left, replied, with an assumed air of injured innocence, "As a man of honour, then, sir, your daughter is not in this house; and really, this is such extraordinary conduct that I can only say, that having given you this assurance, I shall answer no more questions from you on the subject."

"If I am wrong," replied Papa, almost abashed, "I feel convinced that Lord Fortiwinx is gentleman enough to make some little allowance for my feelings in this trying position."



*Lord Fortiwinia in an awkward situation.*





“ Say no more, my dear sir,” replied the old thing, bowing. “ But I trust nothing unpleasant has occurred? you surely do not suspect anything between the young lady and my secretary?”

“ Your Lordship must pardon my giving you any explanation as to the cause of my visit here,” answered Papa, “ further than saying that I came to seek one whose character is dearer to me than life.”

“ Oh, heaven forbid that I should wish you to disclose any family secret!” answered his Lordship, with extreme politeness. “ However, my dear sir, if I can in any way aid you in this unpleasant business, I shall only be most happy to do your bidding.”

“ Thank you, my lord; and, since you are so kind, I will accept your offer,” said Papa, glancing at the folding doors, though from his manner it was plain, that after his Lordship’s assurance, he wanted the heart to express any further doubts; “ and if you can pardon my still entertaining any further suspicions, there is one way in which you can satisfy my mind at once.”

“ Well, sir, and what may that be?” replied his cunning Lordship, taking care not to promise a compliance with the request, until he had heard what it was.

“ To look into that room, my lord,” returned Papa, glancing at the door through which Fanny had entered the adjoining room, and where he fancied she might still be secreted.

There was a twitch in the corner of his Lordship’s lip, that even he—master as he was over the muscles of his face—could not subdue, and that told he feared—from his not having heard the door close, though he had been all the while anxiously listening for it—that Fanny hadn’t yet had the courage to leave it—“ Really, Doctor de Roos,” he stammered out, with an air of feigned insult, “ perhaps it would be more satisfactory to yourself if you searched the whole house; allow me to ring the bell for my housekeeper, to show you through the different apartments.”

“ No, I thank you, my lord,” replied Papa, taking him at his word; “ but since you are so good as to give me your permission, I will content myself with an insight of this room.”

And so saying he advanced towards it, while his Lordship seated himself in his chair, and awaited the issue of the examination with no little trepidation.

In a minute Papa returned; and as he re-entered the apartment, he said, with a bow, "My lord, I have to apologize to you sincerely for my unjust suspicions of you; I am now thoroughly satisfied that I have wronged you, and wronged you deeply, and am too happy to make you this slight atonement for this outrage on your privacy, and to ask your pardon for any offence I may have given."

"I will frankly confess that you have wounded me, Doctor de Roos, and wounded me very keenly too," rejoined the beau, delighted at Fanny's escape, and yet wishing to appear seriously hurt at Papa's conduct; "but the noble way in which you have acknowledged your error has made ample amends for the injury, and in token of my forgiveness, I tender you this hand."

Papa was advancing to take it, when Mamma and I rushed into the room, dragging the abashed Fanny in between us, whom we had discovered stealing from the house, while we were waiting in a cab at the door, and debating whether, after what Papa had said, we should venture up stairs or not.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Papa, fancying we had come from home with Fanny, to put an end to his doubts, "then my child returned shortly after I left home?"

"Returned, indeed!" said Mamma, boiling over with passion. "I found this young lady creeping, like a guilty creature as she is, from the door of his Lordship's house here."

Papa positively looked awful, as, scarlet in the face with indignation, he turned round to Lord Fortiwinx, and knitting his brows, while he drew himself up, he looked at the old beau—who seemed to have lost all his self possession—full in face, and said, "There are two terms, Lord Fortiwinx, that I can apply to you, and they are—villain and liar!" and then pushing Mamma from the room before she had time to say another word, he seized Fanny, just as she was about to faint, in his arms, and rushing down stairs, jumped with her into the carriage, leaving us to follow him in the cab as quickly as we could.

When we reached home, we found Papa in the library with Fanny, bending and weeping over her, and begging of her to tell him all; while she, pale and motionless as a statue, sat half stupified in her chair, only occasionally muttering to herself, "The God above me knows I am innocent!"

Mamma, though half frightened at Fanny's ghastly appearance, ran up to her, and shaking her head in her face, said, "Oh, you deceitful, good-for-nothing, bad child! and so this is the end that your pretended simplicity has led to, is it? But you shall not live under the same roof with me; go where you will, it's no matter to me now,—only I'll take care you shall not stay in this house, to contaminate your poor dear, good sister here, with your wicked ways!"

"Leave her to me," said Papa, interfering; "this is not the way to rouse the poor girl to a sense of her conduct. If she be guilty, severity will only harden her; whereas kindness and proper care may yet save her from the doom that you, woman like, would only hurry her to."

"Kindness, indeed!" cried Mamma, more angry than ever; "she shall have no kindness from me, I can promise her; and all I can tell you, sir, is, that either she or I leave this house, — I'm not going to harbour any such creatures here!"

"And so, in your horror of her acts," he replied, meekly, yet sternly, "you would cast her from you, and force her to even greater imprudence still. The good can help themselves, but it is the erring daughter that most needs the mother's guidance; and yet that mother would be the first to fling the poor frail thing from her to infamy, when, by her counsel and care, she might yet be won back to virtue and happiness. Madam, I blush for you!"

"Oh, yes, certainly," replied Mamma, somewhat calmed, "I agree with you,—she has done perfectly right, and ought to be rewarded, instead of punished for her wickedness. But Mr. Brooke is in the next room, and we'll see what his opinion is of the young lady's conduct!"—and she rushed out of the room; while Fanny, who seemed brought back to life by the mention of his name, exclaimed, "Do with me as you please, but, for Heaven's sake, spare me *that!*"

When Mamma returned with Mr. Brooke, she told him all that had occurred, notwithstanding Papa's continuous attempts to interrupt her; and when she had finished, she asked Mr. Brooke what he thought of Miss Fanny.

"Really, Mrs. De Roos, this is so much a family matter, that you must excuse my declining to offer any opinion on the subject," replied Mr. Brooke, apparently much hurt at poor Fanny's awful appearance, as she sat there with her hands before her face.

"Of course," continued Mamma, "you'll give her up, as she deserves?—come, I am glad to find that you, at least, don't think it worth your while to trouble your head any further about her."

"Pardon me, Madam," he answered, as if disgusted with Mamma, "I meant to imply nothing of the kind. After I have heard from the young lady herself some explanation of the affair, I shall be better able to offer you my opinion."

Fanny no sooner heard this than, as if suddenly awakened, she dropt her hands, and bursting into tears, sobbed out—"Bless you, Alfred!—bless you!" while Papa, taking him by the hand, said, with a tear in the corner of his eye, "I thank you much, Mr. Brooke, for your consideration in this awkward, though, I hope, harmless business."

Here we were all much alarmed by a loud and continuous knocking at the door, and, directly afterwards, the manservant handed in the cards of Lord Fortiwinx and Mr. Sertingley, who were in the dining-room, and wished to speak with Doctor de Roos directly.

Mamma beckoned me to follow, and we all entered.

"I do an act of justice to your daughter, Dr. de Roos," began Lord Fortiwinx. "I come here at the risk of any further insult you may please to cast at me."

"Yes, my Lord," answered Papa; "pray proceed. "You have come here to do an act of justice to my child?"

"I have, Sir," continued his Lordship; "for on talking with Mr. Sertingley, I find that what I foolishly fancied to have been a declaration of love from Miss Fanny, and which I—imagining to have been the cause of her visit this morning—felt some hesitation in confessing that visit to you,—I

say, I find, from some conversation I have had with Mr. Sertingley, that her visit had reference to Mr. Brooke, rather than myself."

"But still, my lord, the real cause of that visit remains to be explained," said Papa.

"That, she gave me to understand," his Lordship continued, arose from a desire to be freed from the addresses of Mr. Sertingley, who, it appears, had proposed and been accepted by her sister, Miss Charlotte!"

Papa smiled with delight, and looked at Mamma, as much as to say, "You see how you have wronged poor Fanny," while I sat, all impatience to hear how Mr. Sertingley would explain away his dishonourable conduct to myself.

"I am much obliged to you, Lord Fortiwinx," said Papa, "for this generous confession; and I can only regret, that in the heat of our mutual error, I should have applied to you terms which I now blush for, and hope you will allow me to retract."

Lord Fortiwinx bowed his acceptance of the apology.

Then Papa, turning to Mr. Sertingley, said—"If, Sir, you were the accepted suitor of my daughter—though the fact is new to me—how came you, may I ask, to transfer the affection you had plighted from one to the other?"

"I feel, Dr. de Roos," answered the extremely polite gentleman, much "embarrassed at having to answer your question in the presence of the lady herself, and you must pardon me for any harsh truths I may feel it necessary, for my exculpation, to use before her. That I loved her at one time, my acts were the best proof, for it was for her sake that I risked the favour of his Lordship. But when, on confessing to her how I had deceived my lord—because I knew, that from the account he had received from Mrs. de Roos, he was anxious to gain the love of the lady herself—I found her manner change entirely towards me; and, moreover, when I noticed how, on her first introduction to Lord Fortiwinx, she used, before my very eyes, every artifice she could to ensnare and fascinate the noble prize, I must confess I felt my feelings change immediately towards her. And further, when I contrasted her scheming tricks with the beautiful simplicity and

artlessness of her sister Fanny, was it to be wondered at that I should feel as great a growing detestation for the one as I did love for the other?"

I could contain myself no longer, and was about to tell Papa how Mr. Sertingley had flirted with Fanny on the evening referred to, when Papa, observing me about to speak, motioned me to be silent, saying that he would hear my explanation by-and-by. Then turning to Mr. Sertingley, he said, "And did Miss Fanny, may I ask, give any encouragement to your addresses."

"I must do that young lady the justice to say, that I am now convinced that she never did. I certainly at one time did construe her affability into a dawning of affection; but when I questioned her on the subject, she told me that she was wedded, heart and soul, to Mr. Brooke; adding, I must confess, in truth to the young lady, that even if she were not, she never could think of countenancing the inconstancy of the accepted suitor of her sister."

"And in consequence of this," interrupted Lord Fortinwx, "it seems the young lady came to me this morning; and, perhaps, it may be a lesson to Miss Charlotte for the future, and somewhat of a corroboration to Mr. Sertingley's account of his conduct, if you will allow me also to inform you, that, fascinated with the description report had given me of the charms of your eldest daughter, I came to town wholly and solely to make honourable proposals to her, if I found her disposition was equally admirable. But I regret to say, that where I expected modesty, I found heartless coquetry; where I hoped to meet with coy simplicity, I found only dishonourable trickery. A lady courting where she should be courted, and seeking to win rather than waiting to be won; and, moreover, scheming, where scheming is most loathsome of all; and seeking to ensnare a husband by her arts, rather than win one by her virtue. Need I tell you, that all this produced such a revulsion in me, that I, too, could not help comparing her with her sister, and admiring Miss Fanny for the very qualities in which I found Miss Charlotte deficient. Before quitting, Dr. De Roos, it may afford you some satisfaction to learn that the young lady,

whose honour you so unjustly suspected this morning, came to me at the risk of her own reputation to befriend her sister, by begging of me to induce Mr. Sertingley either to carry out his proposal to her sister, or else to discontinue his addresses to her, as they were the cause of much uneasiness to Miss Charlotte."

Then both Lord Fortiwinx and Mr. Sertingley rose, and having bowed very formally to us all, took their departure.

Papa went into the study, and, bursting into tears, threw himself upon Fanny's neck, asking her pardon for his dreadful suspicions of her, and calling her "his own dear injured girl;" and taking Mr. Brooke by the hand, "I am happy to inform you, my dear Sir, that so far from her not being worthy of you, indeed there is not the man living who is worthy of her."

Then taking my hand, he led me up stairs alone with him into the drawing-room.

"Charlotte," he said, gently, yet sternly, as he always did, "can you imagine what have been my feelings this day, to find one of my children so noble, and the other so base, both in the same breath? How can you expect to be happy when you find that your conduct wins only indignation, though affection be the stake you play for? How much longer will you require to live in the world before you find out that this very admiration you hunt after from day to day, as you do, is so slippery a prize, that in your struggle to gain it, you are sure to over-reach yourself, and falling backwards, meet only with contempt instead?"

I endeavoured to explain to Papa how Mr. Sertingley's conduct with Fanny had excited my jealousy, and that this had been the sole cause of my behaviour to Lord Fortiwinx.

Of course, he would have it that this in no way justified my conduct. If I had thought Mr. Sertingley untrue to me, I should have known that he was unworthy of me; and not, because he was dishonourable, have stooped to follow him, especially when such dishonourable acts were tenfold more base in a woman, who, in casting off her truth and constancy, casts off her woman's nature also.

“But I am sure, Papa,” I argued, “I meant nothing of the kind by it. I was piqued at Mr. Sertringley’s flirtation with Fanny, and only wanted to make him believe that I was taken with Lord Fortiwinx, just to make him as jealous as he had made me.”

“And so to purchase this slight revenge,” he answered, “you wouldn’t hesitate to give, as the price for it, your own modesty. And see what a beggar it has left you. Here you have had an old man—yes, old enough to be your father’s father—so indignant at your wanton artifices, that even he, to your very face, tells you that, finding himself courted before he had even begun to court, he turned from you with disgust, loathing the very woman he had wished to love! Isn’t this the very end I prophesied awaited you? And what was the security you offered me, that it should not be so? Did you not tell me to believe in your honour—believe in your virtue? Indeed, my poor, poor child, if you do not hoard up well what little of the treasure you may still possess, you will soon be bankrupt in both.”

“Father! father! do not say so!” I said, hiding my face.

“Indeed, Charlotte, I would that I could say otherwise. But there is a storm hanging over you, and if it only burst on your wretched head, God help you, my poor one”!



## OFFER THE SEVENTH.

THIS WAS AS LUCKY AN ESCAPE AS A POOR CONFIDING GIRL EVER HAD. IF I HAD ONLY MARRIED THE HANDSOME DECEITFUL MONSTER, I DO VERILY BELIEVE I SHOULD HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO THE DISGRACEFUL STATE OF HAVING TO DARN MY OWN CLOTHES, OR, WHAT IS MUCH WORSE, HAVING TO NURSE AND TAKE CARE OF MY OWN CHILDREN. BUT, THANK GOODNESS, I FOUND OUT WHAT A MERE BEGGAR MY GRAND GENTLEMAN OF PROPERTY AND LANDED ESTATES WAS, BEFORE I FELL A VICTIM TO HIS FINE SPEECHES, AND WICKED GOOD-FOR-NOTHING STORIES. THOUGH I DO LIKE TO HAVE A KIND WORD FOR EVERYBODY, STILL I MUST SAY, THAT MY THEN FUTURE HUSBAND,—WHO UP TO THE ELEVENTH HOUR I THOUGHT AN ANGEL DROPPED FROM THE SKIES, AND WELL ENOUGH TO DO IN THIS WICKED WORLD,—WAS THE BASEST AND VILEST OF DOUBLE-FACED MONSTERS, AND, TO CROWN IT ALL, WITHOUT A PENNY TO BLESS HIMSELF WITH.

AFTER Papa had done lecturing me, I ran up stairs to my own room, and locking the door, sat down before my looking-glass, and had a good cry, till my eyes were as red and swollen and puffy as tomatos, and I then made a vow that I would go on differently for the future. “Oh,” I said to myself, as I bathed my poor eyelids, for they made me look a perfect fright, “Oh, I wish to goodness gracious I had been blessed with an ugly face, and then I should have been sure to have been a pattern of virtue, and people would have said, what a dear good plain young woman I was, and all would agree what an excellent wife I should make, if any gentleman could but bring himself to take a fancy to me. Then, of course, I should have been one of those sweet frights, whom to know was to love, but whose looks are unfortunately so much against them, that nobody will take the trouble to *know* them.”

So I went on convincing myself—while I was pearl-powdering my face—how happy I should have been if I had only had the good fortune to have been born positively bad-looking. Upon my word, I got to such a state of disgust with myself, that actually whilst I was improving the arch of my eyebrows with my tweezers, I was wicked enough to wish that bountiful Providence had only vouchsafed unto me a cast in the eye; and instead of cursing me with a classic Grecian nose, that could only lead me into evil, had blessed me with a highly moral snub, that would have pointed the way to Heaven. But when I, in the impulse of the moment, put my finger to the end of my Grecian, and lifted it into the wished-for snub, and squinted at myself in the glass, O-o-o-oh! dear! dear! dear me! what a horrid, repulsive, pure-minded thing I did look. But it certainly had the effect of teaching me to be more resigned to my personal attractions, for I felt satisfied that it had all been done for the best.

But it was quite useless my vowing a pack of vows, and promising myself to be such an innocent angel for the future; for, of course, just as I had made up my mind to be as prim as a Quakeress, Papa and Mamma must needs go settling the day for Fanny's wedding with her trumpery Mr. Brooke. This was more than my flesh and blood could bear; for the idea of my younger sister getting married before me, did put me in such a way, that I determined to wear my back hair in ringlets again, and strain every nerve to get the start of my lady, even if I had to give a long flourishing account of myself in the *Sunday Times*, and ask some of its readers to have me. But this I knew, that if my fine stuck-up Miss Fanny was in such a hurry to get "settled," that she must needs go and get married before her elder sister, she was quite mistaken in me if she for one moment fancied that I was going to be present at the wedding, or even at the breakfast. No! that I wasn't, even though I was obliged to be suddenly seized with the influenza—I wasn't.

At last, one day, a beautiful idea struck me. I was turning over the leaves of our volume of the *Byron Beauties*, when that silly Mamma would have it that I was the very

image of that beautiful Haidée. And upon my word, when I looked at the picture again, I did see some little resemblance, and couldn't help allowing that Haidée had got my eyes, though, as I said at the time, her mouth would have made two of mine. Just to return the compliment, I told Mamma that if it wasn't for her Roman nose, she would be the very image of the Maid of Athens; and I declare if she didn't simper away as if she thought I meant it, and five minutes afterwards said, "That if ever it pleased Providence to send her an invitation to a fancy dress ball, she should make a point of going in that character." No sooner had she said the words, than I told her that it would be very nice and quite *distingué*, if we made our next evening party a fancy dress one; and at last I said so many fine things to her, that she perfectly agreed with me, adding, "she didn't see how on earth Papa could object to it, as it wouldn't be any more expense than a mere quadrille party."

In order to make Mamma as determined to have the fancy ball as I was, I kept running over all the different costumes that I thought she would look well in. Now I was pointing out to her how wonderfully well she would look as Mary Queen of Scots; and how nice her old black velvet body would cut up into that darling little pet of a "bonnet" her Majesty always wore; and how her lovely imitation pearls, that she had bought in Paris for her back hair, would do admirably for the trimming. But, no; she wouldn't listen to it, saying there would be certain to be at least a dozen Queen Marys. So then I gave her a glowing description of herself in the costume of a Sultana, telling her how our old India muslin drawing-room curtains would make up into a lovely pair of Turkish trousers, and she knew that nothing became her so much as a turban, and it would be so easy to have one of Papa's old paste shoe-buckles, that he never used now, made into a little half-moon, to fix her duck of a bird of paradise in with. But Mamma had set her heart upon making her appearance as the Maid of Athens, and all I could say was thrown away, for she would have it that the ringlets she had got up stairs in her drawer, would look magnificent at the back of her head, and my Albanian scarf was just the thing

to go round her waist. So as I saw she had fixed her heart upon that character, I agreed with her; for I was afraid she might grow angry at my opposition, and say she would have no fancy dress ball at all.

To change the subject, I began talking about what costume would suit Fanny, and told Mamma that as that young lady was going to be married, I thought it would be very improper if she was allowed to dress herself out very grand, and that the prettiest and simplest thing would be either a Flower-girl or a Shepherdess, and then there would be little or no expense, for all she would want would be a few yards of sarce-net ribbon, as her book muslin would do very nicely, I was sure. Besides, then she wouldn't want her bracelet and gold chain, and could lend them to me for Haidée.

Well, after a great deal of coaxing, and Mamma's being obliged to have another nasty attack of low spirits, Papa gave us his consent to have the ball, but the cheque he presented Mamma with to pay for the supper and refreshments was so small, that we saw we should be obliged to make all the custards and jellies at home. We set to work immediately, writing out the list of the friends we should invite, taking very good care to send only to those to whose parties we had been; for, as Mamma said, Hospitality was one thing, but feasting a pack of people who never asked you even to so much as a mere trumpery *thé dansante*, was another. She must confess she did like some return for what she gave, and it was all very pretty to tell your guests, in a grand after-dinner speech, that it was your greatest delight to be surrounded by your friends; but the long and short of it was, friendship had nothing to do with it, for it was now very well understood in polite society that when you gave a friend a dinner, you expected as good a dinner back from him. If this was not the case, why, she would ask me, didn't people in the best circles go giving grand dinners to those who wanted them? No, indeed, they were not such ninnies as that. Everybody, with the least pretensions to good breeding, very well knew that your dinner and evening parties had grown into a very pleasing and convenient system of fashionable commerce. It is just the same thing, she told me, that Papa said about his rubbishing Poli-

tical Economy—you buy your suppers or your dinners in the cheapest market, and of course you sell them again in that market where you think you are likely to make the most by them. Did I, now, for one moment imagine that she was going to the expense of a grand fancy dress-ball just to make her friends happy, and allow them to wear a pack of fine clothes? No! she begged of me to understand—for she made no secret of it—that she did it with the view of getting me comfortably settled in life. And she looked upon the elegant supper ' she intended to provide as a very eligible investment of capital, which, some day or other, ought to yield a very large return. Nor was she—she continued—at all singular in this opinion, for every person of any refinement looked upon it in the same light, and, indeed, understood that when the pleasure of their company was requested to quadrilles by any lady of “ton,” that it was merely a genteel announcement that the young ladies of the establishment were ready to be disposed of to the highest matrimonial bidder, and the invitation to the “danse” was always considered merely as a “card to view.”

So we sent out the notes to all the best of our acquaintance, and as we gave plenty of notice, we had not above a dozen refusals, and on the night in question the rooms were so beautifully full, that I declare no one could move about with any comfort; and although people were nearly fainting with the heat, still they all agreed they had never passed such a pleasant evening before in the whole course of their lives. Oh, it was so beautiful! Everybody did look so grand, and so stiff, and so unlike themselves, and seemed to be quite delighted at the opportunity of strutting about in other people's clothes. If there was one King I'm sure there were a dozen, and at least nine of them were Henrys the Eight, though what on earth can make the most disgusting of all Monarchs the most popular at fancy dress balls I never could make out; but it was very lucky they did come, for, upon my word, there was such a crowd of Anne Boleyns, Jane Seymours, and Catherines of Arragon, that there were quite wives enough present to have allowed each of the royal Harrys to have had their proper quantity. The worst of it was, there was

so many Field Marshals and general officers, that one would have fancied it was the eve of the battle of Waterloo, as you saw them dancing away on our Brussels. But what amused me the most was, that nothing but the extremes would please the Masqueraders. If they could not come in all the grandeur of Mary Queen of Scots, they were safe to make their appearance in all the cheap innocence of Flower or Orangegirls. If they weren't Lady Jane Greys, they were sure to be Milk-maids; if they couldn't afford to be Joans of Arc, they would be certain to dwindle down into the clean economy of Charity children, so that really your party seemed to be the most curious mixture of the very highest and the very lowest in the land. Anybody to have seen the motley group, would have declared that Madame Tussaud's shilling exhibition had been transported into our drawing-room, for every one seemed to be so stiff and so extremely stupid, that really they seemed to be nothing more than a congregation of fine clothes and wax-work.

Mamma made her appearance as the Maid of Athens, as she had threatened. Of course, all her friends went into raptures, and declared that it was by far the best dress of the evening; but directly her back was turned, I could see by their titters that they were laughing at her for a great big silly, and pulling her to pieces, and I even heard a nasty vulgar French Republican say to Thomas à Becket, while drawing attention to poor Mamma's hook nose, that the dress might belong to the Maid of Athens, but the nose most unquestionably belonged to the Maid of Judah.

But though all the company were first flattering and then laughing at Mamma, still there was one Irish gentleman—in a wig and gown—who had been brought by Mr. Notter Brown, the M.P. for Tipperary, and who would keep following Mamma about the room, calling her his "Zoe, mou," and asking her "to give, och! give him back his harrut!" and vowing he would bring an action, and lay the damages at the amount of bullion there was in the "counthry, as that was the greatest legal tinder that could be made anyhow." And so he went on, until I declare if that stupid Mamma didn't tell me that he was one of the most perfect gentlemen she

had met with for a long time, and asked me whether I knew who he was.

On inquiring of Mr. Notter Brown who and what his friend was, we learnt that he was a barrister-at-law, and a Trinity College man, of the name of Maurice O'Saveloy, and that he belonged to one of the oldest families in Ireland, and was descended from one of the Irish Kings. This quite turned poor Mamma's head, and having dragged the Trinity College man from the refreshment-room, she introduced the descendant of the Irish King to me for the next quadrille. All I could gather from him was, that he was immensely rich, and possessed of great estates in "county Corruk," and that his friend, the Lord Lieutenant, had advised him to go to the bar, on account of his great rhetor-r-ical powers. He next informed me, that though he was one of the most beloved of Irish landlords, he had thought it prudent, in the prisint ixcitid state of his counthry, to lave the brave boys, list any of thim should be wishing to be afther having his life.

I never knew such a gentleman for compliments as he was. But of course I wasn't such a silly as to believe all he said, like that stupid Mamma; so that when he declared that my black eyes were in mourning for the number of deaths they had caused, I told him to go along with him, and begged him to understand that his flattery really distressed me; then, if the impudent thing hadn't the audacity to call the dimples in my cheek "whirrulpools" of love. But I soon let him know that if he went on with any more of that nonsense he really would offend me, as he must take me for a downright simpleton, to fancy that I should believe even half of what he said.

After all the ladies had left the supper-table, we were greatly shocked at hearing the gentlemen down stairs hurraing away as if they were at a Temperance Meeting. When Papa came up, we learnt that Mr. Maurice O'Saveloy had, in a very flowery speech, been kind enough to propose the health of "the lovely and amiable hostess, and her beautiful and accomplished daughter." And he had so expatiated upon the virtues and graces of the whole family, that any one to have heard the gentleman would have fancied he was one of

our most intimate acquaintances, though—as Papa said—he never recollected to have ever seen him before. And upon my word, continued Papa, “he was such an enthusiastic admirer of the family, that he would insist upon every gentleman present drinking the health in tumblers full of my very best champagne.”

On his inquiring of Mamma who the Irish gentleman was, Ma said all she knew was, that he had been introduced by Mr. Notter Brown, and evidently had the manners and air of a perfect gentleman.

After this, Mr. O’Saveloy got so persevering in his visits to the house, and so marked in his attentions to me, that Papa, who had always been suspicious of him, determined— notwithstanding all Mamma could say to the contrary—upon asking him what his intentions were.

To tell the plain truth, I wasn’t at all sorry for this, for neither Mamma nor myself could make Mr. O’Saveloy out. That he was a gentleman of extensive property there could not be the slightest doubt; for if he gave me one present, I’m sure he must have given me a whole drawer-full, and all of the most expensive articles. Scarcely a week went over our head but what he sent some beautiful piece of amiable extravagance up to the house for me. Bouquet after bouquet, too, used to be left for me, all of them of the choicest flowers, in the depth of winter. Still with all this, there was one thing that struck us both as being remarkably strange. We never saw him, but he always wore the same blue surtout with velvet collar and facings. If he dined with us—which he generally did three times a week when term time was over—it was still in the same blue surtout. If Mamma had a box at the Theatre, and he accompanied us there, it was still in that invariable blue surtout. The most wonderful thing was, too, that though he had no aversion to theatrical performances, still we never could prevail upon him to escort us to the Opera. Once he invited Mamma and myself to see the Courts of Law in Lincolns’ Inn, and as he was accompanying us, in his wig and gown, down to the Rolls’ Court, whom should we meet but his friend, Mr. Albert Sox, whom we had so often heard him speak of as being possessed of large plantations in Jamaica, and as occupying half



of his Chambers, in Staples-Inn. As Mr. Sox approached us Mamma nudged my arm, and on looking at the gentleman, I declare if he had not got on a blue surtout with a velvet collar and facings, cut exactly the same as the one that we had so often noticed on Mr. O'Saveloy, and the very first words that Mamma and I said, when we were alone in the carriage again, were, "Did you see *that* surtout?" But, however, on turning the matter over, we both agreed that it was very natural for two such bosom friends to dress alike. Besides it was ridiculous to imagine that two gentlemen of such immense property as Messrs. O'Saveloy and Sox should wear each other's clothes.

When Papa spoke to Mr. O'Saveloy about the nature of his intentions towards me, dear Maurice did say such a pack of fine things about me, and declared that he was dying in love for me, and that the only thing to save him was my hand. On this Papa, of course, inquired more particularly into his circumstances, when if the generous dear didn't say that for every thousand Papa settled upon me he would settle ten, though he should not like to go much beyond a hundred thousand, as he thought that would be quite pin-money enough for me, and he gave Papa such a flaming account of his castle in this county, and his shares in that company, and his money in all kinds of securities, that Papa said, that if I was a consenting party, he could have no objection.

And as I could not be otherwise than a consenting party with such a dear attentive rogue as he had always been to me, especially after the handsome settlement he proposed making upon me, why the day was fixed; and to my great joy, Miss Fanny's wedding with the trumpery Mr. Brooke was put off for more than a month, so that we might both be married on the same day, and, as Mamma said, then the dash of the equipages of the noblemen that Mr. O'Saveloy said had insisted upon being present at his wedding would give something like a style to the nuptial glass-coach of that Fanny's trumpery Mr. Brooke, whom, to tell the truth, she never was particularly fond of having for a son-in law, and did not see the use of putting herself to the expense of another breakfast expressly on his account.

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And now that I have shown my readers the bright side of that pretty Mr. O'Saveloy, and let them know what an admirable match I thought he would have been for me—indeed, to tell the truth, we seemed at first to have been made expressly for each other—let me now, show them the reverse of the portrait, and then I will ask them whether the three months' violent fever, and the entire loss of my beautiful thick head of hair, was not just what might have been expected under the distressing circumstances? After the match was once broken off, every day kept bringing fresh discoveries about the handsome villain. And on putting this and that together, oh! dear, dear, poor me! what a mercy it was that I escaped from the clutches of the fortune-hunter! Upon my word I should have liked to have had the fellow indicted for matrimonial swindling, or endeavouring to obtain my heart under false pretences.

Man of property!—an owner of large estates in the county of "Corruk," indeed!—pretty estates, to be sure! when the only property he possessed in "Corruk," were the soles of the boots, which we afterwards saw in the *Times*, he was summoned for. The following are the plain unvarnished facts, reader; but first let me give a description of the deceiving wretch, lest he should treat any poor confiding girl in the same heartless way he did me; and I have heard, on the very best authority, that he is still to be seen prowling about the West End, like a raging fortune hunter, seeing what poor heiress he can devour.

He stands upwards of six feet high, and is very broad shouldered, and has a highly-commanding figure, being very muscular and powerful, and, indeed, a remarkably fine, large, wiry, well-built man. His cheek bones are high, his nose small, his whiskers full and sandy, his mouth large, and his eyes impudent. He is usually, or rather always, dressed in a blue surtout, with velvet collar and facings, and is remarkable for the whiteness of his shirt fronts, and the flatness as well as the size of his feet.

This gentleman—if I may be allowed so strong an expression—resided in Staples-Inn, where he had what he called Chambers, but what I call a legal second floor back.

These apartments he held in common with Mr. Albert Sox, a young gentleman who was qualifying himself for the bar, by taking his dinners, during term time, at a legal ordinary, and, to do him justice, was eating his way to the woolsack as fast as he could.

As for the Chambers, or legal garret—as I wittily called it a few lines back—oh, it was the most wretched hovel! What with the darkness and the dirtiness of the place, I declare, it was as black as poor dear Mamma's *front* hair. On each side of where the street door ought to have been, there were no less than eight long streaks of clean and dirty white paint, on which were written the names of the twelve tenants. I couldn't help pointing out to Mamma, as we entered, how it was very easy to tell, from the whiteness or grubbiness of the streak, how long each party had resided under the dingy roof. But I found out afterwards that those cunning, scheming, Messrs. O'Saveloy and Sox, had had their names painted on a dirty ground, on purpose to give an air of antiquity to the term of their residence; or, in other words, to make people believe they were the oldest inhabitants of the place. As you groped your way up the nasty staircase, (positively the walls were as moist as the windows of a cookshop,) you expected that every person you met would be as white as the shoots of a potato vegetating in a coal cellar.

When you did reach the summit of this Mont Noir, ten chances to one but what you saw wafered up on the great big black door, a slip of paper, on which was written and flou-rished in a legal hand,

At Court.

*Back at 4.*

But from the frightful smell of tobacco smoke that kept issuing through the opening in the door for letters, and the loud laugh that stopped suddenly whenever Mamma tapped

with her parasol, (there wasn't so much as a knocker or a bell to be seen,) we both felt satisfied that my fine barristers, instead of being at their Court indeed, were at their nasty filthy pipes again!

The Chambers themselves, I'm sure, were the dustiest, gloomiest, closest, and untidiest rooms I ever saw. But when I recollected that there was nothing but a pack of men living in the house, I wasn't at all astonished, either at the condition of the staircase, which they held in common, or at the appearance of the apartments all the way up it. It only proved to me what a dreadful state they would come to if it wasn't for us poor women, and how they would pass the whole of their lives up to their knees in dust—the poor helpless things—unless some of us angels condescended to look after them a little.

Really, the first thought I had when I entered that abominable garret, and saw the dust come up in clouds as I crossed the carpet, was, how sadly that poor Maurice wanted a wife. In fact, I couldn't help promising myself, that when I was Mrs. O'Saveloy, the first thing I would do, would be to send in a good brawny charwoman during the honeymoon, and have the whole place, as well as Mr. Sox, thoroughly swept out, and plenty of good wholesome soap and soda applied to the boards.

One day, while we were in the room, waiting for Mr. O'Saveloy to make his appearance, Mamma would go prying about, and looking into every corner and cupboard in the place. The first thing that surprised us was, that although the table was covered with briefs—on which were endorsed fees to a large amount—and you consequently thought the place wholly devoted to the law, still there was a peculiar smell about the chambers of, here coffee, there cheese, sometimes herrings, and now beer, and then apples, and always pipes. Mamma, who was sniffing all round the room, saying, "What is *that* the smell of, my darling?" at last stopped right opposite the cupboard, in a corner of the room, and after exclaiming, with another sniff, "Whatever it is, it's here, my pet," opened the door.

And then, was there ever such a sight! There stood a

greasy girdiron, side by side with at least a dozen dirty stale tobacco pipes. Here was a grubby tin saucepan, with a blacking bottle inside it. In one corner was a pile of dirty plates and dishes, and just over them, I should say, a pound of kitchen candles. In another corner was a trumpery Bachelor's Comfort, indeed! guaranteed to boil a quart of water, with a bundle of firewood, in less than five minutes. And on the shelf, just above it, stood a tin "Multum in Parvo," which was warranted to cook a steak, do an 'egg, steam potatoes, or boil water for shaving, with a spoonful or two of any spirits, British brandy excepted. On the top shelf, all among the black lead and Bath brick, stood three unwashed tea cups, and the knives and forks; whilst at the bottom there were, I should say, about half a peck of coals, and about a dozen potatoes, but they were so grimy, that really it required a practised eye to tell, at first sight, whether the potatoes were really kidneys or the best lord-mayors.

Mamma closed the door of the cupboard directly she had seen the whole of its contents, declaring that the smell was enough to knock a Christian down. Then telling me she shouldn't at all wonder if the whole place was full of such dirt, she went up to a box upon four legs that was standing near the table. The thing opened in the middle, and, dear me, if it wasn't a nest of pigeon-holes for papers, but which the ingenuity of Messrs. O'Saveloy and Sox had converted into a larder. There were all their different provisions arranged in true legal form under their respective initials. Under the letter—

A, was a pen'orth of Apples and Anchovies.

B, contained Bread, Butter, and Bacon.

C, had Chops, Cheese, Candles, Cocoa, &c.

E, Mamma found an Egg in.

H, had a Herring.

P, a Polony, a Pewter Pot, Pickles, and Pipes.

S, was devoted to Sausages, Sugar, and Soap, and

T, to Tobacco, Tea, and Trotters.

Poor mamma, who was smelling and looking at her straw-coloured gloves with extreme disgust, said she never knew such an eccentric being as that dear Maurice. A man to

live in that filthy state, and yet willing to settle a hundred thousand pounds on his poor dear confiding wife! Well, all she could say was, that he really seemed to her to be a second Elwes, or she might say a gentlemanly Dancer; and she really shouldn't wonder if presently she found bank-notes stuffed into old worsted stockings, and rolls upon rolls of sovereigns stowed away in the arms of all the chairs.

In pursuance of this notion, Ma lifted up the lid of Mr. O'Saveloy's wig-box, and if there weren't two plates of cold à la mode beef in it, with the name of—

WORRAL,

HOLBORN HILL,

printed on the crockery.

In fact, there wasn't a thing in the room that didn't do duty in two or three ways. For instance, the highly popular blue bag, in which the gentlemen of the bar usually carry their papers to court, had been ingeniously converted into an invisible coal sack. Poor Mamma, not for a moment suspecting that the bag could be applied to such a purpose, and feeling some strange bits of something at the bottom of it, thrust her hand with great curiosity right down it, and to her horror converted her beautiful straw-coloured gloves into the most perfect black kid; and then the thought flashed across her mind, that the blue thing was used as a reticule for coals, and that Mr. O'Saveloy was in the habit of having his Walls Ends in by the bag-full.

When I came to put all these things together in my own mind, the reader may well imagine I began to grow rather nervous. I told Mamma of my fears, but she, far from agreeing with me, would have it that I was a stupid suspicious little puss, and that when I had lived as long as she had in the world, I should know that many much more eccentric things were done by persons with twice the means of dear Maurice. Did I not know that the celebrated Dancer, who died worth considerably more than a plum, used over and over again to sit upon his victuals in order to warm them up again, and so save the expense of fire? Then there was that Elwes, who left

at least a million behind him, he used to travel miles upon miles upon nothing more than a hard boiled egg, and at least whatever Mr. O'Saveloy's faults might be, he didn't go to those extremes.

As Mr. O'Saveloy kept us waiting a long time, Mamma, to while away the interval, continued her examination of the apartments. On approaching what appeared to be a chest of drawers, Ma, with the view of looking into the state of Maurice's buttons, tried to open it; but finding the drawers rather difficult to move, she gave a good strong pull, when to her horror the whole of the front came away in her hands, and she fell right upon her back, while the press-bedstead, which the front was used to conceal, being released from its hold, burst forward, bedding, clothes, and all came to the ground with a bang, burying poor screaming Mamma completely under it.

Mr. O'Saveloy, hearing the noise, rushed into the apartment in his wig and gown, (for it was Mr. Sox's day out,) and to his horror discovered Mamma under his turn-up bedstead, with her lovely new white chip crushed to pieces, and her head only just visible from beneath it.

Quick as lightning Maurice flew to the pigeon-holes, and snatched a bottle of L.L. (whiskey) from under its proper letter. Taking a wine-glass from G. he filled it to the brim with the pure spirit, and begged Mamma to drink that, as it would do her a power of good.

Mamma, fancying it was soothing medicine, and thinking it might be nasty, drank it off as quickly as she could. No sooner had she swallowed it, than, waving her hand and gasping for breath, she tried to stammer out—"Hah! you've—hah!—given me—hah!—a glass of raw spirits—ugh!"

"What! you're afther knowing the taste of thim, are yer, ye divil?" replied Mr. O'Saveloy, with a roguish wink, filling up the glass for himself.

"Oh, Mr. Maurice! you don't know—hah!—what you've done to me—hah!" replied Mamma, who had not yet regained her breath. "It will be—hah!—the death of me! I know it will!"

"Nivir fear, darlint!" replied O'Saveloy, laughing; "sure

an' a hogshid of such as that same wouldn't harrum the hair of your hid, it wouldn't."

"Ah! it's all very well for you Irish gentlemen, who are accustomed to it from your cradle," answered Mamma, who was leaning on me; "but I feel it flying to my head, and in ten minutes I shall be totally deprived of my senses, and unable to stand maybe."

"Divil a bit, my iligint mother, if I may make so bowld," replied Maurice, smiling; "maybe it's a little early for ye, but it'll do ye all the good in life."

Poor Mamma was not mistaken in her idea as to the effects of the fiery L.L. whiskey upon her; for in about a quarter of an hour after, she began laughing and laughing away at everything Mr. O'Saveloy said; and then she got to speak very thick, and mix up her words.

First she asked Mr. O'Saveloy if he happened to have any "selling smalts" in the house, meaning all the time smelling salts. Then she begged for some cold water, saying that I could "tathe her bemples," and at last I found out she meant "bathe her temples."

After this, poor Mamma had a fit of sentiment and hiccups, and began speaking of her extreme love for me, and made me blush up to my eyes when she told Mr. O'Saveloy what a blessing—yuck!—I should be to him—yuck!—and how she knew it would break her heart—yuck!—to part with me—boo—o—o!—and how she was a woman—yuck!—of very deep affections—yuck!—and Mr. de Roos didn't treat her as she deserved—boo—o—o—o! Here she burst out crying, and throwing her arms round Maurice's neck, began kissing him and calling him her dear son—yuck!—and declaring that if it—yuck!—was the last words she had to speak—yuck!—she had always done her duty to that hard-hearted man, Mr. de Roos—boo—o—o!

At last Maurice got a cab; but when the man saw the state Mamma was in, he said that the lady was tipsy, and he warn't bound by the "hact" to take drunken fares.

This called forth poor Mamma's indignation to such a degree, that it was as much as Maurice—who behaved very well—and I could do to prevent her breaking her parasol over the man's back.



As it was, she went on in such a way, and so loud, that she collected a ring of little boys and lawyers' clerks, who commenced laughing at her; for, to tell the truth, with her broken bonnet and peculiar expression, she looked as if the disgraceful state in which she was in arose, not so much by accident, as from an old and confirmed habit.

At last, thank goodness—for I was ready to sink with shame—I got her into a cab. And even then, gracious, what a piece of work I had with her. First, she insisted upon being driven to Mr. Gee's, in the Albany, saying that she felt it to be her duty as a mother to tell him a bit of her mind. And when I wouldn't allow this, she burst into tears, and calling me an ungrateful child, told the cabman to drive to Mr. Dossey's, saying she had long wished to expose him to the neighbourhood, and now she would do it. At length, she was again quiet; but even then she begged of me, in the tenderest terms, to take her to that old wretch of a Lord Fortiwinx, and allow her to comb his wig for him. On my refusing, she again burst out crying, and asking me where I expected to go to, at last fell asleep, and continued so until we reached home.

But here, alas! our troubles began anew. She would have it the footman had winked at her in an impudent way, and looked at her with a nasty low grin she didn't at all like. I needn't tell the gentle reader that this was nothing but fancy on Mamma's part, and that the man had behaved himself excellently all the while. In the hall, Ma told him to leave her presence, and gave him warning to go that day month, adding, that she never did like the looks of the man, and, in fact, didn't feel herself safe with him about her, for she was more than ever convinced that he was a regular Don Giovanni in plush breeches.

When Papa saw the state she was in, he called me into the room, and asked me whether I had ever before noticed that Mamma was addicted to strong liquors. I really didn't know what to say—for I didn't like to tell Papa how the accident had occurred—and my foolish hesitation only made it much worse, and served to convince him that Mamma of late had taken to the bottle. The consequence was, that he immediately took

away from her all the keys of the cellaret, and wouldn't allow her to take so much as a glass of wine at dinner every day, for fear, as he told her, that the old passion should return.

All this used to annoy poor Mamma so, that she would set to work and scold Papa; on which he, alas! would imagine she had been drinking again, and would often turn round to me, and, with a frown, tell me that he could not imagine where my mother got the drink from, and that I really must keep strict watch over her for the future.

One day, when he thought Mamma's head was clear and cool, and that he might venture to speak to her reasonably and dispassionately on the subject of her weakness, he took her hand, and sitting down beside her on the sofa, began in a kind and soft voice, exhorting her, that if really the fearful appetite was so strong upon her that she had no command over it at times, and if she felt that she could not take one glass, without a burning desire for many more coming over her, why he should really advise her to take the pledge of total abstinence.

This put Mamma in such a rage that, out of mere perversity, she would have the wine; and, indeed, when Papa refused and locked it up from her, she sent out for it, and began by drinking it so fast and regularly, out of mere obstinacy, that in time I do verily believe she would have run after it, out of mere habit. However, at last I summoned courage to tell Papa of the mistake he was making, and the evil he was working, and by the help of a few little white fibs as to the cause of Mamma's previous state, at last got them both to make it up again, and be as they were before.

But to return to the wretch, O'Saveloy, and his disgraceful partner, Mr. Sox. The day for my wedding was fast approaching. Papa made things very uncomfortable by the peculiar line of conduct he thought fit to adopt. "If I chose to marry Mr. O'Saveloy," he would say, "I might do so; but as he was a gentleman of whom he had not a very high opinion, he must decline giving his consent to the union. As I was no longer a child, of course I was at liberty to do as I pleased, but he felt it his duty to warn me against ally-





George Cruikshank

*A Lady of considerable attractions.*

ing myself with a gentleman of whom he could not help, from all the circumstances, feeling not a little suspicious as to his means and character."

When the day came for arranging the settlements, do all we could, Papa would not accompany us to Maurice's Chambers, he would, as he said, "wash his hands of the business."

But before giving my readers a description of that dreadful meeting, let me first give them an account of a conversation which took place between Messrs. Sox and O'Saveloy, on the evening previous, and which came to my ears in a way that I am sure it is not necessary for me to mention, and if it was, I shouldn't do it—that's all.

"Well, Maurice, my boy," said that demon, Sox, little thinking a little bird I know had got his ear to the keyhole; "so you found nothing at Doctors' Commons under the name of De Roos."

"No, my jewel," said our friend Maurice, with a shrug of his broad shoulders and a deep sigh—"nothing! though I searched as many as half a dozen wills made by gentlemen and ladies of that name, at no less an expense than a shilling a piece; for do all I would, I couldn't get the blagheard at the office to make me the usual allowance on taking a quantity, and give me seven for the six shillings; and though I have spent pounds and pounds in that very useful establishment, and tould him I'd spent my last shilling in the place, still he wouldn't let me even look at another on credit."

"Shameful!" cried Sox, throwing up his eyebrows and hands—"especially after all your countrymen do for the office."

"Thru, for you, Albert, my boy"—and sure the place was so full of Irish boys, you might have sworn you had mistaken your way, and got into a lodging-house in Craven Street, Strand. Here stood a boy from County Galway; there was a smart Tipperary lad; here was an ould friend from Mayo; and, indeed, the pickings of 'Ould Ireland' were scattered all over the room—"busy looking after the tin that our ancestors, the Phenicians, my boy, used to love to come to England for. Even the clerk himself has got an illegint touch of the brogue, by this time."

“Ah!” said Sox, “I know you Paddies are fond of the place, but for my part, I haven’t much faith in it; for I once loved a dear girl—a sweet angel of the name of Smith, at a boarding school at Turnham Green, and hearing she had some money left her, went to look after her dear uncle John’s will, but deuce take those JOHN SMITHS—but hang me if I didn’t spend fifteen to sixteen pounds, and waste a month’s hard labour, and was no nearer to the sweet angel’s property after all!”

“Now, to my mind,” continued that little wretch, Sox, “the waters at Harrowgate and Cheltenham are the cheapest investment one can make of one’s money. I know a friend that picked up a very tidy consumption there, and has been very comfortably off ever since; and the beauty of it is, the angels one finds in those Paradises don’t remain long on one’s hands; so that, you see, age is no object.—Well, Maurice, but about to-morrow—what are you going to do, old fellow?”

“Why, I had some very pleasant conversation with the old boy, her rivirind Father,” answered that O’Saveloy, twiddling his pet sandy whisker; “and I very plainly told him, that for every thousand he gave the darlint, I would settle ten thousand, up to a hundred.”

“But you haven’t ten pence,” replied Sox; “and there’s that fifteen shillings you owe me for looking into the wills about those two Miss Bells.”

“All right, my boy,” answered Mr. Maurice, slapping his friend on the back. “And sure, an’ what does it matter, if I haven’t got ten pence in the world, can’t I settle what I please upon the lady? If I had to pay the money down, that would be a different thing entirely; but as they always give long credit in marriage settlements, why, I’m determined to do the thing handsomely. Now, there’s that No. 86, Fleet Street, I intend to make her a present of the house—upon my word I do, my boy.”

“But it isn’t yours to give,” roared Mr. Sox; “what on earth are you talking about?”

“Well, and sure, what does that matter?” replied Mr. Maurice. “I don’t suppose the respectable tenant will let her have it just because I choose to give it her. Then, to con-

vince her that she's married a gentleman, don't I intend to make over to her and her children for ever, all my right title, interest, and property in the New River Company; and ain't each share in that same worth four thousand, any day?"

"Come, that's cool," answered Mr. Sox; "and you know you haven't any right, title, interest, or property at all in the Company."

"And isn't it, then, the more easily made over to the darlint creature?" replied that wicked, bad, bad man, O'Saveloy. "And is it Maurice that's the boy to refews the jewel that iligant castle and well cultivated estate, near Flaherty, in the county Corruk."

"Castle Flaherty!" exclaimed Mr. Sox; "but it isn't yours, man alive."

"Well; and is it yours, asked Mr. Maurice?"

"No; of course, it's nothing to me," answered Mr. Albert.

"Then why on airth, do you grumble about my giving it to the poor creature," replied Mr. O'Saveloy, quite indignant.

Thus I was credibly informed these two worthies passed the entire evening, and when the morning came, who should surprise Mr. O'Saveloy, whilst he was yet fast asleep in his chest of drawers, but a gentleman dressed in the first style of fashion, with a nose as red and hooked as a lobster's claw, and a complexion yellow as rhubarb, knocking loudly at the outer door, he requested the boy to open it, as he wished to make an appointment for a consultation. No sooner had poor Mr. Sox admitted him, than the stylish Israelite gave a loud whistle, and up came a very nasty hungry, and wretched-looking being, who had been waiting below, and whom Mr. Albert immediately recognised as his old friend the bailiff's follower.

The gentleman demanded the payment of four-pounds-three-and-fourpence for back rent, which demand coming inconveniently upon Mr. O'Saveloy, at a moment he was about to settle his hundred thousand pounds upon me, the descendant of the Irish King was obliged to confess that it was beyond his power to settle the claim just then, where-

upon the hook-nosed and highly stylish gentlemen requested his rusty friend to take up his abode at the quarters, and billet himself upon the brace of barristers.

Then arose a new difficulty,—how was it possible for Mr. O'Saveloy to settle his vast property on me with a man in possession in the room for four-pounds-three-and-fourpence? What was to be done! The follower could not be prevailed upon, either for love or money, to quit the apartments; and time was now going on so fast, that we were expected every moment to knock at the door.

At length, a bright idea illumined the gloomy brain of the wretched O'Saveloy. He would get the man to pass as his Father, and all might yet be well. Borrowing half-a-crown of his friend Sox, and pressing it into the follower's grubby hand, asked him if he would consent for that sum to adopt him for half-an-hour as his favourite Son.

When the man had consented, and heard how much property he was going to settle and make over to his dearly beloved boy, on his approaching marriage, his conscience smote him, and he said, very justly, that he ought not, as a father, to aid and abet his favourite boy in such extravagant ways, unless he was allowed a liberal per-centage on the proceeds of the plan.

O'Saveloy assured him that, if the affair turned out as well as he expected, that he was not the boy to forget the duty he owed to his parent, especially as he intended that he should be a very good father to him.

Then, taking out the well-washed chintz dressing-gown of the firm, they enveloped him in it, and putting on his head the smoking cap of O'Saveloy, and taking the muslin blind from the window, and tying it round his neck, gave him Mr. Sox's Meerschaum pipe, and declared that he had all the air and appearance of a real Nabob, just returned from India with half a liver and nearly a plum.

Scarcely had they enjoined him to say as little as possible, and grumble as much as he could, when Mamma's parasol was heard tapping at the door, and when we entered the room, if he actually hadn't the impudence to introduce the fellow to us as his much-respected father, Lieutenant-General





Geo. Cruikshank

*Introduction to the Officer*



O'Saveloy, K.C.B., telling us that he was a distinguished officer, who had signalized himself in many an action, and taken scores of prisoners with his own hands.

When Mamma heard this, she made him her most polite bow, and smilingly said she was highly delighted to meet so illustrious a character, and hoped that their acquaintance would not end there, but that she should have the honour of seeing him at our house before long.

The gallant General replied to this, "Thankee, Ma'am; if ever there should be any distress in your house, I have no doubt you will see me there, Ma'am."

"Good generous creature; but pray do not wait till then," said Mamma. "How like a soldier! Rough—always ready to serve a fellow-creature in difficulties."

"Oh, sure, and you may well say that!" exclaimed O'Saveloy; "haven't I known the old boy here walk miles and wait weeks to find an opportunity of serving them?"

"Dear, *dear* me! what noble disinterestedness on the General's part!" rejoined Mamma. "I am sure it will be the proudest day of my life when I am allowed to claim relationship with your son. Ah!" continued Mamma, pretending to go into raptures—"ah! what a history your life must have been. You must have gone through many trials, and been witness to many a desperate defence."

"Why, yes, Ma'am," replied the broker's man; "I have certainly many a time, and sometimes when the party defending wern't worth powder and shot!"

"Gracious me, how horrible!" cried Mamma, throwing up her hands.

"You may well say so, Ma'am," replied the General, coolly; "an execution in a house isn't a very pleasant thing, I can assure you."

"An execution in a *house!*" screamed Mamma, horror struck. "You don't mean to tell me, my dear General, that you have ever known such brutal acts!"

"Indeed, I have Marm!" he answered, smoking away; "and what's more, I've often had to take the body away myself, off the premises, though it's been a nasty job, I can assure you."

“Ugh! lord a mercy me; you may well say that!” replied Mamma, shuddering at the picture; “but gentlemen in your profession require to be made of steel.”

“But look you, Ma’am, what’s a man in my station to do?” returned the Sheriff’s Officer, growing eloquent. “You hears that such and such a party is trying to steal a march upon you, and they tells you that they intends to bring up their van, under the cover of the night, and carry off all the baggage and every article of any value in the place. Well, what’s a gallant officer to do; why, gather together his men to be sure, and rush down upon the parties when they least expect you, and take the place either by storm or stratagem; or else surround it, and pour into it, on the first opportunity, so many Bums, that the place grows too hot to hold them, and they are obliged to surrender, and then you walks in, and takes possession in the name of her Gracious Majesty.

“Och! Mrs. De Roos, my respected Fayther will fight his battles to you over the dinner table,” interrupted Mr. O’Saveloy, who was growing a little nervous, lest the son of Slowman should make some dreadful blunder, and put an end to the whole business.

But, thank goodness, it seemed as if the hand of Providence was hanging over me in all my distresses! For no sooner had Mr. O’Saveloy opened the draft of my settlement, in which he made over to me and the heirs of my body, lawfully begotten, (like his impudence, indeed,) all his rubbishing property to the amount of a hundred thousand pounds, (I never saw such a hundred thousand pounds!) and said, “Now to business, if you please ladies,” than that Mr. Albert Sox, who all the time had been bobbing, in his wig and gown, in and out of the room, with the blue bag in his hand—much to the annoyance of the lynx-eyed man in possession, and to the delight of the cunning Manners, who kept winking and nodding as his friend crammed the bag with different moveables in the place—than Mr. Sox, believing that the man in possession wouldn’t dare to say a word, took the nice German umbrella, and bowing, said, in a bland voice—

“And since I can be of no assistance here, I will to my business also, with the kind permission of the ladies—

Good morning—good morning, and my best wishes to you all.”

He was about to open the door, when up bounced the pseudo-general, and seizing hold of the blue bag in one hand, and the silk umbrella in the other, said, as he shook his head—

“Come, none of this here! it wont do you know; I am not to be done in that there style—so, come!” (I give the man’s own words, I can assure the gentle reader.)

Poor Mr. Sox looked confounded and stupid, Mamma stared, and I jumped off my chair with surprise.

But Mr. O’Saveloy with great presence of mind advanced towards the Sheriff’s Officer, and taking him by the hand, said,—

“Och! Fayther, darlint, don’t be aafter giving way to any such illusions!” then, turning to us, he pointed to his forehead, and shaking his head, and lifting his eyebrows, whispered with a sigh, “Poor old gentleman, he’s not all right there; you see he had a sun-stroke at Qui-lon, and has been touched in his upper story ever since.”

The Sheriff’s Officer, however, unfortunately for Mr. Maurice, overheard this strange excuse for his conduct, and growing extremely angry at the trick that he fancied had been played upon him, so that Mr. Sox might have an opportunity to decamp with the property from the premises, drew out his writ, and having showed it to Mamma, who was petrified with astonishment, he declared that his upper story was all right, though he feared that the upper story of Messrs. O’Saveloy and Sox would not be so in a day or two.

No sooner had Mamma heard and seen this, than giving a scream almost as loud and shrill as Mrs. Yates in the “Wreck Ashore;” she rose from her chair, and calling them both bad—bad men, and telling them, “she would go down on her bended knees, and thank Heaven for the lucky escape we had had from the fangs of the two matrimonial vampires,” sailed out of the room, dragging poor me with her, and having reached Holborn we hailed a cab, and both of us had a good comfortable cry up to our Crescent.

When we reached home I went to bed, and didn’t get up

again for a week or two, for I thought that the very least I could do, after having been so grossly deceived and tricked at the expense of the very best and purest feelings of a poor trusting maiden's nature. Besides, to tell the truth, I found it an excellent time for reading up all the back novels that had lately come out—and I've no notion of subscribing to a Library, and not using it.

## OFFER THE EIGHTH.

THIS WAS INDEED AN OFFER, AND ONE THAT REALLY SEEMED SO ADVANTAGEOUS, THAT I FELT IT TO BE A DUTY THAT I OWED BOTH TO MYSELF AND MY DEAR PAPA TO ACCEPT. BUT IF I HAD KNOWN AS MUCH THEN AS I DO NOW, I CAN ONLY SAY I WOULD HAVE SEEN ANY GENTLEMAN WITH A PASSION FOR STEEPLE-CHASING FURTHER, BEFORE I HAD CONSENTED TO TAKE HIM FOR BETTER OR WORSE, UNLESS, INDEED, HE HAD INSURED HIS NECK IN EVERY ONE OF THE RESPECTABLE INSURANCE OFFICES IN LONDON FOR THE HIGHEST AMOUNT ALLOWED BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT, AND SETTLED ALL THE POLICIES ON HIS POOR CONFIDING WIFE. THEN I SHOULD HAVE FELT MYSELF BOUND TO LOOK UPON IT IN THE LIGHT OF A GOOD MATCH, AND MY DEAR DEPARTED CHARLES MIGHT HAVE GONE HUNTING AS MUCH AS HE LIKED. BUT, AS IT IS, I HAVE THE SATISFACTION OF KNOWING THAT I HAVE WASTED THE PRIME OF MY LIFE UPON A TRUMPERY BOY, WITH CERTAINLY VERY GOOD EXPECTATIONS, (DRAT THOSE EXPECTATIONS!) BUT—AS THE LAWYER SAID TO CONSOLE ME—THOUGH HE HAD ANY AMOUNT OF WEALTH IN POSSE, STILL (BOTHER TAKE IT!) UNFORTUNATELY HE HAD SCARCELY A PENNY IN ESSE. HOWEVER, THERE WAS ONE CONSOLATION, IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORSE. THANK GOODNESS, THERE WAS NO FAMILY!

To tell the candid truth, this sad termination to my attachment to that Irish O'Saveloy (if ever I am driven to advertise for a husband in the Sunday Times, I certainly shall put at the bottom of it, "No Irish need apply") did not have that effect upon my health that my first disappointment had; still, as I felt that it ought to have a much stronger hold upon my mind, I persuaded myself and the doctors that I was very much cut up indeed, and felt satisfied that I should never be thoroughly myself again. For a whole fortnight I lived upon nothing but that filthy water-gruel and

beef-tea, still, bother take it! I could not fall away; and though I dieted myself night and day, yet when I got up, I was much fatter—from taking no exercise—than when I went to bed. I would insist, however, upon having my hair clipped, and if I hadn't, I do verily believe that I should have been forced to have my head shaved, and given the talented artist in hair, next the Polytechnic, employment for a month at least; and I am sure that if he could make Priscilla Macdonald's carrots look well as bracelets, there is no knowing what chains he might have made with my chestnut. I don't know if the gentle reader has seen his Hairy Weeping Willows, but really they are the most affecting souvenirs I ever saw in all my life, and would be thoroughly like nature if he would but dye them green.

But to return to that monster in human form, called O'Saveloy. I declare the disreputable descendant of the Irish King, not content with deceiving me, must go all round the neighbourhood deceiving our tradesmen as well, and telling them that I wanted some of the most expensive articles in their shops, directed that those he selected might be sent round with his compliments. Of course, they were very nice as presents, but when I found the bills pouring in one after another for a pack of trumpery I never wanted, I couldn't help looking upon them in quite a different light. When Mamma gave the people to understand that she'd never pay one sixpence for the paltry gewgaws, I do verily believe a week did not pass over our heads but we had a summons from that vulgar Court of Requests—either for bouquets, or gloves, or opera-boxes, or some stuff or other—so that it really seemed as if Mamma's polite invitation to that horrid man in possession was likely to be accepted much sooner than was wished. However, Mamma, who dreaded the exposure, at length was enabled by dexterous management to squeeze the money out of the housekeeping, and to pay for Mr. O'Saveloy's several presents to me out of the pudding.

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What with one thing and another, I don't know what would have come of me if that dear, charming girl, Emmeline Dowdeswells, hadn't sent Mamma and me an invitation



to spend a month with them at their delightful Villa in the suburbs of Canterbury. As Emmeline said she couldn't hear of a refusal, and Mamma said she was sure, after what had occurred, she could not afford to take me down to the sea-side that year, why, we made the best of it, and accepted the sweet girl's offer "with much thanks." Yet if we hadn't heard that Canterbury was delightfully military, I do not think that even the idea of embracing that lovely Emmeline once more would have induced us to go to that horribly dull, dingy, dusty town, with nothing but its Cathedral and brawn to drag it into notice. Only go we must; for, as Ma said, I really ought now to think more seriously than ever of getting settled, and it was very well known that most of the young officers were single men, with the best of prospects.

When we arrived at Canterbury, if that dear Emmeline wasn't at the Rose Inn, with her Father's beautiful pony-chaise, and she had on the loveliest pink drawn crêpe bonnet, that I declare all the time I was kissing her I couldn't take my eyes off it, and kept wondering to myself how much she could have given for it. Oh! for the first week I did think those Dowdeswells the nicest people living. I declare I loved that dear old lady, and Mamma said she felt at times as if she could hug that fine, stout, good-tempered old man. Still the strange part of it was, that after we had been there about a fortnight, our feelings somehow began to change towards them. The old lady, I must say, was very near, and, as Mamma said, the old gentleman was not fit company for ladies. Besides, that Emmeline was so selfish at bottom, there was no putting up with her.

Again, we had come down merely to get introduced to the society of the Officers, and had condescended to accept the Dowdeswells' invitation, under the belief that they moved in the very best circles; but we hadn't been a week in their house before we, to our horror, found out that the Dowdeswells could not rise higher than apothecaries and retired tradesmen.

However, Mamma was determined not to have spent our railway fares for nothing. Accordingly, she strained every nerve, and at last, finding out that the officers were a most

eccentric set of beings, and were continually going about the town, dressed up in all kinds of disguises, she at last came to the conclusion, that every common man she saw had all the air of a military man, and was perfectly satisfied that he was an Officer having some intellectual amusement.

Mamma's conduct, though, was not so silly as it might at first sight appear, for there was scarcely an "Officer and a Gentleman" in the place that didn't delight in going about the streets dressed up in such a way that one would have mistaken him for a "costermonger and a vagabond."

At one time, nothing would satisfy the intellectual creatures, but they must needs go buying a donkey and a cart, and lay heavy wagers amongst themselves, that, dressed up as common men, they would, in a stipulated time, sell a whole load of sand to the inhabitants of the town without being recognised. This set poor Mamma on the *qui vive*, and for days, not a donkey-cart did she see filled with the article in question, but she would lay out shillings in sand, and pay the coarse, vulgar fellows of drivers all sorts of compliments, in the hope that they might be officers in disguise, which unfortunately they never were.

Then somebody told her that the Honourable Alfred Padding was going all about the town in the elegant fancy costume of a starved-out weaver, with a young wife and a large family at home, all crying for bread; and that there he used to stand in the middle of the street, assuring the ladies that he had not got so much as a shirt to his back. Really it was quite wonderful—when it became known that he was a nobleman, and didn't want the charity he solicited—what heaps of money were thrown to him! while even those who wouldn't give anything to the serious original, didn't hesitate to throw out a half-crown to the jocular counterfeit. Mamma, much to her annoyance, after having given crown-piece after crown-piece to every oratorical beggar that went past the house, in the hopes that she was giving it to the one that didn't want it, at last got so tired of making so many expensive mistakes, that she vowed she would hand the very next of the shameful impostors over to the police. Then, to her horror, she learnt that the first man she drove





*Mystery and Crochery*

away from the house, was the noble vagabond whose good graces she was so anxious to solicit.

Our next surprise was, to hear that Ensign Dawdle had exchanged from Her Majesty's Sappies and Minors,—as that wretch of a Mr. Gee called them,—into the very regiment that was now stationed at Canterbury. Tired of his former occupation, of living on raw rump-steaks for a month at a time, to fit himself to pick up a hundred eggs in the hour, he had now taken to the more refined amusement of putting on a nasty blue smock frock, and going about from door to door with a large basket of crockery. If he was lucky enough to meet with a particularly nervous old lady, and could only get into the passage to bargain with her, he would suddenly let the whole basketful fall from his head, with a terrific smash and crash, and scamper from the house, laughing fit to kill himself at the excellent joke of the old lady's consternation.

Mamma thought this an excellent bit of fun, and just like one of those exquisite strokes of wit to be expected from a young gentleman with more money in his pocket, and time on his hands, than he knew what to do with, and only wished that the spirited young monkey would play the trick upon her, for, from what she had heard, he had such good expectations, that it would do her heart good to see him.

Accordingly, she gave directions to the servant, that whenever a man called with crockery, she was to be sure not to send him away, but to behave with the greatest politeness to him, and request him to step into the parlour until Mamma could wait upon him.

In pursuance with these directions, Mary came running the very next afternoon to Mamma, to tell her that she had shown a gentleman with a basket of china up into the drawing-room, and that he was seated on the ottoman, waiting for her.

Mamma insisted upon my smoothing my hair, saying, that it was impossible for me to tell what Providence had in store for me. Then, having put on her best cap, she hurried with me into the drawing-room, declaring that she had a presentiment that this crockeryware man was none other than that dear, eccentric Dawdle, and something within her told

her that this very visit would be an event in my life—and so, indeed, it was—in hers, as well as mine; for of course it turned out, in the end, that the crockeryware man was no more in the army than Mr. Dawdle was in the crockery line.

The man rose as we entered, and Mamma, drawing a chair opposite to her own, requested he would do her the favour to be seated, saying, with her blandest smile, “Will you allow me, Captain, to offer you any refreshment?”

Grinning with astonishment, as well he might, the crockeryware man answered, after wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, “Thank’ee, Ma’am, you’re werry kind, and since yer are so pressen, I woul take jist a drain, if yer happ’n to have sich a thing in ther house.”

“A drain in the house, Captain! We certainly have one that does annoy us sometimes; but you are such a man, Captain, for your jokes, that one never does know how to take you,” said Ma’, turning round to me, and whispering, “What a fine nose the Captain must have,” adding, “Pray, love, get out the cake and wine for him directly, for I am sure, with that horrid load, the Captain must be ready to drop.”

All the time that I was getting it out, he kept looking, first at Mamma, then at me; now scratching his head, as if he were asking himself what on earth it could all mean; and then fidgeting about on his chair, until he got right on the edge of it, as if he were getting ready to start at a moment’s notice.

When he had taken the wine he seemed half afraid to drink it, and held it in one hand, and stretching out the other towards the cake I was offering him, he looked up, grinning in my face, as if he was thinking what a capital berth he had tumbled into; while Mamma, who fancied that his surprise was only feigned, threw up her hands in admiration of what she thought capital acting, and with an affected simper said, “Dear me! how well you do keep up your character, to be sure.”

“Well, Marm,” answered the wretch, “it be rather hard now-a-days, ’specially with that little affair of Maidstone ’sizes on a man’s back.”

"I never knew any one so funny as you are, Captain, in all my life," replied Mamma. "You military men will have your jokes. But it's no use with me, Captain; I know who you are as well as possible."

"Well, Marm, it warn't me as stript the passage, I can 'sure you," replied the creature.

"Oh! dear me, Captain! I'm sure I hope you don't fancy I ever suspected you of such a thing for a moment," exclaimed Mamma, with the utmost courtesy; "but now do let my daughter and myself join in your laugh at these silly people about here. Now tell me, Captain, do you sell many of these trumpery things?"

"Why no, Marm," he answered, getting serious, "I can't say as how I've took more than a pair of trousers to-day, though I had a hoffer of a humberrellea for this here werry identical teapot; but the ribs worn't whalebone, and so it worn't of no hearthly use whatsomdever to me, though she war a uncommon nice plump girl, to be sure, and I guv her the wink, and told her that if she had sich a thing as a silver spoon andy, maybe I could let her have a set o' real chaney that would look terrible ansome in that back parlor, when she war married to her young man as she wos keeping company with."

As I saw the man's face reddening with the wine he had been drinking, glassful after glassful, I thought it was high time to whisper in Mamma's ear that I was convinced that she was making another of her dreadful mistakes. But Mamma told me I was an ignorant child, and had no perception of character; and scarcely were the words out of her mouth, than the vulgar wretch drew his chair close to Mamma, and nudging her with his elbow, said, in a disgusting way, and with a nasty chuckle, "You seem to have a snug place of it here, eh?"

"Yes, it is a very comfortable place, Captain," replied Mamma. "It is Mr. Dowdeswell's."

"Oh! that's the name of the family, is it, eh, Cookey?" continued the vulgar boor, positively taking Mamma and myself for common servants; "and master and missus is out, are they? Oh! I understands," he added, with a strange

look. Then turning to me, he said, "And Meary! come here and sit down on t'other side of me, and make yerself happy, there's a hangel."

Mamma started up in horror, and screaming out, "Cookey! cookey! Did I hear him call me cookey? Then the man's no officer after all, and only a shameful impostor after all. Oh! leave the house—leave the house, or I'll call in the police!"

"Come, come, none of that there, my dear," he replied, rising and advancing towards Mamma. "Come, I didn't mean no offence; so tip us a bus, and let's be good friends as we were afore. You see little Meary and I here don't go having no breezes," added the impudent fellow, positively chucking me under the chin.

But, as I withdrew from the fellow, he advanced towards Mamma, and she raised her arms to keep him off, saying, "Villain! villain! stand off,—stand off, I say, or I will have you given in charge, I will."

"Holloa! so you wants a little pressing, old un, does yur! Well, I must say I likes it better," he cried, running round the room after poor terrified Mamma, while I rushed to the door, and hurried down the stairs, to alarm the house, and seek for assistance: and Mamma, taking advantage of the open door, soon followed me; and by the time we had brought Mr. Dowdeswell from the garden, we found the man, with the basket on his head, descending the staircase as coolly as if nothing had happened.

Mr. Dowdeswell, in a stern voice, immediately demanded of the fellow what he meant by entering his house, and insulting ladies in the shameful manner he had.

"Yes, what do you mean by it?" demanded Mamma, now quite valiant—"you good-for-nothing scoundrel, you; what do you mean by it, I say again."

"Mean! why I means to say it was you as first begun it. Wasn't I quietly trying to yarn a onest penny outside o'here, and didn't the old un and the young un there have me haxed up into the drawing-room, and begin a treating on me to cake and wine, and call me cap'n, and a grinning at me, and looking at me in a queer kind of way loike; and I'll ask you,



old buffer, now, what was a body to think on that ere? Why, that the two on em had taken a fancy to a cove what warn't perticler bad-looking, to be sure, and that's what I mean. Now, what have them there got to say arter *that*, I should like to know."

"Hoh!" shrieked Mamma, as she fell fainting into one of Mr. Dowdeswell's arms.

"Hoh!" shrieked I, swooning into the other.

As the man saw Mr. Dowdeswell trying to support the pair of us, the impudent fellow said, "I wish you well through it, old codger; I suppose I can't take the old un there off your hands, can I? Well, good bye! give my love to Meary when she comes to;" and then, thank goodness gracious, took his departure!

Scarcely could he have left the house when who should march down from her room but that stupid, stupid, jealous thing, Mrs. Dowdeswell, and seeing him with an arm round each of our waists, and our two heads on his shoulders, stood for a moment aghast on the bottom stair, with her hands lifted up with horror; then springing at her poor little podgy husband, she seized him by his powdered hair, and dragged him by it along the passage, until he, in his agony, was obliged to relinquish his hold of Mamma, who fell heavily on the mat at the parlour-door, while I only escaped a similar fate by coming to myself just at the critical moment.

After this, of course we were obliged to leave the roof of the Dowdeswells, and to take up our abode at the principal hotel; for, as Mamma said, that after all the trouble we had got into through the obstinacy of that Dawdle, she should not think of leaving the place until after the Race-week and the Race-ball was over.

Determined not to be foiled in her intention, Mamma wrote to town, and got Papa to send her an introduction to Dr. Buchanan, the first Physician in the place, and it was not long before we were in the very best society of the county, and we were introduced to that dear Dawdle long before the Race-ball had come off.

Of course the first thing Mamma told him was the strange scrape she had got into with that nasty crockery-man, through

our desire to be introduced to him. We soon became good friends, for, thanks to Mr. Gee, he had often heard of both Mamma and myself before. Upon my word it was very funny, but from the first it seemed as if we were made for each other, for he was delighted with me, and used always to call me Lotty, and declare I was a brick of a girl,—to use my Charles's peculiar terms of endearment.

And, upon my word, most of the ladies in the town were quite in love with Dawdle. He was the boldest rider in the regiment, and had a whole room full of prizes won at Steeple Chases. He had only had three upsets and killed two children at tandem-driving. He was the best shot, too; and at pigeon matches no one was like him. At billiards, he has often told me himself, that he knew he could have made a very handsome living at the Divan. More than this, he had the largest collection of knockers of any Captain of a similar number of years' standing. The amiable creature had fought two duels, and had always "winged his man" like a love. He had studied deeply the noble art of self-defence under Cooper the Gipsy, and he used to boast that there wasn't a cabman in all London that would like to stand up and have a quiet quarter of an hour with him. Fencing, Angelo had taught him, and when he was over in France he was universally admired. I'm sure he had a beautiful voice, and I declare he was a most accomplished and amusing companion, and could imitate sawing bits of wood, and eggs frying, to the life. His man knocking a brick out of the chimney was alarmingly natural. And as for what he called the pea-and-the-thimble rig, upon my word he was as great a proficient as if he had been bred and born at a race-course, and regularly brought up to the profession. The thing which he prided himself most upon was his sleight of hand, which he called palming; and his "*sauter le coup*" was the most perfect thing I ever saw in all my life. In fact, Mamma, who seldom loses at whist, said she wouldn't play with him for any money. Nor did his virtues rest here. He could throw as many as twenty summersaults one after another, and could hold a butcher's hundred weight straight out for fifty seconds with one arm, and he would take any person's bright poker, and strike it over the muscles of his arm until it was bent double.

Indeed, he was, without exception, the most perfect and highly accomplished gentleman I ever knew. He could suit himself as easily to the society of the lowest as he could to that of the highest in the land. St. Giles's or St. James's, it was all the same to him, he was perfectly at home in either. How could I help admiring such a man? Indeed I was only happy when I was in his company. At least, from being so much together, I found my taste gradually conforming to his, and perceiving that nothing gave him so much pleasure as when I endeavoured to imitate him, I at last began to take a delight in doing it, and to feel annoyed when he laughed at any blunders I committed, until with this constant practice I soon got to be, in many exercises, quite his equal. I could drive his mail phaeton quite as well as he did. I was almost as bold a rider in the field, and seldom missed a meet of the hounds if he was willing to take me. At trout or salmon fishing I would throw a fly as dextrously as he would, and with the gun I seldom missed my bird. He had even taught me to smoke my cigarette after dinner, and to look forward for my glass of spirits-and-water at bed-time, until at length the whole regiment hailed me, in their own elegant language, as a regular trump of a girl.

Though sometimes on my pillow I could hardly help contrasting my present tastes and habits with what they had been but a few months back, and thinking what a totally different being I had become, and how utterly I had unsexed myself, to gain the admiration and love of this man, and remembering the early prophecy of my father, as to the degraded thing I should ultimately be, if I continued in the course I had then begun.

But in the morning, I soon shook off the scruples of the over-night. It had been all arranged that I was to be married to Captain Dawdle, and whose taste else had I to adapt my conduct to. If I pleased him, what cared I if all the world beside were dissatisfied.

Well, on the last day before that of my marriage came, my wedding-dress had been sent home, and tried on. Mamma had kissed me affectionately, and told me that I was indeed her own dear girl, and that a life of unalloyed happiness was before me. I had at length won the prize I had so long

sought after, and was about to become the wife of a gentleman of birth, education, and fortune; I should now find that the world would look up to me with envy, and that, before long, she was satisfied that I should bless her for the care and pains she had been at in selecting so fit and estimable a mate for me to be united to.

But what struck me as strange was, that Papa, all the evening through, never once alluded to the subject of my marriage on the morrow; and I could see that, though his eyes were fixed on a book before him, his mind was far away from the page; nor did he speak so much as a word to me, until I arose to wish him good night.

Then taking me by the hand, he led me into his study, and seating me beside him, he pressed my palm in his, and, with visible emotion, told me that we were about to say "good night" for, perhaps, the last time under that roof, beneath which I had passed the whole of my life with him.

"Lotty," he said, "I have always given you to understand that I have no right of control over your affections. They were the bounteous gift of your Heavenly Father, and it has been my duty, as your earthly one, to guide and direct them. Many years ago, I warned you against selling them for any worldly or mercenary consideration, pointing out to you that the only real equivalent for love was love; and that if you bartered them on any other condition, you became that which I loathed and trembled lest my daughter ever should become. You know best whether, in your own secret soul, you really love the man you are about to be wedded to. But if I am not much mistaken, you have, in your solitary moments, felt how he has unsexed you, and how he has seduced you, not only to lay aside the lovely gentleness of woman, but to put off from your nature all the homely and peaceful virtues of the wife, as well as to sow in you a distaste of the blessed cares of the mother. The qualities you admire in this man who is to become your husband, are the very opposite to those which he should admire in you; but having deprived you of woman's meekness and timidity, which was your birthright, depend upon it the union is so unnatural, that it cannot come to good. And if you feel and know that what I say is true,

do let me implore you, not only for your own happiness, but his, not to swear to love and honour that man who has demoralized you in taste, thought, and feeling. Here I suppose ends my duty to you; my words you may pass by until it be too late to heed them. However, let your trials come upon you when they may, here, my child, shall always be a home for you, and here a heart ever ready to console you, when, alas! it may be too late to direct and guide."

All I could do was to sob out my thanks for his continual and kind care of me, and to assure him that I felt convinced that my union with Charles could only be one of happiness.

But all that Papa could say, in return, was to murmur, "God grant that it may be so, Lotty!—God grant that it may be so, my child!"

Upon my word, the happiest day of my life was the most miserable morning I ever passed in the whole course of my existence. We commenced crying at church. My father cried when he gave me away; Charles cried when he took me for his wedded wife; and I cried when I took him for my wedded husband; and the bridesmaids cried because every one else cried.

At breakfast, Papa made us all cry when he wished us joy for the remainder of our days. Charles cried when he thanked Papa for all the pleasing things he had said, and the joy that had been heaped upon us; and when the time came for Charles and myself to withdraw to the Continent, every soul, down to the very servants, cried, as if I were about to be handed over to the executioner, instead of the arms of my dear Charles.

When we returned to England, Charles and I thought that our happiness was never to end. Scarcely a pleasure but what we could join in it, and enjoy it together. We hunted, and shot, and fished together; and scarcely a sport that he indulged in that I didn't participate in the pleasure with equal joy.

But, alas! how short was my reign of happiness and content doomed to be! Charles had agreed to ride a steeple-chase, and I don't know from what cause, but I parted with him in fear. Scarcely had I been married to my reckless,

high-spirited husband six weeks, before he was brought home to me a bleeding corpse: he had been thrown from his horse in a desperate leap, and falling upon his head, had been deprived of his life, in the madness and fury of the sport.

I must leave to the imagination of the reader what were my feelings on that awful—awful day. Suffice it, that even in the uttermost depths of my agony I heard my father's voice still ringing in my ears, as it warned me of the horrors that impended over me, and that now indeed had fallen and crushed me to the very earth—and dashing the cup of bliss and hope from my lips, had left nothing but the very dregs of despair for poor me to feast upon.

Unfortunately my husband's property was all in expectation, and dying before he inherited it, I was left a widow in my youth, without even the widow's mite that I could call my own.

What was to become of me I knew not—all I felt was, that my troubles were far from being at an end.

## OFFER THE NINTH.

HAH! THERE ARE VERY FEW SINGLE OR MARRIED WOMEN THAT CAN FORM A NOTION OF THE TRIALS THAT AWAIT US POOR, DEAR, BROKEN-HEARTED, AND LONELY WIDOWS. OF COURSE, WHEN MY BELOVED AND NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN HUSBAND WAS SNATCHED FROM ME, I MADE A VOW I WOULD NEVER MARRY AGAIN. AS MY SILLY, FLATTERING FRIENDS, TO CONSOLE ME IN MY HOUR OF TROUBLE, WERE KIND ENOUGH TO TELL ME THAT THE WIDOW'S WEEDS BECAME ME ADMIRABLY, WHY IT STRUCK ME THAT I SHOULD BE WANTING IN RESPECT TO THE MEMORY OF MY SAINTED DAWDLE, IF I DID NOT WEAR THEM FOR A WHOLE TWELVEMONTH, AT LEAST.

I WAS so excited at reverting to the painful fact of my poor dear Charles's sudden decease, at the conclusion of my last chapter, that my feelings were too much for me. My tears fell so fast upon my paper, that they blotted out each word as soon as my pen had traced it. Besides, to tell the truth, my printer had sent me word I must bring my sorrow to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and that it was useless my grieving in the heart-rending and profuse manner I was about to do, as he should be obliged to leave out all my agony for want of space. So as I did not exactly see the fun of weeping over one's poor dear dead-and-gone husband in private, without even a soul to see how sadly one was taking her bitter bereavement to heart, why, I wound up the melancholy affair very rapidly—especially as that young monkey of a boy was waiting below for the copy. Accordingly, I scribbled a letter to the printer, saying I thought he would find I had ceased weeping as he had requested, adding that it wouldn't much matter, for I could bring in my inconsolable affliction very nicely at the beginning of the next chapter, and my feelings could easily stand over for two or three weeks, or so, without losing much of their poignancy.

Well, then, to return to my bitter bereavement.

“Ha———a——ah!”

What an extraordinary cross-grained world this is! One moment we are making the whole of our dear lady friends wretched with envy at our success in life; the next moment we are delighting them with the bitterness of our disappointments. I'm sure when I was first married to my dear Dawdle, (who is now at rest, thank Heaven! though he was far from a good husband to me,) there wasn't a girl we visited that didn't come running up to me on purpose to congratulate me on my approaching wedding with a person of Mr. Dawdle's extraordinary expectations and attractions. Every one kissed me and told me, “I was the luckiest of women, I was. They only wished they were me, and had got those wicked black eyes of mine”—though all the time I knew that directly my back was turned they would go shaking their heads, and wondering whatever Mr. Dawdle could have seen in me, and how on earth a man, with his moustachios and means, could have thrown himself away upon a mere threadpaper as I was! But no sooner did it become known that my dear Charles (whose memory I love to distraction, though I cannot help thinking that the least he could have done for me was to have insured his life) had been cut off in his prime, without coming into his property, than all those who had congratulated me so warmly but a few weeks before, began to throw up their nasty deceitful hands and eyebrows, and to thank their stars they were not me, indeed!—adding, that it was a sad, sad bereavement for me; though they must and would say it served me perfectly right for going on in the way I had done with the man;\* and, further, that there always was something about Mr. D. they never did half like.

\* I trust I need not tell the gentle reader this was nothing but a wicked, wicked story, and that I know for a positive fact that Rosa Jasey was ready to bite her fingers off when she found all her flirtations—and silk purses, and slippers, and embroidered braces, indeed—had been thrown away upon Mr. Dawdle. I took good care, though, to have them all returned to my lady the very first week of my honeymoon—that I did.



However, there was some little excuse to be made for the poor things' nasty petty jealousies. Really when I returned from our matrimonial trip up the Rhine, and saw the beautiful manner in which the little box Charles had taken for me at Notting-hill had been furnished, (indeed, Charles had given a "*carte blanche*" to his upholsterers, and certainly they had done their work magnificently,)—when I saw it all newly fitted up, I say, from kitchen to attic, I could very well understand any poor unmarried girl—however fond she might be of me—being ready to tear my eyes out with vexation, at the idea of a "mere nobody" like myself having been able to get such a splendid roof over her head.

Oh! of all the palaces in a band-box, I do think that pet of a Fuchsia Villa (don't you think the name a pretty one, gentle reader?) was the loveliest I ever beheld in the whole course of my life. To look at it outside, one would have thought it was nothing more than a little, humble, trumpery cottage, far away in the country. It was built in what Master Charles (bless him!) would call "the curds-and-whey order of architecture," and certainly I must confess it was, externally, very much after the style of the celebrated little, romantic-looking milk and bun shops, at the park-gates. Outside it was covered over with unbarked bits of wood, as if it had been put together in the backwoods of America, where a brick was not to be had for love or money. Then all over the lawn stood seats made out of the most crooked boughs of trees that could be put together. They were the loveliest things to look at, certainly—but the most uncomfortable to sit down upon; for positively the backs were so knotty and zigzaggy, and the elbows were so lumpy and spiky, and the seats were so hard and ribbed, that if you sat down on one for a moment or two, I declare you got up with your body all over dents, and marks, and pins and needles.

By the lovely thatch that surmounted the cottage, everybody would have fancied we were always up and stirring with the lark, and that it hardly cost us a shilling for candles all the year round. However, just to let the people who stopped to look at our little box know that the inmates were not altogether uncivilized, I bought a beautiful pet of a bright brass wire-

cage, with a Java sparrow in it, and hung it up between the muslin curtains in the little bow-window of our sweet pretty parlour. Of an evening, too, I used to throw the windows open, and play away and sing Italian songs and French "*Romans*," just to show the passers by we were not exactly the rustic rosy boors that the outside of our house would have made us out.

Oh! it was so delightful, too, to see the astonishment of all one's friends at finding that which was a humble cottage outside, almost a perfect palace within. And instead of their catching Charles and myself over our bacon and cabbage, and hasty-pudding at one, (augh!) I always took good care to ask them to stop, and take a chop and a glass of Madeira with us at eight, saying I should so like to introduce them to Lord this, and Sir William that.

Dear! dear! then how delicious it was to see them—all the time they were talking so politely to me, and pretending to be so *much* interested with what I was saying—looking so slyly round the room, biting their lips with envy, and wishing to goodness gracious! they could furnish their houses like ours, and make me just as spitefully envious at the sight of it as they themselves felt. And well, I'm sure! the poor things might have been ready to eat the tips of their fingers off with jealousy; for I never, never saw such a little *bijou* as that Fuschia Villa of ours was! I declare we hadn't a grate in the place that wasn't most beautifully bright. Of course we never had a fire in any of them—unless indeed sometimes, when it was bitterly cold, and I let Charley, as a great treat, have a little basketful of live coals placed in the grate, as far from the bright bars as possible. But one never gets any thanks in this vain, empty world; for there I should have my gentleman threatening to go and sit with the cook in the kitchen! saying, "what with our bright hobs, bright bars, and bright pokers, the Englishman's fireside now was about as cosey as Siberia."

Oh! those loves of tables! I have them now in my mind's eye! As highly polished as a coach-panel. You might have smoothed your hair in any leaf of them—though to be sure they were seldom seen; for, being of the very handsomest

wood, we of course kept them covered up under Japan imitation rosewood or mahogany covers. I declare they were a great deal too good for use. If ever we had dinner on them, I was obliged to have the mats several inches high for fear of blistering the beautiful polish. Indeed, all dinner time, I used to be in such torment lest, on the cloth being removed, I should find a white ring where each plate had been, that I've over and over again vowed that I would have one of the common deal tables up out of the kitchen; for with the imitation mahogany cover, I was sure it would look quite as well, and nobody would be able to tell the difference.

The silk damask on our sofas was so rich and of such a lovely delicate yellow, that everybody said it was quite a shame to sit upon it. However, we scarcely ever allowed any one to do so, for we generally kept them covered up with a very nice common cheap chintz; and when, on grand occasions, we did take the covers off them, I used to throw all over the backs and ends, the very thickest and closest anti-Macassars that I could get, for really and truly I could never rest easy as long as any one was lolling on them.

The chairs were the loveliest things to look at, though I must confess they were the most uncomfortable to use. In one corner stood what was called a "devotional," with its legs as short and its back as straight and long as a weasel's, so that the seat was scarcely higher than a footstool. However pleasant it might have been to kneel upon, I can only say it was the most dreadfully uneasy thing to sit upon; for there you had your knees up in your mouth, while your body was as stiff and upright as a Quaker's. In another part of the room was a thing without any legs at all, which they called an American rocking-chair. I'm sure I never saw a lady sit down in it, but I felt for her; for immediately she did so—back the poor dear went, and you could see by the agony of her expression, and her nervous clutch to the sides of the shaky commodity, that she fancied her feet were about to be thrown over her head, and she be forced to fling a summersault, in the presence of the whole company; and then, being afraid to get out of the wriggling thing, lest it should tip as far forwards with her as it had done backwards, the

poor, dear, timid love would sit in it, wabbling about, until she would feel downright sea-sick with the nasty motion. Besides this, we had "conventionals," in which the parties wishing for a cosy chat were obliged to sit back to back. Then there were "recumbents," with backs as bendable as a clown's, and fronts that pulled out like press bedsteads. Indeed, every variety of chair was there, and positively not two of them alike.

In fact, there wasn't a soul that came to our house, and saw the beautifully extravagant way in which it was furnished, that did not say what a lucky, lucky girl I was to have "settled" so well, and wound up by asking me, "However, Charlotte, you pet! did you manage to do it?"

Dear mother—who before had always been a good mother to me—no sooner found me the mistress of our little palace of a cottage, than I declare her affection grew so unbounded, that positively she would hardly leave me for two days together. If she didn't drop in to lunch, she was sure to come to dinner. "Ah!" she would say, "what a price had she paid for her experience of domestic management, and did her dearest boy Charles think she was the woman to refuse to impart that valuable, dear-bought knowledge to her own child? No!—not if she had to bring her boxes and stop a whole twelvemonth with us."

But I think the most beautiful trait of all in Mamma's amiable character, was her extraordinary solicitude for her "own darling Charley's" health. Over and over again has she, after luncheon, taken me by the hand, and with tears in her eyes, said, "Charlotte, my dear pet, you are *not* sufficiently careful of that treasure of a Charley of yours. You seem to forget, my darling one, that if anything dreadful were to happen to him (which Heaven forbid!) before he is twenty-one, the property would pass into other hands. Ah! my words may well alarm you, my sweet lamb, but I speak strongly, in order to awaken you to the value of your husband's precious life, and to force him to wrap himself up well whenever he goes out in this horribly variable climate of ours. Then, again, you positively should not allow a mere infant, like him—for such, you know, he is in the eyes

of the law—to ride those dreadfully high spirited horses he does. When he has arrived at years of discretion, of course he can do as he likes, but now you really should look after him more than you do, and not permit him to go out upon that vicious little iron-grey mare of his. Only the other day, I saw the frisky thing prancing all down Oxford-street side-ways. Besides you know, as well as I do, the animal has such a trick of shying, that I am certain, some fine afternoon, she will shy your inestimable husband into an early grave.”

Alas! little then did I think that Mamma's words were so soon to come true!

Dear Charley had very foolishly entered his iron-grey for the officers' grand steeple-chase, which was to come off near Canterbury. At the mess, he had backed his “Kitty” to such a heavy amount, that it was no use my talking and crying to him. He must ride it, come what may. Besides, he said he knew he was sure to win, for there was one leap which he was certain none but his Kitty could take; for Bates had been practising her at it, and said she went over beautifully.

The day before the steeple-chase was to come off, we had the new landau round, and travelled in it *per rail* to Ashford, where two pair of post horses awaited us, and we dashed and rattled into Canterbury in such style, that everybody looked round to see who it was. Oh, it was so beautiful! Of course dear Charley was well known there, and to get a nod from the rich, generous, and stylish young Mr. Dawdle, was a thing to be proud of. So as we galloped up the street, I declare it made one think quite well of the world, to see the hats, one after another, either lifted or touched to us by nearly every one we passed.

It was a most extraordinary thing, but I was as certain as certain could be, that something was going to happen the next morning. I hadn't had so much as a wink all night. When I told Charles as much, he said, in a nasty way, he supposed *something* would happen in the course of the day, and insisted that I was as nervous as a stag. But I was determined I wouldn't give way, and told him it was not nervousness, but that I saw a superior Power in it all. However,

he only laughed at me for my fears, and said, that all *he* saw in it was the lobster salad that I ate so much of last night; adding, that he thought at the time it would make me ill.

But I knew a great deal better. Looking-glasses, I said to myself, are not broken for nothing, and wasn't one of ours knocked off our dressing-room table by the blind, when that stupid Mary left the window open, the very day after we returned from the Continent. Every lady possessing the least knowledge, is well aware that it is out of the power of the first physician in the land to save the life of a person after that. Again, I should like to know whether, as women of mind, we are to shut our eyes to the awful fact of sitting down thirteen to dinner. And *that* we foolishly did at Papa's, not a fortnight before poor Charley was snatched from me. Though Mamma, to prevent its having any effect, would insist upon Mr. Brooke dining at a side-table; still I felt convinced in my own mind that it was quite useless trying to turn aside the blow, and that all drugs and medicine would be utterly thrown away upon one of the thirteen before the year was out. Moreover, I should like to know what made that nasty black dog of Charles's howl all the night through—and that just before we started for Canterbury. It's very fine for a pack of self-conceited, stuck-up men, to preach to you about cause and effect, but what rubbishing facts, I ask, are more settled in all their trumpery sciences, than that our dog's cries were occasioned simply by his seeing Death coming to our house to tear my poor dear Charley from me, before he had come into his property? Besides, all I can say is, I never knew a coffin jump out of the fire for nothing—that's all! And as perfect a one as ever I set eyes upon *did* pop out from the bars, and deposit itself down on the rug between Charley and me, whilst we were at breakfast, on the very morning of that hateful steeple-chase. Wiseacres may smile, and say that the world is not carried on in that way, and that the events of life depend upon other things than hollow bits of coals leaping out of the fire. But don't tell me!—I saw the finger of Providence in it. Papa may go on as long as he likes, declaring it is *simply* the calorific causing an explosion of the liberated carburetted hydrogen; but all I can say is—fiddle!

It was no caloric, nor any such stuff, but a superior power, warning a poor, dear, helpless woman that her fond husband was about to be snatched from her, and telling him, as plainly as it could speak, to go and insure his life, so that his darling wife might be comfortable when he was no more.

My Charles knew his iron grey was the only horse that could take that leap, and yet how did it turn out? Yes! how did it turn out, I repeat?

When he left me that morning, his spirits, though they were always high, were higher than I ever remember them to have been before. He wanted me to go and see the start, but I told him I would have nothing to do with it. Of course I was only a silly for my pains; "and if I didn't like to come without pressing, I might let it alone."

And so I did, thank Heaven!

Over night, I fear he had taken more wine than was good for him at the mess; yet before he started, he held out his arm to show me, as he said, what capital cue he was in, and that his hand was as steady as a finger-post; so I needn't be alarmed, for he was certain to win. He had invited, too, all "the lads" to dine with him; and I was to see the hotel people got "an out and out" dinner ready, and to take care there was plenty of curry, for the fellows liked it; and to have "the prog" on table at four to a moment, for they would all be precious sharpset."

About half-past three, as I was standing out in the balcony, to see if I could catch a glimpse of the officers returning, I observed Bates leading the iron-grey pony down the street, with its knees bound up, and a dense crowd following after it. All the people were talking in couples as they walked along. I turned cold from head to foot, for I felt certain that some dreadful accident had occurred.

Rushing down stairs into the yard, I ran up to Bates, and trembling in dread of the reply that I knew was coming, I stammered out, "What ever has happened, Bates? Where is your master?"

"He'll—a—be here, Ma'am—that is—a—Captain Pad-dings, Ma'am, said he'd come on, and speak to you, and tell you all about it, Ma'am."

“All about what—about what, Bates?” I half screamed out. “I command you to tell me what it is!”

The man turned away his head, not liking to answer; and I was about to repeat the command I had given him, when Captain Paddings dashed into the yard.

Jumping off his horse, he advanced towards me as quickly as I did towards him.

“I wish to speak with you up stairs, Madam,” he said, with a tremulous voice. “I have something of great importance to communicate to you.”

“What is it?—what is it?” I cried, wringing my hands. “Pray, pray let me know the worst! I can bear anything; indeed, I can!”

“Up stairs, Madam,” he answered, as he grew paler; “up stairs, you shall know all.”

He tried to lead me away, but at this moment the crowd rushed in at the gates, and half filled the yard.

Then there was a cry of, “Stand back! make way—make way there!”

The Captain, on hearing this, placed his arm round my waist, and endeavoured to drag me along, saying half angrily, “This is no place for you, Madam; you *must* come up stairs.”

But he could not keep the sight from me; for before he could drag me away, I saw turning the corner of the yard the body of a man stretched at full length, and borne above the heads of the crowd.

I felt it was my husband, and saw and heard no more.

\* \* \* \* \*

As soon as I was well enough, I returned to town, determined that my poor dear Charles should be consigned to his last home, at least with decency and comfort;—though, upon my word, I hardly knew how I was to do it; for Mamma took good care, immediately on my return, to open my eyes to the penniless state in which Mr. Dawdle had left me. However, though I might be poor, still there was no need to let the world know it. So I made up my mind to treat my husband’s remains with all the respect I could!

Mamma was soon with me, to arrange about the advertisement. This she drew out for me from a form in



that day's "Times." When I glanced over it, it struck me as being so very cold and concise, and to look such a mere matter of business, that I could not help saying to her, I thought it would have a much better appearance to the world, if she could manage to put in "universally regretted," somewhere or other.

"I really don't see the good of it, my dear," replied Mamma. "It's all very right, proper, and nice, when a poor dear man leaves a large property behind him to pay for it. Perhaps you are not aware that the newspapers always charge extra for 'universally regretted,' my pet," she added; "and Mr. Dawdle, you should remember, hasn't left you a sixpence in the world to enable you to go to the extra expense, my poor dear poppet."

"Well then," I said through my tears, "I think you might shorten the first part a bit, and wind up with something about 'leaving a young and disconsolate widow to lament his loss.' Really, it appears to me to be only decent!"

"I can't help that, my lamb!" Mamma answered, shaking her head; "had it pleased Providence to spare my poor dear boy until such time as he had come into his property, then, of course, you might have made your agony as long and acute as you like, my afflicted angel! But when *we* have to pay for your grief by the line, and your sorrow actually has to come out of your poor Father's pocket, why I can only say you must reserve your tears for your closet, and make up your mind not to give way to your grief in the columns of a newspaper."

The next thing I did was to send to a "*Maison de Deuil*," and very soon one of the most respectable and melancholy-looking gentlemen waited upon me, and asked me, with a deep sigh, what mourning he could have the miserable pleasure of serving me with.

He was dressed in deep dead black from head to foot. His jewellery was all jet, and his rings were mourning ones. Scarcely any of the beaver of his hat could be seen for the crape round it. Not only his expression, but his complexion was clouded, for he was as bilious as he was lugubrious.

He brought with him the latest funeral fashions, so that

I might grieve after the first style of sorrow. They were all from Paris; indeed, he told me ladies of quality objected to show the acuteness of their feelings in any other articles, and that their house had the honour of serving some of the most elegant and inconsolable widows in the land.

Then drawing his beautiful clean white cambric handkerchief from his pocket, he slowly unfolded and shook it, till the "*extrait de rosemary*" with which it was scented perfumed the whole room.

With a deep sigh and downcast eyes, he asked,—“Is it for a deceased partner, Madam—ha-a-ah?”

“Ye-e-es,” I stammered out, as I buried my face in my pocket-handkerchief.”

“Aa-a-h! It must be a severe affliction, to you, Madam!” he answered with another and a deeper sigh. Then turning to the wicker basket covered with oilskin that the woman who accompanied him had brought with her, he continued,—“Will you allow me to show you some caps? We have some here that I think would become the classic style of your countenance extremely well.”

“Indeed!” I exclaimed, suddenly withdrawing my handkerchief from my eyes, to look at the two the man had taken out. “Ha-a-ah!” I continued, taking the best looking, and shaking my poor head,—“alas! alas! little did I think that I should come to this. This certainly is very light and pretty, and full of woe.”

“Just so, Madam,” he replied, with a sorrowful bow. “Lady Crummy, who has just buried her fourth husband, wears nothing else, I can assure you, Ma’am. Only last week, we had the hagonny of serving her with another.”

“Poor dear sufferer! I can imagine her feelings as much as I admire her taste,” I answered. “And what might be the price of the article?” I asked, turning my head away to hide my feelings, for it was as much as I could do to prevent making a silly of myself before the man.

“Do not give way, I beg of you, Madam,” he stammered out from behind his pocket-handkerchief, as he blew his nose till he made the room ring again. “We can let you have that as low as five-and-twenty—or, in the present state of your feelings, we will say one guinea.”





*The Widow's Cap.*

"Dear, dear, how very, very cheap!" I replied, startled at the high price; "but I think it is a little too gay for me just now. I should like to see something lower. Have you any in book muslin?"

"Book muslin!" exclaimed the man, horror-stricken; "no widow of fashion ever mourns in book muslin now, Madam. Relicts in the upper circles never grieve for their dear deceased partners in anything under *crêpe lisse*, or tarlatan, I can assure you. We *could* make you one; but I am satisfied a person of your standing, Madam, would as soon think of wearing sackcloth and ashes."

"Alas!" I exclaimed, "I am not versed in these matters. This is only my first bereavement. Will you let me see the other cap, if you please!"

"Certainly, Madam," he replied; "I think you will find it exactly to your sorrow. It is the latest we have had from France. Ladies of 'ton' like the Parisian style of grief much better than ours. It looks much more poignant and tasty, while, at the same time, it is of a much lighter quality, and as cool again for the head. Now, this style of cap is extremely popular among the ladies of the 'beau-monde' in 'la belle France' for an affectionate and deeply-lamented husband. It is called '*Le petit bonnet Lafarge*.' We can let you have it a bargain, Madam. Would you like to try it on? I am satisfied you would look positively '*ravissante*' in that there one."

I went towards the glass to see how I *did* look; and when I caught sight of myself in my weeds, it was too much for me, and I burst out crying, as I said, "I think it would look better if the '*ruche*' was a little fuller."

The poor man seeing my distress, passed his knuckles sharply over his eye, and said in a voice apparently choked with emotion, "Once more, let me beg of you, Madam, not to give way to this bitter hagnony of soul. That we can let you have as low as—twelve and six."

"I will take that one," I said, rousing myself on hearing the low price. "Now I should like to look at some dresses."

"Certainly, Ma'am. Evening or morning sorrow shall I have the misery of showing you?" he answered, again going to the wicker basket, and unfolding a large brown paper

parcel. "Here is an exquisite article for full evening grief, Madam. It is an imitation lute-string silk, though, with a sentiment that I'm sure you will admire, we call it the widow's heart-string. You see it is remarkably strong and elastic—indeed, it is warranted to stretch, but not to crack. Then, again, if it loses any of its brilliance and beauty, I can assure you a little drop of spirits, or even beer, will brighten it up, and restore the colour wonderfully."

"I suppose I must have a dress of it, then," I replied. "How many yards will it take?"

"You would have the body low, as it is for evening sorrow, of course, Ma'am?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, "nice and low, if you please; and I should prefer the skirt very full and rich."

"Certainly, Ma'am," he answered, bowing; "that is quite the approved style for widows. I can assure you we are putting in as many as eleven breadths. Lady Crummy took twelve, but then she likes her grief made up to look as deep and full as possible. Perhaps, Madam, you would not like to venture so far—at first?"

"No, I thank you, eleven will do. How much is it per yard?"

"I can assure you, Madam, we are now selling this as low as seven and six—our object being to alleviate rather than profit by the widow's sorrows."

"I think seven shillings would be quite sufficient," I replied, putting my handkerchief to my eyes, and burying my face in it.

"Well, Madam," he answered, turning his face aside to hide his emotion, "it would ill-become me, under your present feelings, to debate with you about a sixpence. So we will say seven." Then in a bland voice, and leaning over the table, he continued, "Perhaps it would be too much for you to talk about a dress for the morning at present. I am afraid I have distressed you more than you can bear already, my dear Madam," he added, with an excess of sympathy, and a soft, dove-like expression about his eyes as he looked at me, that I didn't half like.

"No! go on," I said, "I can bear anything now. I should like to look at your bombazeen, if you please."

“Bombazeen!” he replied, throwing up his eyebrows, “we don’t sell much of that now, Ma’am. It splits very much, and does not last long. Besides, widows like their mourning to *appear* as durable as possible. Now paramatta is much more the vogue. Here is one, Madam, that you will find extremely serviceable. In fact, I can assure you, it will last a lady for two or three widowhoods at least—and so, indeed, many of our best customers have made it.”

“That will do—that will do,” I cried, quite overcome by my feelings. “Anything, so long as it is rich and cheap.”

“Thank you, Madam,” the young man replied, with interesting sympathy—“thank you; I can well understand your distress. This bereavement must have been a sad, sad blow to you. But I hope and trust there is no children.”

“No, thank Heaven!” I replied.

“That is a great mercy!” he continued. “Only we have some very charming and *distingué* articles for young ladies’ and gentlemen’s mourning, which I’m sure you would have liked very much; and we could sell them just now at a remarkably low figure—indeed, considerably under prime cost.”

“Ha-a-ah!” was all I could say in answer.

“I suppose you would wish the servants to mourn, Madam?” he asked, as soon as he saw I was a little more composed.”

“Yes, of course,” I replied. “How deep is it usual for them to wear it?”

“Knee deep in crape, Ma’am, for excessive sorrow, if you please.”

“And in what material do you usually make it?” I asked.

“We have a very good, stout, lasting, and cheap English merino here,” he replied, taking out another brown paper parcel, “which we call ‘*le respect des pauvres.*’ We have it manufactured expressly for the grief or sympathy of the lower orders. I think you will find it a very good and genteel-looking article, Madam.”

After I had arranged with him about everything necessary, he was preparing to depart, when he drew from his basket another packet, and gracefully advancing towards me, said in a bland voice, “As Providence has kindly ordained, Madam, that grief should not last for ever, perhaps you will be kind enough to think of our house, when the period of

half-mourning arrives. Now, here is a remarkably handsome, chaste, and poetical article, quite new from Paris, Ma'am. We only received it last week, and but two dresses of it have been sold as yet in London. In France they call it '*La Niobe*,' and perhaps you will notice that the light spots on the dark ground, are meant—by a sweet idea, worthy of our inimitable neighbours—to give one the notion of the dress having been stained by tears."

Waving it from me, I told the man, as well as I could, that it was sweetly pretty, and pleased me so much, that when my sorrow was subdued a little, I would certainly think of their establishment.

In the excess of his gratitude, the man, bowing, wiped his shoes several times on my new carpet. At last, having again packed up all his goods, he came towards me with a brown paper parcel under his arm, and drawing a card from his waistcoat pocket, with a bland smile, placed it in my hand, saying—

"Will you allow me, Madam, to present you with a card of our wedding establishment, at the sign of "*La belle trousseau*." Our nuptial assortment is one of the most extensive and chaste in London; and the assistants, both male and female, are all clad in bridal garments—the ladies in book muslin with orange flowers, the gentlemen in blue coats, buff waistcoats, and white trousers. Any lady who may honour us with her patronage, may rely upon having her orders executed with the greatest punctuality and dispatch. The shop, Madam, is next door to our mourning establishment, at the sign, as you are aware, of '*Le crocodile d'or*.'"

Scarcely had I given the orders for the mourning, than I was called upon to make the necessary arrangements for the funeral with the undertaker. Much as I am shocked *now* at the recollection of the venal and tricky sympathy of the gentleman from the "*maison de devil*," still, the coarse and less artful, and thoroughly business-like commiseration of the undertaker even then disgusted rather than soothed me. Scarcely a word of pity fell from his lips, but the sentence was finished with a request for another item to his bill. While to give me the idea that he came to console and assist



the living, rather than get his cent. per cent. out of the dead, he would lard his condolence with passages from the most impressive of all our services; till, instead of consoling, they horrified me. I fancied that, perhaps, only the day before, he had used the same set phrases to some other sister in sorrow, and I felt, as he whined them out, that they were the stock sentiments and clap-trap religion belonging to his trade.

The man stole noiselessly into the dark room, shut the door with extreme care and gentleness after him, and then stood respectfully near it, rubbing his old crinkled black gloves. Though his eyes were apparently cast upon the ground, I could see him looking askant all about the room, to observe in what style it was furnished, and whether his bill was safe. And afterwards, in his conversation, he would endeavour to "cant" out of me, whether my husband had died worth money or not.

When I had informed him of the melancholy cause of my sending for him, he threw up his eyebrows, and drawing in his breath between his teeth, as if in pain, said, with a look of extreme agony, "Dear, dear, dear me!—this is a sad, sad business, Marm. Poor dear departed!—you would like to have him handsomely interred, of course, Marm?"

"Yes," I sobbed out, "of course, handsomely."

"Certainly!" he continued; "I understand, Marm; it's a sad, sad thing to be cut off in one's prime. Man cometh up—you know, Marm—and is cut down like a flower, Marm! Our poor, dear brother,"—and as I stared at him, he added, "that is, as we say at Kensal-green, Marm—was very much respected, I hear. You'll require a large number of hatbands and gloves, I suppose?"

"I cannot say just now," I replied. "I've no doubt I shall; but at present——"

"Of course. I understand, Marm," he continued. "It's very natural in the present distracted state on your feelings. But you shouldn't take on so, Marm—indeed, you shouldn't; for you know, in the midst of life we are in death, Marm. I hope our dear departed brother had insured *his*, Marm?"

I made no reply to the man's impertinent curiosity; and he continued—

“For as I always says, as long as the dear relict and the blessed babes is comfortably provided for, why the agony of the visitation is uncommon softened. For though, you know, Marm, money is the root of all evil, still, as we say at the Green, it's particular pleasant to have a few cuttings of the plant left to comfort a poor body in the hour of woe. Besides, it's been very beautifully ordained, that—whether it's peasant or king—a body must leave his property behind him, Marm. You know we brought nothing into this world, and we can't take nothing out of it, Marm!”

I merely said, “Yes, very true, certainly,” in reply, and Mr. Crowe proceeded.

“Yes, Marm, you see there's no doubt whatever is, is right. And when a poor, dear relict is left very comfortable, it does strike me to be her bounden duty to see that the poor, dear departed is carried to his last home with every mark of honour and respect heaped upon him, Marm. Of course you'd like to have feathers, Marm? they says so much for the poor, dear deceased, you know. I'm sure I never sees feathers but what I always says, there goes a tender husband and an affectionate father!”

“Yes,” I answered, disgusted with the man's artifice.

“Thank you, Marm!” he replied. “The poor dear departed had a large circle of friends, I believe, Marm. They tells me that no one could know the gentleman without loving on him; so, in course, there'll be a good many as would like to follow him, as a last mark of respect, Marm. You'll want a good many mourning coaches, wont you, Marm? And with a gentleman whose connexions laid all among the first people of the land as his did, I really don't think we could with any decency do with less than four horses to each on them, and, in course, six to the hearse.”

“Surely we could do with less than that,” I said, half frightened—intent as even I was upon disguising my situation to the world—at the expense the man was endeavouring to lead me into.

“Oh dear—dear me! No! no! no! You’d never forgive yourself—I know you wouldn’t, Marm—when you came to think it was the last thing as a fond relict could bestow on a poor dear departed. Besides, what would the world say at a lady in your walk of life, Marm, having nothing but two-horse coaches, as if the deceased were a common tradesman going to his last resting-place?”

This was such a dexterous thrust at my vanity, that I soon fancied myself convinced that I should be wanting in proper feeling if I did not make the ghastly display the man had proposed; so I told him to do what he thought our position in the world might require.

“Yes, Marm, certainly! You only leave it all to me, Marm, and I’ll take care that the dear departed shall have as handsome and respectable a thing as any man in London could turn you out, Marm. You shall have the use of our very best pall and horse-trappings—they’ve only been out twice, Marm, and were made for the funeral of Lord Carthamus. I give my word, Marm, I gave no less than eighteen shillings a yard for every inch of the velvet. This here waistcoat’s made out of a piece of the very stuff!”

“Yes, there—that’ll do—anything you like,” I said, wishing to get rid of the man.

“Certainly, certainly; and if you hasn’t made up your mind as to the ground where the poor dear gentleman is to lie, I should like to recommend you either Kensal or Highgate, Marm. Highgate certainly is drier; but then, the Green, you know, is so much more select; and maybe you might feel hurt at the idea of the poor gentleman lying alongside of some common man as had to work for his living, you know, Marm—and that there might be the case at Highgate; though, to be sure, it’s getting more the rage of late, and—let me see—yes! I think we had as much as ten per cent. last dividend. And what’s more, now I come to think on it, I knows of a very nice, snug, dry vault to be disposed on cheap there. And perhaps it might be a consolation for yer to know that when your time was come to be cut down like a flower, Marm—for we’ve all on us but a short time to live, and is full of misery, you know,—that you’ve

got a nice comfortable place already provided for you beside your first—that is, I should say—your poor dear husband. However, I'm distressing on yer by what I'm a saying,—but I hopes you will take it all in the way it's meant, and that's kindly, I give you my word, Marm. Everybody as knows John Crowe, will tell you the very same thing, and that it ain't in him to take advantage of the relict and the orphan. However, I think you said you'd have feathers and six horses—though I hope you understands, Marm, it's all the same to me whether you has 'em or not; for I don't make a penny by it; and that for the matter of what I shall get by it, Shillibeer might have the job."

At last, thank goodness, the man left me; but the next day, to my horror, I received the first intimation of what was in store for me; for, with the morning's earliest post, the following scrawl was handed to me. It was from the obsequious Undertaker, inclosed in a greasy envelope, edged with deep black, and sealed with a coffin nail. The cautious man had been making inquiries in the neighbourhood, and finding that his bill was not quite so secure as he could wish, had thought it better to decline "the honour of my custom" in this curious jumble:—

"John Crowe present respects to Mrs. Captain Dawdle, and beg to inform her that, owing to having to meet a Heavy bill in the Course of next month, i regret i shall Be obliged to Decline Executing the orders you was so good as to honour me with, unless Mrs. Captain D. can favour J. C. with the name of Some party who would be Answerable for the Amount, which, on going over the different items, i find will Come heavy, specially as J. C. always Makes it a rule never to take legal proceedings against the Widow and the Orphan, my Business being for ready Money Only.—Waiting your further favours, i have the honour to remain, Madam, your obedient, humble Servant to Command,

"JOHN CROWE.

"N.B.—We are now taking off Twenty-five per cent. Discount for ready Money only. Weekly payments taken."

But Mr. Crowe was not the only one who had made him-

self acquainted with the penniless state in which my husband's sudden death had placed me. His polite note was soon followed by a host of similar ones from all our different tradesmen, who were sorry to intrude upon me at such a moment; but having (like Mr. Crowe) a heavy bill to meet in a few days, they were obliged to request immediate payment of their accounts. In fact, scarcely a knock came to the door, but what it was either a letter, or a visit in person, from some fresh creditors, who, having trusted Mr. Dawdle to a large amount, until he should come into his property, had heard of his death while he was yet in his minority, and had hurried up in their alarm to the house, to see what they could pick up from the wreck.

Some, more bold and unfeeling than the rest, would insist on speaking to me. On being told I could see no one, they would force themselves into my presence, and revile my dead husband to my face, while his remains were still in the house; calling the place a "nest of swindlers," and vowing, with oaths, "they wouldn't stand still and be robbed of their money as they had been—no! not if they had to sell the bed from under me!"

All this nearly drove me mad. I didn't dare to send to my father, and be the first to tell him that a worse evil than even he had foreseen in my marriage, had fallen so soon upon his child. Then, again, I shuddered as I feared that my ruined credit would deprive me of the means of burying my poor husband without papa's aid. At last, after turning and turning over in my mind all the different schemes that presented themselves to me, one after another, I determined on disposing of the whole of the plate we had in the house, together with whatever jewels I possessed, in order to pay my last act of duty to poor Charles.

Scarcely, however, had I made up my mind to do so, when, to my horror, an "execution" was put into the house by one of the many parties who had advanced money to my husband, at exorbitant rates of interest, and secured themselves by means of what I believe is called a "warrant of attorney;" on which, hearing of my loss, they had entered up "judgment," as the man told me.

This, of course, swept all hope and all means from me. However, one stone remained unturned. I had not as yet applied to my father's upholsterer. I thought I knew enough of the man to be satisfied that he would not refuse to trust me. Papa had dealt with him since he had first settled in life; and I remembered him ever since I had been a child. As anything was better than applying to my father, I at once determined on sending for Mr. Cawthorne.

Hastily scribbling a note, I despatched it to him. Then I began to fear lest, if he saw the man in possession below, he too might refuse to help me.

That evening, when I heard his single knock at the door, I could not help trembling for my fate. I stole out on to the landing and peeped over the bannisters, to assure myself that the Jew was safe down stairs. For in the dread of my circumstances being discovered, I felt convinced no one could see the man without knowing who and what he was. But from the smell of tobacco that filled the house, I was certain the fellow was smoking as usual in the parlour. Thank heaven, though, the door was shut! and as I looked over into the hall, there was old Mr. Cawthorne in the passage, wiping his bald head before he came up stairs.

After he had entered the room, it was as much as I could do to extract from him the answer I so much desired. For he *would* keep contrasting my present widowed state with that of my past childhood. One moment he was condoling with me on my unhappy loss; and the next, babbling of the time when he first knew my father, and I was a little thing that could hardly "toddle." Scarcely had he told me "he was very sorry to hear on the sad business, and that his Missus had read it to him on the paper last Sunday; and, as she had said at the time, she were quite cut up, for I had always been an uncommon fav'rite of hers"—than he began throwing up his hands, and shaking his head, as he said, "he had known me ever since I was scarcely higher than his two-foot rule, and it was he as had made the high baby chair for me to sit at table with. More than that, he had furnished my father's house, just after he was married, when it wasn't quite such a grand place as it was now, he could tell me.

“ Ah, Miss!—that is, Mum, I mean”—he added, with a deep sigh—“ I little thought then as how things would ever have come to this, or that I should live to see those little rosy cheeks of yours inlaid in a widow’s cap! Hah! no more did your old father, I’ll be bound! and there isn’t a man in the whole parish as I respects so much as he, for what I calls a real honest, upright, and downright old English gentleman, and that’s just what Mr. De Roos is—and I don’t mind who hears me say it! I never lost a penny by him, and I’ve yearned many a pound of his in my time. And I will say this, my money has always been just as safe with him as if it had been in my own pocket—and much safer too, for the matter of that.”

I took advantage of the first pause to tell him I wished him to conduct the funeral of my late husband; but that—a—that—a—I should be unable—a—at least until my affairs were settled—to—a—and as I hesitated and stammered over the sentence, Mr. Cawthorne suddenly became thoughtful and stroked his chin, and said, “ Hem,” as if he was turning my proposition for credit over in his mind.

“ Yes!” at length he exclaimed, again shaking his head, “ it’s an awkward business, and I’ve no doubt it’s left you anything but comfortable.” Then, as if to avoid the question, he continued, while I sat listening to him in an agony of suspense, yet fearing to seem too anxious for his reply,—“ Dear! dear me, too! and it seems but yesterday—and yet it must be—let me see—yes, it was just about the time when I made them Pembrokes for your father—and that’s eighteen year ago, if it’s an hour—when you used to come running into the drawing-room, and a stealing all my tacks while I was a-putting up the curtains—and very handsome curtains they was, to be sure—and a-running off with my hammer directly I put it out of my hand, to fasten the handles on your wooden swords, as you and little Master James, as died, wanted to act the play with. I suppose you don’t recollect the little mahogany doll’s bedstead, with furniture and bedding complete, as I gave you on your birth-day, Miss?” he asked, half smiling at the recollection.

“ Yes! yes! I recollect it perfectly. But—a—a—” I answered, trying to bring him back to the subject, and yet

feeling nearly certain, by his strange digressions from the object of his visit, that he wished, yet didn't like, to refuse me.

"Bless my heart! if any one had told me at the time as I gave you that doll's bedstead, that this was a-going to happen, I'm sure I wouldn't have believed it—no, not if I had dreamt it three times," he continued, without answering my question. "Howsumdever, I a'n't the same man myself now, Miss, as I was then, and I'm sure I couldn't make them finikin articles at present. You see my eyes don't serve me now as they used. When I was a young man, there warn't a journeyman in the trade as could come a-nigh me for fancy-work. Now, there was a work-table as I made afore I was out of my time—my old woman's got it, and wouldn't part with it for love or money I know—well, that table, I mean to say, can't be matched in the kingdom for good fancy-work. It's all inlaid with different coloured woods, like flowers, you see—Parquetry work, you know, Miss—that is, Marm, I should say again, asking your pardon."

"But," I said, "you have forgotten to answer my first question, and to tell me whether you would have any objection to conduct the funeral of my lamented husband?"

"Any objection!" he answered, surprised; "why, haven't I know'd your father, when he lived at Somers-town, and was plain *Mr. De Roos*, with a red-and-blue lamp outside the door, and a little kind of pothecary shop, which they used to call the surgery, round the corner. And didn't he bring into the world my eldest boy, Ed'ard, as will be out of his time next year come Michaelmas—and a fine strapping youth he is, though I says it. And do you think, Marm, I'd be after refusing to trust your father, or any of his family? No; I only wish as either him or his'n owed me a thousand pounds, that's all."

I was about to explain to him, as I had before stated, that it would be out of my power to discharge his bill for some considerable time, when he interrupted me, saying,—

"There, Marm, don't let's have another word. I know all about it, and will do everything as lies in my power. So if you'll only leave the business to me, I'll take care the percession shan't be no disgrace either to you or the family."



I burst into tears as I heard the words come from his lips. I could have thrown myself at the good old man's feet, for the weight he had removed from my heart.

"There now, come, Miss Charlotte—for I forgets your other name—there now, don't take on so in this way," he said, trying to console me. "I know it has been a sad, sad blow to you, and I dare say it goes nigh to break your heart, first to lose your husband, and then to have all this fine furnitur' and things—which seems to be uncommon well put together, to be sure—taken from you. But if so be as there is anything as you has a fancy for—either your piany—or your Devenport, may be—or your wardrobe even—why only you just let me know the day afore the sale comes on,"—(and the words grated on my ear as he spoke them)—"and I'll buy them in for you."

The expression of the thanks I could hardly find words to utter, was interrupted by the sudden stopping of a carriage opposite the door. As soon as Mr. Cawthorne had quitted the room, I went to the shutter, and cautiously opened it a little way to see who it was, wondering to myself which of our fashionable friends it could be, that had at length contrived to visit me in my affliction.

I didn't remember having seen the carriage before; and I was only in time enough to catch sight of a lady in black as she hurried across the pavement to the door. The shutter was still in my hand when the servant announced my sister Fanny—"Mrs. Brooke."

No sooner did I hear the name, than I felt the spirit of my pride come over me again, numbing all the generous feelings of my nature. I would rather have faced my husband's bitterest creditor than my own sister. Of late years I had for ever been struggling to distance her, and yet—strive as I might—she somehow, in the end, had managed to get before me in the world.

Only a few weeks back I had gloried in my fancied triumph. In the lottery of life I seemed to have drawn a rich prize and she almost a blank. We were both married on the same day, and while I appeared to have a life of ease and affluence before me, Fanny's comforts seemed to be limited to a bare

sufficiency, and her days doomed to one perpetual struggle "to make both ends meet."

Besides, in the flush of my prosperity, I had rather avoided than sought her society. If she had come to see me, it was true I was pleased, but then it was because I could let her see how much grander my house was than her own. Whenever I was forced, for the look of the thing, to return her visit, I had always delighted in running over to her all my grand acquaintances, and to make her feel how much I was her superior.

And now to have *her* calling upon *me* in the very depths of my distress—especially when I felt it was merely her knowledge of that distress that had brought her to me—to have *her* coming to offer me a helping hand, was more than I could bear. I knew the very chair I proffered her was about to be taken from me, and yet there was she, coming in the Brougham they had just been able to start, to offer me—as I felt convinced she had—an asylum under her husband's roof.

She was dressed in deep mourning; and no sooner did she see me than the tears started to her eyes, and we both sat silent, not even liking to look at each other.

"Charlotte," she at length began, "I have come to know whether I can be of any assistance in these bitter, bitter trials of yours."

I bit my lips as I heard her proffer the annoying kindness. Though from the moment she had entered the room I had expected it, still I was hardly prepared for it.

"Thank you, Mrs. Brooke," I answered, with a stiff bow, "I'm sure I am *very very* much obliged to you; but as yet there is no necessity, I am glad to say, of my becoming a pensioner upon the bounty of yourself and Mr. Brooke."

"Come, come, Charlotte," she replied, taking my hand, "this is not the time for any silly pride. You have for many years past misunderstood me. But you *must not* and *shall not* do so any longer. I know all, dear Lotty, and believe me, from my soul, I pity you, poor girl."

"Of course," I said, as pointedly as I could, "of course *you pity me*, and no doubt are very happy to have an opportunity of pitying me."

“This is ungenerous of you, Lotty,” she replied. “I came here in good feeling to you, and I am determined you shall not receive me in any other spirit. We are now, thanks to Papa’s influence, getting on in the world, faster, I’m sure, than we could ever have expected; and I have talked the matter over with Alfred, and he has sent me here to beg of you to come and make your home with us; and you know we might be *so* happy together.”

“Never!” I said inwardly to myself; “not if I have to go from door to door, and beg for my living.” Then, turning round to her, I said, with bitter gratitude, “I’m sure *I’m exceeding indebted* to Mr. Brooke for his generous consideration; but I think it would have been more delicate in my sister’s husband, if that *gentleman* had not been quite so anxious to believe he had a pauper for a sister-in-law.”

“Mr. Brooke, Charlotte,” replied Fanny, colouring as she spoke, “believes—and indeed knows—his sister-in-law to be in distress; and he has had the delicacy to send me to offer you the sympathy and assistance that he feared might come roughly from him.” Then rising, she placed her arm round my neck, and as she kissed me, said, “Come, Lotty, Lotty, why let this pride stand between you and your best friends?”

“Best *friends!* Best *friends,* indeed!” I returned, as I cried with rage. “Don’t tell me, Ma’am; if I had no better *friends* than you in the world, I should be badly off indeed! Don’t tell me! Pretty *friends,* indeed! Ha! ha! FRIENDS! when you know you only came here to glory over my downfall, and to boast about your getting on so well in the world, at a time when you knew I had been deprived of everything.”

“Sister! sister!” she said, frightened at the vehemence of my manner, “*you know* I didn’t come for that.”

“You did—you did!” I almost screamed; “you know in your own heart you did! You came to me in the arrogance of your success—under the subterfuge of offering me *your home*—to let me know that *mine* was about to be taken from me. Or else why did you come in your new carriage? Why—answer me—why?”

“If I had thought of it for one moment, Charlotte,” she replied, “knowing the pride of your nature, I would have

walked, rather than have hazarded these angry feelings at a moment like this. Again, as Heaven is my judge, sister, I came here in perfect faith and sympathy, to act—as I always have been—your *sincerest friend*. Will you now, after this, receive me as your *meanest enemy*?"

I was so stung with poor Fanny's unalterable kindness, that seeing I could not offend her, I only grew more savage, and intent upon saying cruel and unjust things to her.

All I had gone through was light to this trial, for I would *not* give in to her, even though I felt that if she did not go soon, I might perhaps have the bailiff's man growing suspicious, and introducing himself into the room, as he had done over and over again before.

At last, thank goodness, Fanny rose to depart. Taking my hand in hers, she told me, as she wept, "She wished she had never come; for then she would have loved me more, though she should have hated herself for it."

As soon as she was gone, I lost all command over myself. The excitement my pride had produced was now followed by a corresponding amount of depression. I burst out crying. As my tears relieved and sobered me, I began to think I might have wronged my sister, in attributing the mean motives I had to her visit. I called to mind the frankness of her manner, and the many efforts she had made to turn aside my suspicions and my anger.

First, I thought of going after Fanny, and asking her forgiveness. But her husband, most likely, would be at the house, and whatever my feelings might be towards *her*, still there was no need to humble myself before *him*. Then I determined on sending a servant after her, saying I wished to speak with her; and when Fanny came back, and we were all alone, I would throw myself on her neck, and ask her pardon. Still, even then, I felt convinced the words would never leave my tongue, and the first unkind syllable she might utter, would be sure again to fire me, and perhaps make matters even worse than they were now.

Besides, I could *not* bring myself to acknowledge, in the presence of my *younger* sister, that I had done her wrong. So the best way, I said to myself, would be to write a letter.

There I could be calm and collected. I could weigh over each separate sentence before I committed myself. Then, too, I could say just as much as would conciliate her without degrading myself.

But when I came to write, and my feelings got each moment more and more cool, every line seemed to be too penitent and crouching, as I read it over carefully after I had written it. Copy after copy I tore up, in the *hauteur* of my pride; until at length, finding I could not confess my error without (as I foolishly imagined) lowering my own dignity, I pushed the paper from me, saying to myself, "Well, perhaps it will be all for the better if I don't write at all. I dare say I sha'n't die of starvation for want of Miss Fanny's trumpery assistance.

Then as I sat still, biting the end of my pen with vexation, I could not help thinking to myself how Fanny had always—let me struggle as I would—got the better of me. How she, without an effort, had succeeded; while I, despite of all my continual efforts, had failed. And so I went on, giving full play to all my bitter envy, till the ungenerous thoughts came bubbling up so thick and fast in my heated brain, that I got to look upon her very virtues as vices; and because I lacked the courage and generosity to do towards her what, but a few moments back, I felt it was my duty to do, I got to hate her more and more, and to convince myself I was the injured party, and she had never done her duty to me.

I'd done with her, and would sooner die of want, than accept the hated charity she offered.

Thus I went on, nursing my spleen. Was it to be wondered at, then, that what with the crowd of my misfortunes—the bitterness of my disappointments—the suddenness of my bereavement—my quarrel with my sister—the revilings of my husband's creditors—and the struggle I had had even to get him decently buried—all had made me so wretched, and had so depressed my mind, that now the violence of my different emotions had subsided, I felt embittered and churlish, while all life appeared to me to be but one long, weary march of sorrow to the grave. There was not a bright spot for me

in the world; and I got to love the darkness in which I had wept away so many days. What others thought most beautiful, I, in the distemper of my melancholy, had got to look upon as mere tinsel and frippery. The noblest acts of virtue I reduced into calculating selfishness. Each book I opened to divert my mind, and to try and get some little solace from, seemed to me to be but the merest sentimentality—the words of passion without the feeling. If any one sought to comfort me in my distress, I felt certain the expression of their sympathy was mere lip-labour, and that instead of pitying me, they were in their hearts all glorying in my downfall.

When the day for the interment of poor Charles' remains arrived, I saw in the whole ceremony a mockery, and such a mere transparent varnish of sorrow, that even I—loving all outward show and pomp as I did—could not help thinking what a dismal masquerade I had “got up” for the world to stare at, and to wonder how I could have cajoled myself into the belief that all this gloomy foppery of woe in which the living tricked out the dead, was prompted by their love and respect for the “dear departed,” rather than by their love and respect for their own worldly reputation.

While I sat up stairs in my bed-room, listening to the carriages arriving one after another, I could hear the hum of the boys and the women in crowd collected round the house to see the procession start. I fancied, too, I could distinguish in the drawing-room below me the voice of my husband's cousin—the chief mourner—for it was he who had come into the property, and having been raised from a bare competence to princely affluence, he was to be the principal actor, and weep over that death as a sad calamity, which had proved such a blessing to him. I fancied, too, I could see him moving about in the room, shrugging his shoulders, and lifting up his eyebrows, as he told each visitor, in a solemn whining, “how much he regretted the melancholy bereavement.”

At last, the hearse left the public-house where the drivers and attendants had been stopping to drink till the “mourners” were cloaked and gloved. Then was assigned to each his particular station in the procession, with all the hollow etiquette of grief, and the same stickling for precedence in woe,

as if the funeral had been some jubilee at court. As I heard the hearse rumble slowly from the door, I went to the window to watch my husband's remains as long as I could, on their way to their last home. Oh! how bitterly then I felt it, as I saw the vain and empty procession move slowly along the crowded thoroughfare. Here were borrowed plumes carried above the heads of the hireling attendants, and the horses, with their let-out velvet trappings, and the black cloaks of the mourners, lent for the occasion, and the brass-tipped ebony wands of the paid and costumed troop. After this came a long line of shut-up empty carriages—as if the owners, knowing why they had been invited to the ceremony, had sent that for which alone their company had been requested. When I saw all this, I could not help thinking what a hollow theatrical show the whole train was; and false and wicked as I might have felt other displays to be, I saw in this the worst deceit of all; vanity playing at grief, as if—to reverse the fable—the showy peacock had borrowed the plumes of the sable jack-daw.

As soon as the dismal ceremony was over, back came the mourners, hurrying to the luncheon which I had prepared for them. As I received them, one after another, in the drawing-room, I could see some of them eye the various articles of furniture, and hear them, as they did so, say, in a whisper, to the others near them, "Poor thing, I'm sure my heart bleeds for her! Have you heard when the sale takes place?"

"No, I hav'n't," some other would reply; "but it can't be long now. Dear! dear! it's as melancholy an affair as I ever knew. Now, there's that pier glass, it never could have been made under forty pounds, and you'll see it will go for a mere song."

"Bless me!" the first speaker would again exclaim, "you don't say so! And it would be just the thing for my drawing-room mantelpiece. I shall certainly—come what will—make a point of attending the sale."

"Yes, you may depend upon it, the sacrifice of property will be terrific. You've seen poor dear Dawdle's splendid service of plate, haven't you? I forget how much he paid only for the dies, just to have his crest raised on it—poor

fellow! I shouldn't wonder, now, if it went for the price of old silver; and that's dreadful to think of, you know. So I shall be here on the day of the auction, and see whether they are to be picked up a bargain."

Then, in another corner of the room, I should overhear the following:—

"Lord! my dear Sir, I don't pity them in the least. It may be a hard thing to say at the present moment, but they are not worthy of the slightest sympathy, take my word for it."

"Goodness, me!" exclaimed the other—"why, I always heard poor Dawdle was so remarkably generous and hospitable."

"Rubbish! rubbish, sir!—the cant of the day! I like to hear people call things by their proper names; and if we say it was downright ignorance of the value of money, we shall be nearer the mark, you may depend upon it. Why, sir, I've dined here, week after week, and we have always drunk the very best Champagne, or sparkling Hock, out of our tumblers, sir. Now, do you call that hospitality, or wilful extravagance, I should like to know?"

"Shameful, shameful! and you see, now, it turns out that the wine wasn't paid for."

"Of course not, sir,—of course not. I knew as much at the time I was drinking it. But that was no affair of mine. The fact was, young Dawdle had no more knowledge of the world than a child. Now, sir, there was that chesnut cob I had picked up dirt cheap—at Barnet fair, I think it was;—and after having the poor thing doctored, and clipt, and trimmed, you know—why, it turned out a very showy and useful little animal. Well, sir—you will hardly believe it—but poor Charles took such a fancy to it, that, though I told him over and over again I would *not* part with it for love or money, yet he went on offering me, first fifty pounds—then a hundred—then a hundred and twenty-five—until, I declare, sir, one morning, if the reckless spendthrift didn't come down to my house and offer me no less than a hundred and fifty, and put the money down upon the table before me, in bank-notes, sir!—yes! bank-notes! Well, of



course, being a married man, and the father of a family, why, I felt it to be only my duty to my wife and children no longer to refuse—though I verily believe, if I'd only stood out a little longer, I might have had two hundred pounds as easily as a penny for the nag. Well, now, I ask you, after that, sir, is it wonderful that his widow is left to starve?"

"You surprise me," replied the other one. "Why, I heard he was allowed a thousand a-year until he came of age. But if he went on in that way, of course six times that sum wouldn't have been enough for him."

"Yes, sir, you are quite right! And what became of the thousand a-year he had, sir? Why, it was all squandered—yes, squandered, sir, in blind Hookey of a night, sir; when he knew, too, that should anything happen to him before he was twenty-one, his life was uninsured, sir. Why, I myself have, over and over again, won fifty and sixty pounds at a sitting, when he has been so fuddled with wine that he could scarcely tell one card from another, sir. In my pocket-book I have at this moment got I. O. U.'s to near upon a thousand; and what are they worth now, I would ask you, sir? Why, not so much as a snap of the fingers," he continued, snapping them. "And do you call *that* honour, or even common honesty, I should like to know, sir?" he asked, in a suppressed fury.

"Why, certainly not," the other replied. "I must confess it does appear to me—that is, I should say, those are not exactly the terms that I should apply to such conduct. But I always thought he was quite a different man—that is to say, imprudent, but with a fine impulsive nature, you know."

"Fine impulsive fiddlesticks, sir! The fact of it was, he had selfishness grimed into him, sir, so deep, that he was utterly regardless of what became of any other person. Let me ask you, then, sir, whether the man, to whose funeral we have come, is one over whose departure we should grieve, sir?"

"I perfectly agree with you, sir; and the fact is, I shouldn't have come myself, only I did it to keep up appearances. But look, they are going down stairs to lunch. I saw the cloth laid in the parlour as we came in, and I hear poor Dawdle had some excellent port."

“ Ah, you may say that, sir. Upwards of twenty years in bottle, and yet quite a *bouquet*, sir! Vintage twenty-four—think of that, sir!—twenty-four; and not in the least pricked, I give you my word, sir!” he added, in an under voice, tapping his hand as he and the others descended the stairs.

\* \* \* \* \*

The next fearful trial I had to undergo was the sale of the furniture. I remained under the roof as long as I could, for I dreaded having to return to my father's home, after the warning he had given me of what my marriage would end in.

Day after day I put off my departure, remaining shut up in my bedroom, until all the different articles of furniture that I treasured had been ticketed in readiness for the coming sale. The house had been stripped from attic to basement. The carpets were taken up, and the whole of the furniture crammed and huddled together into the principal rooms. In the parlour, that I had prided myself so upon, were the kettles and saucepans from the kitchen, with the flat irons, and brass candlesticks, stowed away inside of them, and ranged all round the room. In one corner stood the kitchen table, and on it was the hall clock, and the fender and fire-irons from the bedroom, and beside them were both our dinner lamps. On the floor lay all the books that we had had so splendidly bound, tied up in separate parcels with string. Then came a shower bath, and inside of this were the foils and boxing-gloves, and the umbrella stand. Then all the chairs were piled up one atop of another, and within the uppermost were placed our desks, and the lamp from the hall, and my brass birdcage, and the drawing-room rugs. On our splendid mahogany sideboard lay the copper warming pan, and the double-barrelled gun, the Turkey carpet, and my side-saddle and bridle. In the library I found the tinned meat-screen, and on one of its shelves was the stuffed figure of Charles' favourite beagle in a glass case, with my guitar, his cornet-à-piston, and the drawing-room bellows, while on the shelves of the bookcase were ranged the kitchen plates and dishes, and the glasses and decanters, together with poor black Bess's hoof with its silver shoe, the tea-caddy, a mecr-

schaum pipe, and my husband's regimental sword epaulets. Near the window stood all the hunting, driving, and riding whips, tied up together, and beside them the cook's and housemaid's brooms. In another corner was stowed away the oil-cloth, a fishing-rod and landing-net, and the brass poles for the curtains.

But what shocked me more than all the rest was, that when I entered the drawing-room, there, hanging to nails driven into the beautiful gilt paper, dangled all the linen of the house. Here were the blankets side by side with my lovely damask table-cloths, and the sheets next to the splendid drawing-room curtains, and the napkins and the dusters and the towels all higgledy-piggledy together. Down the middle of the carpetless room was my mahogany pembroke dining-table, drawn out to its extreme length, ready for the purchasers to sit round. On it were ranged the plate and both Charles' and my dressing-cases, and all our splendid china and or-molu clocks, and the silver inkstands, and the model of a yacht, and two racing cups.

Lying down close by the window were the stair carpets, with the printed bills of the sale, "By order of the sheriff," pasted on them, all ready for the day on which it was announced to take place—and I shuddered as my eye fell upon it.

The naked stairs creaked again under my tread, and the house seemed scarcely to be the same place, as I passed heart-broken from one room to another. It looked so dirty and desolate, that unwilling as I might have been to leave it before, I now hurried from it into the cab the auctioneer's man had kindly fetched for me; and letting the thick crape down over my face, I threw myself back so that none of the neighbours might see the misery that I felt was chalked on my countenance.

As I neared my father's house, I dreaded to meet even the servants. Six months ago they had lined the hall, to wish my poor husband and myself long life and happiness, and see us start off in our carriage-and-four for the Continent. Now I was returning a penniless and wretched widow!

But much as I shuddered at the idea of this meeting, still

my fear of them was as nothing compared with my dread of facing him whom, had I judged him rightly, there was the least cause to fear. For no sooner did my father see me, than—whether it was from pity at the paleness of my cheeks, or joy at my return, I know not—but he sought by every kindness to soothe and cheer me, and to divert my mind from the dreadful scenes I had witnessed. For a fortnight, at least, he never mentioned even my husband's name. But he took every opportunity of pointing out to me, by means of the many beautiful illustrations that his knowledge of the sciences afforded him, the wise and benevolent economy of the universe,—showing me how mercifully everything had been arranged, and how pain and grief had only been designed to disgust us with that which was evil, and by chastening, to fit and turn us to that which was good.

At last, when he thought I was in a measure calmed and resigned, he took advantage, one evening, of my mother's absence at Fanny's to tell me how glad he was to have me back again with him.

“When I parted with you,” he said, “you'll remember, Lotty, I told you—perhaps harshly—what were my sentiments on committing you to the guardianship of a man whose character and pursuits I could neither approve nor admire.”

“But, father,” I replied, with the tears starting to my eyes, “he to whom you allude is now no more, and surely *you* should not be the first person to make his memory less sacred to me.”

“My dear girl,” he answered, “I should never have touched upon this subject, had I not thought that speaking honestly to the living was a higher and far better thing than flattering the dead. Do not imagine, my dear child, that your father would wish to wound you uselessly. I want to turn your eyes to the past, so that, like the boatman, you may advance the better into the future. You must remember that with the dawn of your reason I lost all right of authority over you; my prerogative then was no longer to command, but to warn and advise. When I spoke to you on the eve of your marriage, I knew I spoke to one whose heart was deaf to reason; but still my conscience would not allow me to hand you over to

the man you had selected as your protector without raising my voice against an union which, for the causes I then specified to you, I felt satisfied could lead to no good."

"Father!" I exclaimed, "you did not know him! He always did his duty to me."

"My good child!" he replied, rather sharply, "was it his duty to unsex you—to teach you to delight in those masculine amusements which God, in the very frame he gave you, had put his ban upon? If He gave to your sex less strength of limb, it was to tell you that you were not to become the hunter as well as your mate. If He gave you greater timidity, and a quicker sympathy for suffering, it was because he intended you to find your pleasure in the *rearing* of living things, rather than the *slaughtering* of them. And when I saw my girl finding pleasure in those sports which my beautiful profession had taught me the Creator had not only forbidden, but almost prevented her from knowing, it made my heart bleed—and it was the bleeding of that heart, my good girl, that made me warn you of the evil that was to come, and speak as earnestly to you as I then did and do now."

"Warned me, father!" I exclaimed, indignantly; "why, the evil that has fallen on me was an accident that no one could have foreseen!"

"The evil that I foresaw, Lotty," he replied, "was a far worse one than that which so providentially saved you from it."

"You have no right, Sir," I cried, starting up, "to tell me that my husband's death was a blessing."

"Nay—nay! hear me out, Lotty," he answered, taking my hand, "and then judge whether the affection I bear you, and the regard I have for your happiness and character, does not give me the right to call it so. The calamity I foresaw, girl, was to have happened when your husband's tastes should have changed with his increasing years, and the man should have outlived the follies of his youth. Then the monstrosities he had taught you, and which he, as a boy, had thought it a fine thing to see you indulge in, could not but have appeared loathsome to him. As long as your lips were

as crimson, and your mouth as arched and small as it is now, and so long as his thoughtlessness continued, it might have been a capital joke to him to see you play the puppy and puff the cigar. But women cannot be beauties, nor men boys, all their lives; and as you wrinkled, and he grew sober, and most likely churlish, with age, he would have been the first to loathe the very being that he himself had made you. He might have allowed you were the best of horsewomen, but I'm afraid he would have thought you the worst of wives. The sentiment of the honeymoon does not last for life, and however much a man may have been fascinated with the show and 'devilry,' as it is called, of a 'dashing' woman, still, in the end, Nature, depend upon it, will have her sway. Man will, after all, only love woman for being the opposite, and not the counterpart of his own qualities. With his superior courage, he loves her timidity, because it seems to sue for his protection. He is charmed by her gentleness and kindness, because it is a restraint upon his sterner and more impatient disposition; while he cannot help admiring her for the weakness that looks up to his superior strength for aid. If he be a man, he feels as proud of assisting her in his rougher way, as he is vain at being assisted by her in her gentler one."

"Yes, of course," I replied; "when a woman marries, she expects to find a protector in her husband."

"Certainly," he answered; "and what, my dear girl, do you think the husband expects to find in the woman when he takes her in marriage? Is he to shelter and provide for her, and yet meet with no return but the transient ornament of her beauty? Is she to be the helpmate—or the doll? If *he* provides the home, surely *she* ought to take care of it. If *he* provides the food, surely *she* ought to prepare it."

"Really, father," I exclaimed, indignantly, "I don't see that the wife should be the *servant* of the husband."

"No, I know you don't, Lotty," he answered, bitterly, "and that will be the cause of all your misery through life. You are like many others, whose natures have been poisoned by the empty fashion of the time, and think it a degradation in the wife to serve the husband, though you are the first to

complain if the husband neglect to serve the wife. Let *him* fail to earn the daily food, and none like yourselves know so well the wrong that has been done to you. But if you are told it is your duty to do any *servitude* for him in return, your conventional nature rebels at the fancied indignity of making the least return for your living."

"Yes, father, I'll grant that may hold with the lower orders," I replied; "but you forget that among the higher classes, a lady expects to have her servants under her."

"I know she does," he went on; "and because the man who has the lucky accident of being able to find her this assistance gladly parts with his means to ease her of her rightful labours, she thinks nothing remains for her to do, and henceforth considers the performance of any of the domestic duties a disgrace; her greatest glory being to be thought the woman of fashion, and her greatest shame to be fancied to be the housewife; until at length the only pleasure she thinks of is outside her home, her only happiness to be away from her hearth; and often so unsexed does she become, that she must even lay aside that quality which is her greatest beauty of all, and hand her very babes over to be suckled by a stranger, so that the duties of the mother may not spoil the figure of the fine lady, or the cries of her helpless little one for the food which Heaven has entrusted her with, may not drag her away an hour or two earlier from the theatre or the ball-room. And what is the frightful consequence of all this? The mother brings up her daughters with the same views as herself; she heaps upon them all the most factitious accomplishments, and teaches them that the great object of their girlhood is to catch a man who has the power of finding them in every luxury, and keeping them in continual idleness."

"But, father, you speak like an embittered, disappointed man, and as if you hated women," was all I could say in defence.

"I speak, my good child," he continued, more excited than before, "as one who loves and admires woman as Heaven formed her, and loathes her as fashion has deformed her. My profession has shown to me what a masterpiece of creation

she is. It is seeing her in the sick-room that makes me loathe the outward semblance of her that I find in the ball-room. It is seeing her, as I have, beaming with that most special and wondrous quality of her nature—her maternal love—that most bounteous gift of Him who ordained that on the very threshold of our existence the warmest and purest of all the affections should greet us; and it is seeing what the mother, in her natural state, can and will bear for her babe, that makes me heart-sick when I see, as I too frequently do, for how little the mother, in her artificial state, will put her child away.”

“Oh!” I answered, “I really am quite surprised to hear that poor woman has so much as a virtue left.”

“Yes, Lotty,” he continued, “because I do not speak the cant of the day, and cry you up as perfect creatures, you, like a woman, must pretend to be astonished that I can discover in you any beauty at all. Surely you ought, by this time, to be surfeited with the sickly nonsense that has been written and spouted of you. Have you so often heard that ‘Woman is a treasure,’ and that the ‘angels were painted fair, to look like you,’ that you must grow angry if the least blemish is found in you. And in what does all this fustian end? Why, it unfits you for all your household work, for it makes you believe that you really are such heavenly creatures, that it would be unbecoming in you to do such earthly offices as darn a stocking or make a pie.”

“Oh, yes, of course!” I answered, with biting sarcasm. “Man’s an angel, I shouldn’t wonder—oh, yes, of course *he* is.”

“No!” he answered, quite coolly; “I neither said nor meant anything of the kind. I have no more wish to exalt man into a faultless state than woman; and had his nature been bepudded and bepraised as lustily and foolishly as yours has, I should, I hope, have spoken out as strongly against him as I have against woman. All I wish to make my child know is, that in marriage there is a double pledge, and that, if anything, the woman *undertakes* to do more than the man. You should remember, my good girl, that birds pair as well as mankind. And many women, perhaps, might take



a useful lesson from them. There the *female* minds the nest, while the *male* goes abroad to seek the food. *She* tends and nourishes the young, and *he* supplies her with the means. And the very activity, strength, and restlessness, that the Almighty has given to man, and the sedativeness and love of order that He has bestowed on woman, together with those wondrous founts of life that he has added to her frame, prove that the same laws that govern the birds of the air He intended likewise to have power over the sons and daughters of the earth."

"But I really confess, Sir, that I cannot see what connexion this can have with my marriage with my poor departed husband," I said, wishing to end the argument. "I'm sure that had he been spared to me, we should have gone on very happily together."

"Indeed," he answered, with a shake of the head, "I doubt it, Lotty. I have no good opinion of soldiers. It may be, perhaps, from the difference of our trades—theirs, be it remembered, is to inflict wounds, mine is to heal them. And whatever my sentiments might have been towards them before your marriage, still the violent alteration that took place in your character directly you became acquainted with them, made me dislike them worse than ever. I knew before that they always degraded the standard of excellence in woman, but I little expected it would be one day my fate to have that degradation wrought in my own child."

"I hope, Father, you will remember I am a soldier's widow," I murmured, as I burst into tears.

"I dare say," my poor Lotty," he answered, quite moved by my manner, "it may appear unkind in me to tell you I would sooner have you be the soldier's widow than the soldier's wife. Soldiers are fearful people enough in war; and yet to my mind they ravage a city a thousandfold more cruelly in peace. The pillaging of virtue, the sacking of hearts, the destroying of happiness, and, more than all, their heartless triumph and unmanly boastings over the moral ruins they make among your silly sex, would cause you to loathe them as bitterly as myself, if you knew the havoc that they make in woman as well as I do. That an army is a necessary

evil I cannot deny, but let it do its evil work against armed men, and not against weak, weak woman."

I saw it was of no use—even if I had been in the mood—to answer him; so I merely shook my head, determined to let him go on until he should tire himself.

"And these are the men, Lotty, that prate to you, and others less fortunate than yourself, of their love of defenceless woman! It is to protect your sex, they would tell you, they have taken up arms; and yet they would ruin your sex while they whispered the lie in your ears. Look at them, and what do you find? The common soldiers preying on servant-maids, not for the necessities, but for the excesses of life. Tricking the poor drudges of the kitchen or the work-room—the wretched servant-of-all-work or the slaving milliner,—out of their weekly or quarterly pittance. And when the poor dupe's wages are all exhausted, then, forsooth, their very clothes must be sold to supply these men, not with what they want, but what they wish for. And these "men of glory" take the last penny the poor girls can raise; telling them they alone are loved, though the same lips have told the same lie to some half dozen other victims before. And when the pocket and the savings bank are drained, and the clothes are gone, and the reputation is ruined, then they fling the weak ones from them, to become whatever their desperation may prompt or force them to become."

"But is it entirely the soldier's fault, father?" I said, expostulating.

"You are right, Lotty," he replied. "Your foolish, fine-clothes-loving sex, are nearly as much to blame. You know it is almost moral pollution to deal with these men; still such is the fascination of their dress upon you that you cannot keep away. And yet the very sword and colour of the coat which attract you, should suggest associations to your gentler nature, that should make you shudder at, rather than admire the wearer of them. That this fascination is not confined to servant-maids is, alas! too fully proved by the ruined daughters of respectable and wealthy men, that every regiment on its change of quarters leaves behind it. That there are honourable exceptions to this rule I am glad to be obliged to confess;

but having well studied the influence the soldier generally has upon the female character, I could not help shuddering when I saw my child about to link herself to one of them, as heartily as I now thank God for her deliverance from them!—cruel as the thanksgiving may sound in your ears, Lotty. Forget the habits they have taught you, girl, and be again my child. I have had hard things to say to you, my poor one! but the moral surgeon must sometimes be as unfeeling as the bodily one. However, the task I dreaded—and indeed put off from day to day, because I wanted the courage to warn you as I knew I must for your welfare—is now, to my great joy, finished; my harsh words are at an end. May God teach better things, dear girl!”

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It was astonishing how different home became to me after having once had a house of my own. I was afraid even to order the servants, for fear they might turn round and tell me I was not their mistress. I had known what it was to feel jealous when my mother used to interfere with *my* house, and it was a long time before I could bring myself to feel I was not interfering with the arrangements of hers. Then, again, having once left my home, I could not divest my mind of the idea, that my return was a favour. I lived in the house with the sense of an obligation being conferred upon me; and this was wormwood to my pride. Though my father was kinder to me than I had ever known him in all my life, still I could not forget what he had told me were his opinions of me, so that I could not bear to meet his look, and when I felt his eye upon me, I could not help casting mine on the ground. A coldness seemed to have come over me, and I felt in my own parents' house the chill of dependence. I had once known the freedom of being my own mistress, and I could not get rid of the sense, that it was my poverty that had again placed me under the will of others.

I knew that even the maids pitied me for the penniless state in which I had been left; and to my haughty mind, their over-willingness to serve me had a stinging sense of charity in it. My chief amusement was to sit alone moping in my own bedroom, and trying to divert my mind with some of

the serious books my father had given me. But though my eye was wandering over the page, still my brain was busy with contrasting my former with my present lot. One time I was thinking into whose hands the furniture could have passed; at another, who had bought my piano, and what our brougham had fetched. Then I felt a desire to go and see the house again; and wondered to myself whether it was still untenanted, or whether, after all the alterations we had made, it let for much more. Then I would think how I should like to know what amount the sale produced altogether.

I could hardly bring myself to believe my poor husband was dead; and when I did, it seemed to me as if something were wanting to make the world whole again to me—as if some familiar picture had been taken down from the wall, or some well-known statue was missing from its customary niche. At dinner, too, I felt as if some guest were missing, some chair was vacant; and often, before I had grown accustomed to my bereavement, in the impulse of the moment, I would almost ask, "Where is Charles?"

But night was the time I dreaded most. As I went up stairs, every dark corner seemed to conceal his spectre. If I sat alone, I feared to look round, for I felt him standing at my elbow. In the looking-glass I was too frightened to peep, for I was sure I should see his pale face over my shoulder. And when I put my candle out at night, I used to turn round and bury my head in my pillow, lest he should force himself upon my sight despite of my closed eyelids. And as I lay there sleepless and trembling, I would determine to lead a new life, and make my peace with all the world.

It was after a sleepless night, when a few hours' rest only came with the morning, that I made the best of my way to Fanny's, intent upon being friends again with her. When I got there, I stood for a moment looking at the house. It had been newly painted, and appeared so clean and comfortable, and brought back to me such a sense of my own destitution, that though I was at the door, I could not bring myself to raise the knocker. So I walked up and down, and up and down again, for my conscience would not let me go away, and my pride would not let me do what I had come for.

But Fanny saw me from the window, and though I immediately tried to hurry away, still before I could get to the end of the street, the servant was by my side, and my sister standing on the door-step, beckoning me back.

But that visit was a melancholy pleasure to me. I had not been inside Fanny's door for some time. *Then* the rooms were as slightly furnished as possible, and there was a half-naked look about the house. The drawing-rooms were empty, and the stair carpets went no further than the first landing, while in the parlour the mantelpiece was bare; there were no curtains, and only two muslin blinds to the windows. The chairs were no more in number than were actually requisite, and over the fire-place were only such paper ornaments and alum baskets as Fanny herself could make. On the hearth was a green painted bed-room fender with its brass rim, and a common rug before it, such as I gave my servants.

Then I couldn't help saying to myself, what a lucky girl I was not to have married a man who had yet his way to make in the world; and contrasting the cold look of the apartment in which I sat, with the snug and handsome room of my little palace, I would hurry off as soon as with any decency I could.

*Now* I saw by the additions that had been made to the furniture in the room, how rapidly they had been thriving in the world since I had last seen them. On the once bare mantelpiece was a bronze clock and a large pier glass. Before the windows hung curtains of crimson cloth. The bed-room fender had been displaced by a handsome steel one, and in one corner of the room was a cottage piano, while next the fire, where Fanny had been sitting, was a rosewood work-table, the brightness of whose silk told me that it also was a recent purchase. The drawing-rooms were yet empty, but the stair-carpets had been extended to the bedrooms. I could see in all this such a growing prosperity, and such a gradual extension of their comforts in proportion as their means increased, which told me how happy my sister was, and how much happier still she was to be, in the home I once had thought so wretched.

Fanny was in high spirits. Mr. Brooke had that morning

sent in a man to take the measure of the carpets wanted for the drawing-room, and she asked me to come and choose with her from the patterns he had left, and let her know which I liked the best. As we looked over them, she told me how they had arranged with the money their next year's accounts would bring them, to furnish the drawing-rooms. Then came a host of little household cares—as to how they should have done it before, only Mr. Brooke's practice and connexions had increased so greatly, that he had found it necessary, in order to get over his daily rounds, to start his brougham, and that for a time had thrown them back a little. However, thank goodness, they could still hear a knock at their door without dreading to open it, for they did not owe a penny in the world.

But though Fanny was gentle and good, and sought by every inducement she could to make me promise I would come and live with her, yet the increasing comforts I had seen in her house, while mine had all fallen and withered away in my grasp, made the contrast so hateful to me, that I could not stay there in peace, and making an excuse that mamma required me at home, I left the house, glad when I was in the street again.

All the way home I could not help comparing my lot with hers. To think that they, with all the furniture they had gathered about them, "did not owe a penny in the world," and yet I, without even a bed that I could call my own, was still in debt for my husband's funeral.

When I reached home, before I had finished knocking, I was startled by the door being suddenly opened. Mr. Cawthorne was waiting in the passage, and he had let me in. In my terror at seeing him, I felt satisfied he had come on purpose to ask me for his bill, and that the bracket for the kitchen clock, which he had brought with him, was a mere pretext. I felt the blood rush up to my cheeks, as I said, "How do you do, Mr. Cawthorne? I haven't forgotten your little bill!" "Don't mention that, Marm, I beg," he answered, "I aint in any particular hurry—so pray don't inconvenience yourself on that account, Marm." "Thank you," I replied, "you are very good;" and I bit my lips at the indignity of being forced to accept the man's grace.

I went quickly into the parlour to avoid the man. My mother was there, and—as my fate would have it—in not the best of humours, for I had unfortunately left the house with her keys in my pocket. Seeing her there, and feeling myself sad at heart, and only fit for solitude, I hastily quitted the room, and in doing so, the door unfortunately slammed loudly after me. It appeared she had said something angrily to me about her keys, but being too much occupied with my feelings, I had not heard her, and she foolishly construed my leaving the room, and slamming the door after me, into a purposed slight.

Nor had we, indeed, been on the best terms of late. She had spoken harshly to me of my dead husband, and told me I deserved to be what I was for not having made him insure his life, when she had so often warned me of the consequences of any calamity befalling him. This had led to words between us—for she wanted the mild and dispassionate manner of my father—besides, I knew that she who was now the first to blame me for the alliance, was once the readiest to counsel me to it.

She quickly followed me into the library, and coming up to me, said, “I must beg, Mrs. Dawdle, that you will remember that you are not in your own house to bang the doors about as you please.” I might have entered into an explanation with her, had she used any other language to me; but it was the sense that I had no longer a house to be in, that had been festering in my heart all the way home from my sister’s. The creditor I had met in the passage had only served to widen the wound; so I felt my bosom heave as if it would burst, while I tapped the floor with my foot, to give some harmless vent to my passion, which I felt was boiling up to my lips. In the fury of my strong pride, I answered her something which I do not remember, only I know it was not as respectful as it should have been.

This broke through all the little restraint she had over herself, and she poured forth the vials of her wrath on me, calling me such harsh names, that made my whole frame quiver with rage, and I would not trust myself with a word in reply.

The morning’s paper was lying on the table. I took it up, and tried to read it, that I might not hear what she said;

but it rustled in my trembling hand as I held it, and the print danced before my eyes. I was determined in my soul that—say what she might—she should not make me forget my duty towards her; and, by a violent effort, I held the paper still in my clenched hands. Then, locking my lips with my teeth, so that no word should escape me, I fixed my eye upon one spot, determined to read, and so shut out her maddening words from my brain. It was an advertisement for a governess that my eye rested on; and as I forced myself to read it word by word, my mother fancied I merely did so to enrage her the more. Growing more and more violent, she screamed out her words louder and louder still, till at length the terms “beggar” and “locust” forced themselves upon my ear, and, with my woman’s pride, I instinctively knew that the man in the passage must have heard them.

I remained not a moment longer in the room. Taking the paper with me, I hurried along the passage, and in an instant was outside the door, and on my road to answer in person the very advertisement my eye had rested upon.

The situation was in the family of a rich East India merchant, to superintend the education of his young motherless children.

Would to God I had never gone to seek it!



## OFFER THE TENTH.

WANTED A GOVERNESS!—FOR HIS MOTHERLESS CHILDREN, TOO!—YES, WANT A GOVERNESS MY GENTLEMAN CERTAINLY DID, BUT THEN IT WAS NOT FOR HIS MOTHERLESS CHILDREN, INDEED! BUT FOR HIMSELF—A CONCEITED, SNUFFY OLD SCOTCH THING. IF HE'D HAD A GOOD STRONG-MINDED, HIGH-SPIRITED WOMAN, INSTEAD OF A GENTLE, GOOD-NATURED, SIMPLE SILLY LIKE MYSELF, IT WOULD HAVE JUST SERVED HIM RIGHT, IT WOULD. UPON MY WORD THESE OLD MEN ARE TEN TIMES WORSE THAN THE YOUNG ONES, AND THEY ARE BAD ENOUGH, GOODNESS KNOWS. WELL! ALL I CAN SAY IS—THAT I WOULD HAVE GIVEN A GOOD DEAL, IN MY SMALL WAY, IF I HAD NEVER SET EYES UPON THE GREY-HEADED OLD CROCODILE. DEAR DEAR! I WOULDN'T HAVE MY TIME TO GO OVER AGAIN, NO! NOT FOR ALL THE GOLD IN THE MINES OF PERU.

WALKING as fast as I could, I was not long before I reached the circulating library in John-street, Portland-road, where all applications for the governess's situation were to be made. But when I got to the shop, though I let down my veil, I could *not* enter the place. The idea of *my* going to seek for a situation, indeed! I, whose father kept his carriage! and whose husband but a month ago was entitled to one of the largest estates in Cumberland!

Accordingly I looked at all the prints and books in the shop window till I declare I was quite ashamed of myself, and fancied the people inside, from my prolonged stay, might grow suspicious of me. Then, just for the mere look of the thing, I stepped in and bought a quire of paper, saying to myself that, whilst the man was doing it up, I could introduce the subject of the governess—as if quite casually—to him.

Still I was nearly going away without doing what was the special object of my journey. As I was leaving the shop, however, I suddenly turned round—as if the business had been of such slight consequence to me that it had slipped my memory—and returning to the counter, said, “Oh, by the

bye, I believe I saw something in the paper about a situation for a governess?"

"Yes, miss," replied the man; then opening the little door at the side of the shop, he shouted down the staircase, 'Sarah, my dear, you're wanted; here's a young woman after the situation of governess.'

"Well, I can't come up just now," replied a female voice below; "surely you can tell the young woman all about it as well as I can."

On hearing myself spoken of as a "young woman, I felt the blood tingle in my veins; and when the man had informed me that the situation was at Sir Luke Sharpe's, in Portland-place, I turned round, and tossing my head, said, in my most dignified manner, "I beg your pardon, the situation I spoke of is not for myself, but for a *young lady* (and I laid a great stress upon the word) 'who is about to leave my service,' and whom I take a great interest in, and, indeed, am very anxious to see comfortably settled again."

"Oh, really now this will never do!" exclaimed the man, in an indignant tone. "You see we cannot go wasting our time asking whether the situation's for yourself or not! We get nothing by it, you know; and we've had upwards of fifty people bothering here to-day, and they all come with the same cock-and-a-bull story about the situation not being for themselves."

Without condescending to exchange another word with the vulgar fellow, I sailed out of the shop, and made the best of my way to Portland-place.

Of all the dirty and grand places I ever was in, I do think that house of Sir Luke Sharpe's was the worst. Upon my word it was as showy and grubby as our cook's morning cap. The windows were an inch thick in dust; and though they would have made excellent bits of glass for seeing an eclipse of the sun through, still they were not at all calculated for seeing into the street. At least half of the straight bits of wood were gone from the mahogany frame of the half blinds in the parlour—indeed, the green sticks in them looked about as regular as the teeth of an old comb. Then the linen blinds, too, had positively grown as brown, by continually hanging down, as if they had been dipped in coffee. Nor was it as if

this was accidental in the parlour, for I declare the same grubby things were hanging down before the windows all the way up the house. Outside one of the drawing-room windows was a bit of cracked-looking glass, arranged so that the parties within might have a full view of the doorstep and visitors outside.

When I entered the great big stone hall, paved like a draught-board, I could tell, from the close smell of the place, that a window hadn't been opened in the house for the last six months at least. I was requested to take a seat for a moment in the back-parlour, the servant telling me Sir Luke would be with me directly. On being shown into it, I knew at a glance that this was the dingy dungeon where the baronet passed the better part of his existence. I had expected the interior of the mansion would have been dusty; but goodness! I was little prepared for such a filthy, grimy place as it was. The papers could not have been moved these twenty years, and the heap there was of the dirty brown things scattered about the place was perfectly wonderful. In one corner of the room was an old rose-wood card-table, wide open, and positively covered with them. On each side of the window were two whatnots, with their shelves all strewn with the same rubbish. The very round table in the middle of the room, on which stood a little lunch-tray, with a clean napkin—which from the force of contrast actually looked as white as snow—was littered all over with them.

Out of curiosity, I took up a bundle, and found it a parcel of accounts "OF THE SHIP MARQUIS OF WELLINGTON." Here was a packet of letters about the "ROYAL COPPER MINE COMPANY." There lay a large deed, with "SHROPSHIRE CANAL" written outside it. I was just about to take up "a policy of insurance on the houses Nos. 3, 4, and 5, Mincing-lane," when to my horror I looked at my black kid gloves, and found them as grey with the dust as French plums.

How Sir Luke could ever have managed to see what he was about in the place was a perfect miracle to me. For the little light that could get in by the large window, owing to the stable being within a few yards of it, was almost effectually blocked out by the large dusty curtains that hung before it. Between the folds of the things the dirt was perfectly hor-

rible. At first I thought it was a white stripe, but on going towards them I declare it was nothing but dust; for, unfortunately, I took hold of one of them to examine it, when, oh dear! down came a shower of the nasty light-coloured soot all over the crape of my best bonnet.

It is needless for me to go into all the particulars of my engagement; suffice it to say, I entered into the family of Sir Luke Sharpe.

I hadn't been there very long before I got to understand what kind of a gentleman the old baronet was. He was even more conceited and selfish than old age generally makes those who have succeeded in life. His principal vanity was to be thought an exceedingly clever and acute observer of human nature. He was continually boasting to you that it was impossible to impose upon him, and yet all the while he was being cheated by almost every one of the servants about him. If ever he spoke to you, he was sure to beg of you to understand "that he was not born yesterday,"—though there certainly was little chance of any one making the mistake, for he was seventy, if he was a day—and "that he had got a head upon his shoulders,"—which was a fact equally clear to every impartial beholder.

Ask him his opinion of any one—the Archbishop of Canterbury, for instance—and, with a shake of his head and a wink of his eye, he would advise you to take care of him, for his Grace was a deuced sharp, clever fellow, and knew what he was about as well as anybody, but it was no use his trying it on with him, for though old Luke Sharpe might look like a fool, still he had always gone through the world with his eyes open, he could tell me. Ah! he should like to see any one getting on the blind side of him. No, no; catch a weasel asleep, that was all!—and then he'd chuckle away, and rattle the halfpence in his trousers' pockets until he got quite red in the face.

"How on earth," he would sometimes ask me all of a sudden—"how on earth did I think he had ever managed to get such a great big fine house over his head, when it was very well known that his grandfather had cried fish in the streets of Perth? Why, not by letting people pick his pockets in broad daylight, to be sure. He knew what was

what, he could tell me. Hadn't he walked his way from Berwick-upon-Tweed up to town upon nothing but hard boiled eggs and raw turnips? and wasn't he now one of the first ship-owners in the world? and how did I think he had done it? Why, not by falling asleep over his work. No! but by always seeing that he had a 'good pennyworth' for his penny. Yes, that was the way," he would say, half to himself, and half to me, as he walked quite excitedly up and down the room. Then, suddenly stopping, he would add in a voice loud enough for me to hear him, "Dear, dear! when I come to think of it all, it seems to me like a dream. Ah! people little know what a wonderful man I am; and what's more, there are very few such wonderful men in the world, I know."

Then he would sit down to his books, to balance his day's expenses; and after scratching his head for about half an hour, he'd wonder what on earth he ever could have done with "that three halfpence;" and having tut-tutted to himself for a good ten minutes, and said, it wasn't for the value of the money, but he shouldn't be able to balance at the end of the year, he'd turn round to me, and ask me to give him three halfpence, as it would save him a world of trouble—adding, that no man knew so well as he did, it was impossible to get on in the world unless we made our accounts come right to a farthing.

I hadn't been a week in the house before I found out that Sir Luke Sharpe was one of the vainest men I had ever met with in my humble way. For not only was he vain of his having, through his own exertions, risen to the position he had in the world, and of his being, as he thought, so very clever and far-sighted, (though, for the matter of that, he could scarcely see beyond his nose, and any one with their senses about them might have twisted him round their little finger,) but actually and truly he was as conceited of his personal appearance as if he had been the prince regent, and the finest gentleman in England. What he could have seen in himself, I'm sure I can't make out. It's true he imagined he was the very image of Napoleon; and certainly if Napoleon had been a great, broad-shouldered, sandy-haired, and red-faced Scotchman, standing at least six feet two in his pumps

and black silk stockings, people might have discovered some resemblance between Sir Luke Sharpe and the little corporal. Oh! its perfectly ridiculous, and I've no patience with a parcel of men always fancying themselves to be the exact resemblance of some great genius or other. Either we have some stuck-up thing with a most inveterate snub, declaring he is the very counterpart of that dear old Iron Duke; or else it's some creature pitted with the small-pox, and a pair of mustachios as red as a worn-out toothbrush, who will tell you to your very face that he has over and over again been taken for Prince Albert. And here was that vain old peacock of a Sir Luke Sharpe—though his trousers hung so loose about him that really his legs looked more like an elephant's than a human being's—fancying, just because he took snuff by the handful out of his waistcoat-pocket, and because he had been "the architect of his own fortunes," as he delighted to call it so grandly, that he had been made after the same pattern as Napoleon.

Dear! the snuff that poor Sir Luke would take! I declare sometimes he could scarcely speak for it. Positively, the large frill which he usually wore sticking out of his white waistcoat, was always sprinkled over with the brown stuff, like nutmeg on the top of a custard. No wonder he was obliged to put on a clean waistcoat every day; for I declare if he hadn't a large chamois-leather pocket for his snuff made in every one of the long-waisted, groom-like things.

For upwards of ten years of his life he was never known to wear anything but pepper-and-salt trousers, and for a very good reason. In one of his rambles, he had picked up a whole piece of the stuff at a great bargain—at something less than half its original cost, on account of its being slightly spotted. This, he said, would do very well for him, for every one who knew him was well aware who and what he was, and as for those people that didn't know him, why he didn't care twopence about them. He was not going to throw away any of his hard-earned money to please them. No! no! he wasn't such a born idiot as that, he could tell them.

There never was such a man for bargains as that poor Sir Luke Sharpe. Whatever he was in the habit of using, he bought in such quantities, to save a shilling or two, that before

he could use one half, the other was all rotten, and positively good for nothing. For instance, in the spare room at the top of the house, there were no less than fifty sinumbral lamps, which he had picked up at the sale of a bankrupt's stock, for something under ten shillings a-piece—not because he wanted them, but merely because he was satisfied they never could have been made under a guinea; and, as he said, they would be very nice things to give to his children when they settled in life. Again, in one of the cupboards in his bed-room, he had a tremendous pile of little cheap pocket telescopes. He had gone to buy one previous to his going down to the sea-side, and had been tempted to take fifteen dozen—as he would never have the chance of meeting with such a bargain again, and he could get double the money for them any day. Then if he had one bundle of pencils, I'm sure he must have had twenty or thirty gross of those nasty common cheap things, that are as hard as bits of wire, and directly you put them in your mouth, go into a nasty black paste, like moist stick liquorice. As for steel pens! oh, dear, it was positively awful. I declare he'd as many as would have kept the whole of the clerks of the Bank of England going till the national debt is paid off. In old iron alone, they would have been a little property. Once he had been told that there was no umbrella for the servants. What did he do, but the very next day he brought home a whole cabful of light blue and green cotton things, with nasty transparent horn beaks for handles. As usual, he had picked them up “dirt cheap;” and, indeed, he added, with extreme glee, he hadn't lived all the time he had in the world to go giving five shillings for gingham umbrellas, when by merely paying ready money and taking a quantity, he could get them for something like one and fivepence halfpenny a piece.

I had not been in the house a week before, calling me into the study, Sir Luke, in a very serious way told me, “he did not like to see me going out in the rain with merely that trumpery little parasol of mine over my head.” Then half jokingly he added, “Now if I make you a present of a good strong serviceable umbrella, will you promise me to take care of it?” All I could do was to smile, and thank him, and say, it was very kind of him—of course expecting that he was at least going to make me a present of a nice slim, genteel-looking,

silk German one, that he had brought home on purpose to surprise me. But he went to the cupboard under the book-case, and brought out a nasty corpulent cotton thing, with a brass ring round its middle, almost big enough for a parrot to swing in. Of course, I was obliged to be pleased with it; but bother the thing, every time I went out in the rain, it *did* swell and swell so, that at last, any body to have looked at it, would have thought that it was an umbrella in an interesting situation, and about to be confined of two bouncing little parasols at least.

Next to Sir Luke's love of bargains, I think the most marked trait in his character was his hatred of beggars and cabmen. "Out of pure principle," he said, he never gave a penny to a man in the streets. Charity, he told me, might be a great virtue, but we lived in enlightened times, and political economy had taught us that nothing was so bad as almsgiving; and indeed, that men, as well as institutions, should be "self-supporting." "He never found anybody give him anything," he said; "then why on earth," in the same breath he asked me, "should he go giving his hard-earned money to support a large family of ten hired children? No, no; he wasn't a ninny to be gulled in that way, and if people took him for a fool, they were mistaken." So he subscribed to the Mendicity Society, and always carried a quantity of the cheques for soup in his trousers'-pockets; for, as he said, "the scoundrels didn't like that, and, thank God, he was now so well known in London that no beggar ever asked him for a halfpenny."

But if he was well known by the beggars, the cabmen of London knew him equally well—or, at least, it was no fault of Sir Luke's if they did not. He had summoned so many drivers to the police-offices, that at last the reports in the morning papers got to be headed, "SIR LUKE SHARPE AND THE CABMEN AGAIN!" He knew, to a lamp-post, the very extreme of every shilling fare, and he was never known to take a cab beyond it, for—however far he had to go—he would get out and walk the remainder of the distance. If the driver asked more than the shilling, Sir Luke would take down the number of the cab in his pocket-book, then pull out the little book of fares he always carried with him, and



having shown the man he was entitled to no more, he would tender him a handful of silver, and beg of him to take as much as he liked. Over and over again on a wet day, when cabs were worth almost any money, has the worthy baronet, with his pocket-book in one hand and his pencil in the other, gone down a whole stand, saying, "Corner of Langham-place for a shilling;" and then to each driver as he objected to the job, "Do you refuse to take me? Do you refuse to take me? Do you refuse to take me?" and so on, until he had got the numbers down of the whole stand, ready for summoning on the morrow. Positively, his whole life seemed to be one round of warfare with the cabmen and beggars of London. Either he was laying traps with the officers of the Mendicity Society to catch the begging-letter impostors, or else the best part of his day was spent at a police-office, disputing as to whether he ought to have paid one shilling, or one-and-fourpence, for the distance he had ridden. I do believe Sir Luke had had the half of London measured into shilling fares on his own account.

The first day that I was at Portland-place, Sir Luke dined at home in his little back parlour. Rosetta, the upper nursery-maid, told me, "it was a perfect wonder, and the first time he'd done as much these six months; and she didn't know what poor Cook would say to it; but of one thing she was certain, and that was, Cook wouldn't be best pleased." But what was more strange than all was, that about seven o'clock Sir Luke requested his housekeeper—that overgrown Miss Botty, whom people would annoy me by calling a fine woman—to step up to the school-room, and ask me to bring the children down to dessert. No sooner had she—in a way I didn't half like—delivered her message to me, than she turned round to the nurse, and pretending to be all the while speaking to her, said, in a nasty sneering tone, "Dear me, I don't know what's come to us just now, getting so fond as we are of our children all of a sudden! Formerly we used to take our chop at Tom's, and, on our way home, drop into the theatre, at half-price, to see the last new burlesque. But now, bless us and save us! nothing will satisfy us but we must go dining at home and turning the house topsy-turvy, so as to be able to have our *dear children*, with their *new*

*governess*, round us at dessert time! Augh!" she added, to nurse, with a shudder, "I can't abear such fickle-mindedness; and if I do like one gentleman more than another, it is one who has something like system in his conduct, and isn't led away by every new face he sees."

I knew very well what all this meant. To tell the truth, the housekeeper and I had had a slight quarrel in the morning. The fact of it was, she was too grand by half to please me. She wanted to be called Miss Botty, and I wasn't going to give in to any such nonsense. It was very well for her to make the servants do so; she was their superior, and, perhaps, it was right. But as *I* couldn't help looking upon *her* as *my* inferior, both by birth and education, (her mother indeed had kept a dairy in Camden Town,) why of course I wasn't going to call her by any other name than Sir Luke did, and that was Susan. Moreover, I had given my grand lady to understand that I was not going to have the children's dinner brought up at any hour she might please, as I had been informed she was in the habit of doing. Indeed, I had told her very plainly, that if I could not have it on table by two to a moment, I should speak to Sir Luke about it. So of course we were both at daggers drawn.

And to be candid, I never did—not even from the first—half like the look of my lady. I'm sure when I saw my duchess dressed out in her brown satins, and her sandals, and fly-away caps, and silk mittens, I'm sure I thought she was some member of the family. "Sir Luke's sister, may be," I said to myself, as I bowed and curtsied, and called her "madam." But no sooner did I learn from the upper nurse that I had been bowing and scraping to a common housekeeper, as if she had been some lady of quality, than I *did* get so disgusted with the creature for dressing in the nasty, flaunting, vulgar style she did, that I said to myself, "Well, I never saw such goings on, and if you expect that I'm going to put up with any such airs, I can tell you you will find yourself mistaken, my grand Miss Botty."

When I had heard, too, all the dreadful tales that the two nursery-maids had got against the creature, I declare it quite made the blood run all cold down my back, to think that I had been cringing and fawning to a trumpety upstart like her.

And as I learnt from the maids that my lady's weak point was to be called Miss Botty, why I determined from that moment that she should never get anything but mere plain "Susan" from me. Indeed, I kept Susaning her so often that day, that at last my duchess turned upon her heel, and walked away. "Oh, very well!" I said to myself, quite delighted—"oh, very well! now I shall know how to act; and since matters have come to this, why we will see who is to be mistress in this house. For you may take my word for it, either you or I shall quit it before many weeks are over my head, and I'm sure for myself I don't care two pins which it is."

Well, so matters stood between "*Miss Botty*" and myself, when she had the impudence to make those nasty insidious remarks of hers to nurse. A mere vulgar mushroom like her, to dare to insinuate that I had any designs upon that poor grey-headed Sir Luke Sharpe who was old enough to be my grandfather. I, indeed! ha! ha! when I could scarcely bear the sight of the conceited, mean old man. "I'm sure if he had gone down on his knees to me," I said to myself at the time, "and begged me to have him, promising to settle half of his immense property upon me, I would pretty soon have shown him whether I had yet sunk so low as to be desirous of marrying a man with one foot already in the grave. Besides, I understood very well, from all I had heard, who it was that was wheedling and carneying the poor old man over to her own wicked purposes. Where, I should like to know, did all those fine silks and satins come from? I was as well aware as most people how far money could be made to go, and I was well aware of this into the bargain—viz., that no housekeeper—I don't care who she is—could afford, out of her wages, to dress in the way that woman did.—Of an afternoon, I declare I never saw my lady with a gown to her back that had cost less than seven or eight shillings a yard, and she must have taken eleven breadths to her skirt, if she took a nail.

So, as the spiteful creature had chosen to make out that it was the "*pretty governess*" that was wanted, and not the dear children, "why," I said to myself, as I put a clean pinafore on each of the pets—"why, the pretty governess

will see whether she can't have you out of the house, Miss, before you are many weeks older. If Sir Luke is so much taken with me, we'll soon find out whether *I* in my turn can't wheedle and carney him over to do what *I* want—and that is, to give you notice to quit, my fine lady." To have the impudence to insinuate to a common nursery-maid that I wanted to marry the old dotard! Marry him, indeed! as I said before, I'd as soon think of marrying my grandfather—and every one knows that is forbidden by the common-prayer.

When I got down stairs, I soon found out that "Miss Botty" was right as to the cause of this sudden affection on the part of the old baronet for my little chicks; for I declare he did nothing but speak to me, and never noticed one of his children, even though I had got little Peggy by my side, and with my two hands was smoothing her beautiful bright auburn hair. Having poured out a glass of wine for me, Sir Luke told me he should like me to come down with the little ones every evening, and let him see how they were getting on. "Indeed I have always," he had the barefaced impudence to add, "made it a rule in my house to have my dear children round me at dessert every evening." Then taking hold of my hand, he added, "Now promise me, my dear, good Mrs. Dawdle, you'll look after Alick's arithmetic, will you, for I'm afraid it's been sadly neglected, and I do so want him to learn book-keeping by double entry, for with that I know a man may do anything in the world he pleases; and many and many's the time I'd have given my head if my poor old father had taught it me. Now, my dear young lady, *do* drink some wine!"

'No, I thank you, Sir Luke,—I have plenty, I can assure you. Indeed, even now I have exceeded my usual quantity—only yours is such very delicious sherry," I answered, putting my arm round Alick's neck.

"Yes, it is, mam," he answered, filling up his glass; "I picked it up quite a bargain—I took a dozen pipes of it as a bad debt, though when on earth I shall ever drink all I've got down stairs, is more than I can tell. As to the girls," he said,—reverting to the education question,—"I should like you to look after their music, because, you know, with houses breaking as they do every day in the City, there's no knowing

what may happen. And if the worst should come to the worst, you see they can always get a living at it, and I think nothing is so fine in a woman as to be "self-supporting." What's more, I recollect seeing a little chit on board one of the penny boats, playing the harp, and you'd have been astonished, Mrs. Dawdle, to see the amount of money she picked up, even between Westminster and Waterloo Bridges; though to be sure she seemed to be very clever at it, and to have a particularly good head upon her shoulders."

"Oh yes, Sir Luke," I answered, "you may depend upon it, I will pay great attention to my dear little pupils. Indeed, I have great hopes of that darling Janet. Really she seems to have all her father's natural quickness, and *that* you know is such a great thing for her."

"Ah! Mrs. Dawdle," the conceited thing replied, "I've not walked through the world all my life with my eyes shut, I can tell you. No! no! I've had something better to do than to sit all day in my arm-chair, twiddling my finger and thumb. Dear, dear! when I come to think of what I was and what I am, it does seem to me that I'm about the most wonderful man ever born! But my principle through life, you see, has always been to be "self-supporting," and that indeed I should like all my children to be. And now there's another thing I want you particularly to attend to. You know, Latin and Greek, and French and Italian, and all such outlandish dead languages sound very pretty, and make a great show in the drawing-room; but to my mind, education ought to be practical, and it strikes me you know that, for the sake of teaching children something that they may never want to use, we very often neglect to teach them the very things they may be likely to want everyday. So I'll tell you what I should like you to do; why, to make them get off by heart a page of Mogg's pocket edition of cab fares, and every Friday I myself will examine them in it—d'ye understand?"

"Oh, there! won't that be kind of your dear papa," I cried, enthusiastically looking at the little inanimate Scotch things; "and it will do you such a deal of good, you know, my pets."

"Ah! the pounds upon pounds it has saved me, there's no telling," replied the old man. Then, half laughing, he added,

“but the vagabonds of cabmen know it’s no use trying to impose upon me now, for they’ve found out by this time that I wasn’t born yesterday. Well, and are you pretty comfortable up-stairs, eh?”

“Yes, thank you, sir, very comfortable, I’m sure; in fact, very much so indeed, thank you,” I replied, bowing.

“Because if you a’n’t, you know, you’ve only got to speak,” he answered, emptying another glass. Then he added, inquiringly, “By-the-bye, are the fire-irons to your grate up-stairs all right? because if they are not, I’ve got upwards of thirty sets of beautiful bran new brass ones in the cupboard in my dressing-room. I picked them up quite a bargain, or else, of course, I should never have thought of lumbering myself with such a number. Two shillings a set, I think, I paid for them—however, I’ve got the bill somewhere about here—but I’m sure it wasn’t more than half-a-crown; and yet those vagabonds in the shops, you know, have the impudence to ask you as much as seven and six. Ah! but they must live a few years longer before they can take me in. Sir Luke Sharpe knows what’s what, he can tell ’em! So you’re all comfortable up-stairs, eh?”

“Oh, yes, Sir Luke,” I answered, bowing as before. “We are as comfortable as we can be, thanks to you and your housekeeper. By-the-bye, what a very nice, obliging creature she is,” I continued, determined to find out which way the land lay.

“Yes—she is—a very nice, good, well-disposed soul,” he replied—though far from enthusiastically. “It’s true, she presumes a bit sometimes, but I think, do you know, she means very well!”

“Well!” I continued, “that’s just what I should have expected from one whose education has been so sadly neglected as hers. But, as you say, I have no doubt she means very well—though, like all persons in her calling, they’ve a strange way of showing it.”

“Yes, now I’ve given her notice to quit several times,” he replied; “but, hang it, just before the month’s up, she comes crying to me, saying, that if she goes away from me, she knows it will be the death of her, and that she had never

respected any one so much as she did me, for I am such a wonderful man."

"Indeed!" I answered, taking Alick on my knee, and not a little disgusted at the mean way that I now saw Miss Botty had been playing her cards. "She must be a woman of very deep feeling, or else a person of the most abominable deceit, which I should never believe of her, I'm sure."

"Oh, no," he replied, smiling, "it isn't deceit. Deceit!—Egad! I should like to catch the man or woman that would deceive me. Come! come! I haven't lived all this time and had all my experience for nothing, I can tell you. No, I really think the woman has a great respect for me. Still I fancy, in the end, I shall be obliged to part with her. Now, to-day," he added, as he sipped his fifth glass, "upon my word, she looked as black as thunder because I came home to dinner. I suppose next I shall be obliged to ask her whether it's convenient for me to enter my own doors before midnight."

"Dear me," I said, laughingly. "Well, that is certainly most extraordinary conduct; but you should remember, Sir Luke, that a person who has not received the education of a lady can't be expected always to know their proper station. Indeed, from all I can see, Susan seems to have been very low bred."

"Well, perhaps she may be," he answered, "though I haven't remarked as much myself; and yet that's strange too, for I'm generally considered to have a very quick eye that way. Bless you, girl! I can generally see through a person at half a glance," he said, as he rose to put some coals upon the fire.

"Allow me, Sir Luke," I cried, jumping up, and running to the scuttle; "pray don't exert yourself in that way."

"Exert myself!" he exclaimed, scornfully. "Why, I suppose you fancy because I've got grey hair that I can't lift a trumpery coal-scuttle. Well, now look here—can you do this?" he continued, holding out the poker at his arm's length. "Ah! that's muscle for you, if you like! There's not many people can manage that at my time of life, I can tell you. You little know what a wonderful man I am, take me all together."

"Dear me! that is very extraordinary. Well, you are a wonderful man to be sure, Sir Luke," I replied, throwing up my hands. Then, as I could see him wheel his easy chair round to the fire, and begin to yawn and prepare for his evening nap, I told the children to go and kiss their dear papa, and wish him good night, and then took my farewell of him, saying, I would not intrude upon his valuable time any longer.

After this conversation, Sir Luke and myself got to be better friends. He dined at home regularly every day, and the servants made a point of always wondering, in my presence, what *could* be the cause of the change. As for "Miss Botty," as she was called, we soon grew to be such enemies, that I was obliged to beg of her to keep to her own room, and not to think of intruding in mine. With Sir Luke, I knew the only way to deal, was to make him as comfortable as I could, and appear to have the highest veneration for his talents and shrewdness. And while Miss Botty was, by her familiarity, losing every day more and more of whatever hold she might once have had upon the baronet, I, by my show of respect and admiration for his character, was every day gaining more and more of his confidence and esteem.

Moreover, there was such a visible alteration in his children, that at last Sir Luke really began to admire and like them, because other people did. I always took good care to tell him whenever people stopped them in the streets to ask whose children they were; for, to tell the truth, I got them on so nicely, and kept them so clean, that whereas in their former neglected state they looked almost repulsive, now they really seemed very attractive and interesting little things. Then, again, a great point with me was, never to let them annoy Sir Luke. Whenever he was at home, I always played with them, or told them tales, or did a hundred little things, to prevent them crying or making noise enough to disturb him. Alick I taught to draw; and when I had touched up his rude sketches a good bit myself, upon my word they looked very clever indeed, for him. The girls I set to work at embroidery. In less than a month, with my helping them, they had done a beautiful kettle-holder of "MIND IT BOILS," and a very handsome and appropriate pen-wiper, of a butterfly with a



pair of large black cloth wings, so that the ink would not show upon them—together with a splendid pair of rainbow-tinted slippers, which I got the shoemaker to make up.

When we presented them to Sir Luke, he was so pleased that he gave the children all the halfpence he had in his pocket. He was very particular, too, in asking me what each of the articles could be bought in the shops for. When I told him I was certain the slippers alone could not be purchased for less than twelve or fourteen shillings, he was quite astounded; and when I added, that Meggie had only been a month over them, he went into a slight calculation to himself, and said that, when he was her age, he never had been able to earn so much money as that per week; and he praised me, by saying great credit was due to me for making his children so “self-supporting” as they were so soon. “So,” Sir Luke continued, “as they had been so good, he supposed he must give them some reward;” and accordingly he presented them all with one of his small pocket-telescopes a-piece; and afterwards he gave me one of the trumpery things, telling me I should find it a very pleasant companion at the nursery-window; for I should be able to see Highgate and the people on the top of Primrose-hill with it, as plainly as if they were only on the other side of the way; and that whilst I was sitting quietly upstairs—in Portland-place—I might fancy myself a hundred miles away in the country.

Every lady knows the truth of the old saying, “that the best way to a man’s heart is down his throat.” Accordingly, I determined to gain my point with Sir Luke by making him a present of several valuable receipts I had in my possession. I soon found out that my gentleman was particularly partial to what are called “the good things of this world.” If he dined on merely a chop at home, it was not from any love of such simple fare, but because he was positively afraid to indulge in anything richer. He had always made it a matter of duty never to miss a dinner at any one of the city companies or corporations of which he was a member, and from an over-love of “the excesses of the table,” he had so ruined his stomach in his zeal for his civic duties, that his present abstinence was more compulsory than voluntary. Occasionally, to be sure, the sight of some well-known luxury would

be too much for him, and he would break out into all the intemperance of turtle and cold punch. For this, though, he would have to do penance *between* the sheets, until he fancied his favourite pill, powder, or potion, for the time being, had set him on his legs again. Pines and champagne over night were followed by blue pills and black draughts in the morning. Indeed, he now knew so well what he had to undergo for any little dainty, that he almost feared to touch anything beyond a plain chop or steak, and if he did, he would keep telling you, as he smacked his lips over the treat, "he should suffer for it finely in the morning."

Consequently, I soon saw that the poor Scotch Baronet was so tired of his eternal chop and steak, (he had dined at home every day as yet,) that if any one could devise any new and innocent relish for him, he would be so grateful for the toothsome change, that he would do almost anything in return; "and then," as I said to myself, "I'd take good care and see whether I couldn't open the poor old man's eyes or not to the wicked goings on and shameful neglect of that disgusting Miss Botty."

One day I would send Sir Luke home from the butcher's as beautiful a sweetbread as ever I saw. On another, I would forward, from the fishmonger's, round the corner, with my compliments, as fresh and sweet a piece of scate as any Christian need sit down to. Then of an evening, sometimes I would make him a nice large basinful of hot white wine whey, or else I would beg his acceptance of a box of Brockedon's "Patent Bi-carbonate of Soda Lozenges," in a little pet of a box that was itself alone well worth the money. Sometimes I was positive he was falling away by inches, and would alarm him by saying that "unless he took good strengthening food, I would not take upon myself to answer for the consequences, and that he really should bestow a thought upon those poor dear little children of his." Accordingly, I would prevail upon him to take just a mouthful of the beautiful light cow-heel I had provided for his supper. If I heard him complain of the rheumatism, or lumbago, or gout, I wouldn't let a day pass over without buying him a thirteen-penny-halfpenny bottle of "Borthwick's Tincture," of which I had heard so much.

But it was no such very easy task to please so fanciful a gentleman. If, after dinner, he felt at all indisposed, it was certain to arise from something he had eaten. Once I had got him a delicious piece of real Scotch short-bread, for dessert, as a great treat, and, upon my word, if he didn't declare immediately afterwards that it had given him the heart-burn, and made out he had a pack of little stars floating about before his eyes. But I told him I was convinced it wasn't the short-bread, for that was mere flour and butter, with an egg or two—and a little sugar, may be; "but, of course," I said, "if he would drink glass after glass of wine, as he did, how could he expect to be well;" adding, "really he should take more care of himself, and pay more attention to diet than he did, for we could not spare him yet." The next day he wouldn't drink any wine at all; and then, upon my word, if he didn't try to make out that some of the beautiful Tomato sauce I had got expressly for him, had disagreed with him, vowing that it would lay him on his back for a month, "he shouldn't wonder." So I very plainly told him that it was perfectly ridiculous his fancying a tea-spoonful or two of the very best Tomato sauce that could be had for love or money, could have any such bad effects; but, I said, "if he *would* go leaving off wine in the sudden way he had, especially after having been accustomed to it so long, of course he must expect to feel unwell. It positively was unkind of him," I added, "to go to such violent extremes, and that really he ought not to trifle with his digestion in the way he did, for he should remember he had other people to live for, and what would become of the dear little pets up-stairs, without a mother to take care of them, was more than I could tell."

At last, to my great joy, Sir Luke told me, one evening, that I was quite a treasure to him, and he didn't know what on earth he should do without me; and after a deal of hemming and hahing, he said he should take it as a great favour if I would, every morning, after I had heard the children their lessons, go out marketing for him, and see what nice little harmless relish I could pick up for him at any of the tradespeople's. But I very respectfully declined, saying I had no wish to interfere with his housekeeper's duties. It

was in vain he told me not to mind her, but only to attend to him, for I said I wouldn't, for the world, breed any dissension in the house, and that Susan—though she seemed one of the most worthy creatures I had ever met with—was such a horrid temper, that I really trembled lest she should turn round in a huff, and give notice to leave; and if she went, it would be *such a loss* to him, he knew. However, Sir Luke *did* speak to that Miss Botty, who answered in her nasty way—“ Oh! dear me, yes, certainly! I'm sure I'm delighted to think Mrs. Dawdle is so attentive to you, Sir Luke.” And then she begged to assure him it was quite ridiculous to fancy she should be in the least hurt at the interference by such a person as Mrs. Dawdle. Oh, dear no!—quite the contrary, she was highly pleased at the idea.

I was determined to take my lady at her word, little, I dare say, as she expected it; and to market I went, and sent the worthy Baronet home as nice and wholesome a dinner as he'd ever sat down to. But when Sir Luke returned from the city to partake of it, what was my horror at finding there was not so much as the cloth laid. “ Goodness, gracious !” exclaimed that Miss Botty, when she was asked about it, “ why, of course I expected, as Mrs. Dawdle had stepped out to order the dinner, that she would have stepped down-stairs to cook it as well.” So poor Sir Luke, after having given “ warning” to the cook, saying it was *her* place to have arranged differently, had, after all, to get his dinner at the nearest hotel.

This puzzled me more than anything, for I could not make out why Sir Luke didn't give Miss Botty warning, instead of the poor cook, who had only done as she had been told. “ Ah,” thought I to myself, “ there's more in this than I know of; but this at least I do know—and that is, either that bad woman or myself shall quit Sir Luke's establishment before we are either of us many weeks older.”

In fact, the next evening I spoke very freely to Sir Luke on the subject, and didn't hesitate to say I thought his kindness was quite thrown away upon a person like Susan, and that I was certain he would never be comfortable as long as she was in the house. But he would have it that it was only her way, and that the woman meant nothing by it; and after she had lived with him so long as she had, why he'd sooner

put up with her little tantrums than change; in fact, Susan, he said, seemed to be very much attached to him, for she knew she couldn't find such a master as he was every day of the week; nor more she would too, he knew very well, for there were very few men like him, he could tell me.

"But do you know, Sir Luke," I replied, shaking my head, "I am so dreadfully afraid she's a double-faced woman. All I can say is, I only hope to goodness she's not taking advantage of your kindness to deceive you."

"Deceive me!" he cried, bursting out laughing—"ha, ha, ha! Deceive me!—well, that is delicious. No, no! the woman isn't born yet that can do that, I can tell you. Why, even the men can't; and do you think old Luke Sharpe is such a donkey as to be taken in by a woman? Ha! ha! catch a weasel asleep; I'm too old a bird, I can assure you, to be caught with any of Miss Botty's chaff. And what's more, she knows as well as I do that I've got a head upon my shoulders, I can tell you, and wasn't born yesterday;" and he rattled the halfpence again in his pocket as he fell back in his chair, and laughed at the bare idea of any one imposing upon him.

"Very true, very true, I quite forgot that," I answered, smiling; "it would indeed be a difficult thing to deceive one who can see so deep into the human heart as you can, Sir Luke. But now, pray, do take a glass of that delicious calf's-foot jelly. It will do that nasty cold of yours so much good; and you know the doctor himself said, in my presence, that you were to have your food little, and often, and good, or else something serious might happen. And I'm sure," I added, with a sigh, "we cannot afford to lose so kind and much-respected a gentleman as you are."

"Good girl, good girl! Well, perhaps it would be awkward to a good many if I was to pop off," he said, sipping the jelly with great relish. "What they would do in the city without me I'm sure I can't say. Pretty rumpus there would be at the India House in a short time. Dear, dear! when I come to think of what I am and what I was, it does seem to me like a dream. Well, all I can say about it is, I'm one of the most wonderful men that ever lived."

"And so I'm sure you are, Sir Luke," I said to the conceited old thing—"a very wonderful man indeed."

"You may well say that, my dear Mrs. Dawdle," was all he answered, simpering over his calf's foot.

Oh, I had no patience with the vain, weak-minded old silly! 'Pon my word, any one with their senses about them might have done anything with him—either by flattering or feeding him. Miss Botty could twist him round her little finger, and I could do just the very same; and yet he talked about no woman being able to impose upon him. Pshaw!

My last compliment and jelly had put the old thing in such an excellent humour, that I thought I might as well present him with the copy of "Buchan's Domestic Medicine," which I had picked up, a day or two before, at an old book-stall, and in the fly-leaf of which I had written—

*To Sir Luke Sharpe,*

*From the humblest of his admirers,*

*With earnest prayers for his better health.*

No sooner did he see the title, than he declared it was the very book of all others he had long wanted to get hold of, for he had heard his old aunt say it was a first-rate work, and he did not see the fun of paying his apothecary round the corner the sum he did every year.

"Very strange, isn't it?" he said, smiling; "I've often said I would treat myself to a copy of this very work, but unfortunately I never could stumble over a cheap copy of it at the book-stalls. Now what did you give for this, eh?" he asked, looking to see if the price was marked on the inside of the cover.

But I had been too deep for my gentleman, and taken good care to put a figure "one" before the five-and-sixpence, which had been penciled there as the cost of the book.

"What! fifteen-and-sixpence, eh?" he continued, opening his big eyes; "well, and now I come to think of it, it's not at all dear. I don't suppose one of my clerks could even copy it in less than a month. I'm sure I shouldn't like to write all this for fifteen shillings, or to get it done either. The paper alone must have cost something. But you mustn't go throwing your money away for me; so here's a sovereign for you, and the remainder will buy you a yard or two of ribbon for your trouble." As I smiled and thanked him, he con-

tinued—"Well, it certainly is a very nice book, and I'll tell you now what we'll do. After you've got the children to bed, I'll get you to come down here and read a chapter or two of it to me every evening, and then I shall be able to find out whatever is the matter with me; for all I know is, that I have been very far from right this long time; and, what's more, I don't half like it."

Accordingly, I declare, if I hadn't to go down stairs every evening, and read a dozen or two of pages out of that filthy book, which positively was as dry as eating so much sawdust, while that stupid old Sir Luke, with his head upon his shoulders, would keep fancying he had got each disease, as fast as I read the symptoms of it out to him. The first evening I left him perfectly satisfied that he was going to have a violent attack of apoplexy, and that before many weeks were over his head he would pop off suddenly in his easy chair. The next evening he told me, with a sorrowful expression, that he was convinced his brain was softening, and that most likely he should end his days as a drivelling idiot. Upon my word, at last I myself grew quite frightened. On the third evening, he sat in his arm-chair, close to the fire, with his dressing-gown on, and speaking in a faint voice, said—

"Let me see, dear, dear, we've finished with the B.'s and have got to do the C.'s to-night; so if you will be so kind, Mrs. Dawdle, as to run over the articles in the index under that letter, you will do me so much good you don't know. Oh! dear, whatever can be the matter with me?"

Accordingly, I began reading as he desired—"Cancer, candied orange-peel, carrots (to be eaten young), casualties, cataplasm discutient, cataract."

"CATARACT!" he cried out immediately I said the word. "Stop there! I'm nearly certain I've got that. It's all very well for people to say that those little stars I have so frequently floating about before my eyes, arise merely from indigestion, but I know better. I've noticed, for a long time, my eyes are getting weaker and weaker, and that my sight's going as fast as it can. Oh! dear, dear, I know it's cataract coming on. I am so much obliged to you for that book, my good girl. Whatever I should have done without it is more than I can tell. But go on, my good creature; what does it say?—cataract, cataract."

"A cataract," I said, reading in a loud, solemn voice, "is an obstruction of the pupil ——"

"Of course," he interrupted me—"that's just what I've got; but go on, that's a good soul."

"By the interposition of some opaque substance, which either diminishes," I continued reading, "or totally extinguishes the sight."

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, throwing up his hands in agony, "and so it will mine, I'll be bound, before I'm many weeks older."

"When the cataract becomes firm," I went on, "it must be couched, or rather extracted."

"Ugh! don't—don't!" he cried out, shuddering. "Oh! what a frightful thing it seems to be!"

"In a recent or beginning cataract, the same medicines are to be used as in the Gutta Serena."

"And what on earth is the Gutter Serener?" he asked, anxiously. "Turn to that, my dear child. It's something dreadful, I'll be bound. I shouldn't wonder, now, if that's my complaint, after all, and that my eyes are guttering away as fast as they can."

"GUTTA SERENA, OR AMAUROSIS," I again read, as soon as I had found out the place, "is an abolition of the sight without any apparent cause or fault in the eyes."

"Just my case; nobody can see any fault in my eyes, I know. Oh! dear, dear; but go on! let's know the worst; there's some satisfaction in that, at least."

"When it is owing to decay, or wasting of the optic nerve," I continued, quite horrified, "it does not admit of a cure."

"O—o—oh! goodness gracious me!" he cried, rubbing his bald head with his hands. "Of course it doesn't. I knew it wouldn't. However, perhaps I'm not quite so far gone as that. Does it say if anything's good for it, my dear?"

"Yes," I replied, "it says that cupping, with scarifications on the back part of the head, will be found of use; and that runnings at the nose, promoted by volatile salts, stimulating powders, &c., will prove serviceable; but it adds, that the most likely means of all for relieving the patient are, issues or blisters, kept open for a long time behind the ears, or on the back of the neck."



“Heaven be praised!” he exclaimed, quite reassured, “I’ll try them every one, to-morrow, as sure as my name’s Sharpe. There’s nothing like decision of character. I’ve not lived all this time with my eyes shut, I can tell you.”

After this, whilst turning over the pages, I happened to pitch upon the article on Hydrophobia, and very imprudently to read the title out aloud.

“Hydrophobia!” he cried directly—“hydrophobia! what does it say about that? I was bitten by a dog a long time ago, and I have heard the poison remains in the system for a wonderful long time. Besides, to tell the truth, I’ve felt rather strange these few days past, and I should like to know what the symptoms are, just to assure myself whether I am all right or not, you know.”

“Few persons,” I at once began reading, “have ever been known to survive this the most frightful of all diseases, for though it may be prevented, it has never yet been known to be cured.”

“Ugh!” he said, shuddering; “never mind about that; for goodness sake, don’t read on there, but let me know how long it is before the disease makes its appearance.”

“Oh, it says,” I replied, referring to the book, “that the poison has often and often lain dormant in the body for a considerable period. Indeed, that there is no certainty, unless the bitten part is completely cut out.”

“Of course—of course, and I shall go raving mad, I know,” he screamed, writhing about in his chair; “for nothing of the sort was ever done to me. But, for Heaven’s sake, let’s know what the symptoms are.”

“Why, it says that the development of the rabid symptoms is rarely immediate. It begins with a slight pain in the scar of the bite, sometimes attended with a chill.”

“Goodness!” he exclaimed, “just my sensations, to a twitch. Upon my word, I haven’t been able to get warm all day; but go on! go on!—there can be little or no doubt I’ve got it now.”

“The patient becomes silent,” I continued.

“Exactly my case,” he answered; “only the other day, Jennings, at the Bank, was asking me, in his joking way, whether I was in love or not, for he said I had lost my tongue

of late. But I see it's coming hydrophobia that's been playing the deuce with me for the whole week past. But go on! it *is* such a satisfaction to know what's the matter with you, you can't tell."

"Frightful dreams disturb his sleep."

"Dear, dear! why if I myself had written down my feelings, the symptoms couldn't have been more like mine. It was only the other night I dreamt one of the first houses in the city had broke, and let me in for the whole of that cargo of nutmegs. Well, what's next?"

"The eyes become brilliant, if you please, sir."

"Just look at mine, will you?—there's a good creature," he asked, staring at me with all his might; "and tell me if they're not very red and bright, for, upon my word, they feel so."

"Yes, they are rather bright," I replied; "but, then, don't you think, Sir Luke, *that* might arise from the wine you have taken?"

"Pooh, pooh! stuff o' nonsense!" he screamed, in an agony. "Wine! I declare I shudder at the very idea of it, and *that* I know *is* one of the symptoms. Ain't I right?"

"Yes, Sir Luke; it says the patient shudders at the approach of anything liquid or any smooth body."

"Of course—of course, I told you so," he whined out, faintly; "I shall be raving mad, and end my days with this the most frightful of all diseases, as the book calls it. But surely it must tell one, somewhere, what is the greatest length of time the poison will remain in the body, for it's twelve years since that strange dog flew at my calves, in Gracechurch-street?"

"Oh, well, then, it says here, sir," I answered, full of joy, "that some have indeed gone mad twelve months after being bitten, but seldom later."

"Rubbish! don't tell me! I know better," he cried, quite in a passion, to think that he was not going to have the hydrophobia, after all. "What on earth's the use of people writing books about what they don't understand any more than a child? To tell me I'm not going to have the hydrophobia—nonsense!—I suppose I know how I feel better than they do? But I'll soon put an end to all this wretched doubt, for if I don't send for my apothecary first thing in the morning,

why, I'm a Dutchman." And indignantly throwing himself back in his chair, the stupid old thing went on muttering to himself for half an hour at least.

\* \* \* \* \*

Upon my word, Sir Luke Sharpe was a most extraordinary being. For instance, I happened to tell him that the piano we had in the school-room was so old and out of tune that it was more like a hurdy-gurdy than a grand upright, and what does he do, but go to one of the manufactories, and buy no less than half-a-dozen instruments, just because they made him the same allowance on taking a quantity, as if he had been in the trade. So I declare we had one in all the principal rooms in the house, and that Miss Botty even felt herself hardly dealt with because I objected to one being put in her room, remarking that it would be impossible for the children to think of practising there.

Of course there was one in Sir Luke's dingy back parlour, and the consequence was, nothing would please my gentleman but the children must play to him every evening. There he would sit in his easy chair, bobbing his head up and down, while he listened in rapture to the "Battle of Prague," declaring he never heard anything more "nat'ral" than the cries of the wounded, or else whistling an accompaniment to the "Bird Waltz," the chirruping of which seemed to please him mightily. After my little pets had gone to bed, he would ask me whether I thought any of them would be able to get a living out of the piano; and on my answering in the affirmative, he thanked me for having made them so self-supporting so soon, and would wind up by requesting me to play him "a few real good old Scotch airs," as he called them. As I rattled over some of the stupid jerky, jiggy things, he'd throw his silk handkerchief over his head and hum the tune after me, until he dropped off into his evening nap.

By these means I soon began to see that Sir Luke would hardly know what to do with himself if I was to leave him. And no wonder, for of an evening I used to make his coffee after dinner, and warm his evening paper for him. Over and over again, too, to save him the trouble of putting on his glasses, I used to read out to him the list of bankrupts, and the shipping intelligence, and the state of the funds, and the share list, and

spell right through that long prosy money article. Then—wonder of wonders—I at last got him to consent to let me put his nasty dusty old room in order. So I took advantage of his going out of town to see about some trumpery ship of his that had gone ashore on the coast of Ireland, and had all the windows in that dirty back parlour cleaned, and the curtains taken down and beaten, and all the papers well dusted and put in order again. When he came back he was quite astonished. The place did look so light, and everything was so nice and exactly in its proper place, that he declared it seemed to him as if it had been done by magic, and he actually went so far as to add that I was a perfect treasure to him, and that the room hadn't looked so cheerful for he didn't know when. All this of course made that Miss Botty so wild, that she was ready to bite the tips of her fingers off with vexation, and she couldn't even pass me on the stairs without muttering to herself some nasty, vulgar, insulting remark about me, for which, however, I didn't care two pins, though it made me more and more determined to get her out of the house as fast as I could.

At last, I got such power over my "wonderful" gentleman, with "a head upon his shoulders, who wasn't born yesterday," and who flattered himself that it was impossible for any woman to get round *him*, that if, in the course of conversation, I merely let drop, quite casually, that I liked to see a gentleman dressed in such and such a fashion, upon my word I declare I should have the stupid old thing, a few days afterwards, figging himself out in the very style I had spoken of in terms of approbation. Once, I recollect saying I thought the Joinville ties sweetly pretty; and lo and behold! the very next day the conceited old silly came home with one of them round his neck! At last, to crown the whole, one evening, after dinner, he pulled out a wig-box, and putting on a jet-black "gentleman's real head of hair," asked me if he didn't look much better in it. Of course I couldn't do less than say it became him admirably, though, upon my word, I never saw such a fright as he looked in the stiff, curly, unmistakable thing, which was called "an invisible peruke." Then, oh dear me! of course, it was my having quietly observed that I liked dark hair that had made him seek the aid of "Professor Browne." He had been

forced to do it, he said, to protect himself against the horrid draughts that came whistling all round the back of his poor head at the India House, like so many razors. Besides, he added, he thought a wig looked so much more sightly than those horrid skull-caps, and of course wanted to know if I didn't agree with him.

Sometimes—soon after this sudden alteration in his costume—I declare if he didn't get talking a pack of nonsense to me, and calling me his dear girl, and taking my hand and squeezing it. But of course I trust I needn't tell my gentle lady readers that I soon put an end to any such ridiculous stuff; and having snatched my hand sharply away from him, drew myself up as straight as a Dutch doll, and gave my gentleman such a look, as very plainly told him I wasn't the weak-minded silly he seemed to take me for.

However, do what I would, I could not set Sir Luke against that housekeeper of his. Complain as often as I would, still he had always some excuse for her ready at the tip of his tongue—"It was very wrong of her, but he was sure the woman meant nothing by it, and he was certain she'd come all right by and bye; he'd seen her so fifty times"—and "the best way was to let her get out of her tantrums as she had got into them"—and a pack of other things that made me quite angry to listen to.

Really it seemed to me that he was quite afraid of the woman; for over and over again, when I had got him to say that he'd have the creature up and give it her well, still, when my lady made her appearance, upon my word he'd be as civil and polite to her as if he'd been a master of the ceremonies, and she a lady-patroness of some public ball.

One day, I remember, he brought home with him from the city two lovely gros-de-Naples dresses, of exactly the same colour, and after having presented me with one, actually had the impudence to tell me to my face that he intended the other for that housekeeper. So, though I had accepted the lovely piece of silk, still I returned it to him, telling him very plainly that "though I was very, very much obliged to him for his kindness, still I *could not* condescend to dress in the same style as his housekeeper." Whereupon, what did my gentleman do, but present that Miss Botty with the two

dresses instead of the one. This *did* put me in such a puff, that I was as near as possible giving him notice to quit myself, and I do verily believe I should have done so, only I didn't see the fun of letting a common housekeeper get the better of me.

Accordingly I made up my mind to bring matters to a crisis, and see *which* of us Sir Luke really would part with. However, as I thought my refusal of the dress might have offended him a little with me, I fancied it might be better first to make him some little present, just to propitiate him again towards me. So, as Sir Luke's birth-day was very near at hand, I bought a very beautiful papier-mâché snuff-box, with a sweet, pretty painting of a lovely young beauty, called "PRINTEMPS" on the lid. Having filled it full of the best Scotch rappee, I scratched with the point of a pin inside the cover that it was

PRESENTED TO  
SIR LUKE SHARPE, BART.  
ON HIS ATTAINING HIS 56TH YEAR,

(To tell the truth, I knew the old thing was past seventy, if he was a day,)

WITH AN EARNEST HOPE AND PRAYER  
THAT HE MAY BE SPARED  
FOR MANY YEARS TO COME.

After giving him a good dinner of grouse, which he was exceedingly fond of, I suddenly left the room, and requested the servant to take the parcel I had made up to him. When, in a few minutes, I returned to the room, I pretended—on his taxing me with being the party who had presented the box to him—not to know anything at all about it, though, of course, I took good care to deny it in such a way as to let him see that I didn't like to confess to it, and to give him to understand, at least, that it wasn't that Miss Botty who had given it to him. And then, dear me! if the little bit of flattery about my fancying him to be as young as I had made him out on the lid hadn't put him in such a good humour, that he took out his cheque-book, and would insist upon my accepting a cheque for ten guineas, saying that I was a foolish, silly, good, kind-hearted girl, to go wasting my hard-earned money upon him, and he would not allow it.

"Oh! thank you, Sir Luke, I can hardly think of accepting it," I said, wrapping it up and slipping it into my purse; "for the fact is, I wished you to receive it as a parting token of my esteem."

"Parting!" he cried, quite pale in the face; "why, what the deuce do you mean, my good girl?"

"Yes, Sir Luke," I replied, looking down on the ground, and sighing deeply; "I am sorry to say I must quit your establishment as soon as you can conveniently spare me—though I'm sure it must be in the night, or I shall never be able to tear myself away from those dear children."

"Go as soon as I can conveniently spare you!" he cried, staring at me with all his eyes; "then if it comes to that, I can't spare you, so you won't go at all. Who on earth, I should like to know, is to market for me, and make my white wine whey of a night, when you leave? What do you want to go for? Ain't you comfortable?"

"I'm sure," I answered, as if choking with emotion, "I never was so comfortable as since I've been in your establishment, Sir Luke. But the fact is—you see—I—that is, you know—I feel I'm not exactly wanted here—in fact, I cannot consent to stop."

"Not wanted!" he exclaimed, thunderstruck; "why, who says you're not wanted, when I've told you over and over again I can't do without you, girl?"

"Yes, I know you have been so kind as to say so, Sir Luke," I answered, hesitating; "but I'm also well aware that whatever little services I may have been so fortunate as to be able to render you, have only been an interference with other persons' duties: the very idea of this has pained me so much, that I have long seen it would be necessary for the comfort of all parties concerned, that either your house-keeper or myself should leave; and out of consideration for Susan's feelings, I have determined that *I* would go, however much the struggle may cost me." And I looked at him to see if I could discover what impression my speech had made on him, while I sat upon pins to learn which of the two Sir Luke would make up his mind to part with.

"Stuff o' nonsense!—stuff o' nonsense!" he burst out; "I won't listen to it a moment. A parcel of women's quarrels!

Why can't you live comfortably and happily together? I've told you over and over again Susan means very well, if you only know how to take her. So, come now, don't be stupid, and go quarrelling with your bread and butter in this way."

"My bread and butter, Sir Luke!" I exclaimed, indignantly, drawing myself up.

"Well," he continued, in his nasty vulgar way, as if all the best feelings of our nature were capable of being reduced into a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, "if you want more wages, child, say so at once, and I'm sure you won't find me object to anything reasonable."

"My wages, sir," I replied, contemptuously, with a curl of my lip, "I am perfectly content with." Then rising and walking towards the door, I added, "I will leave this day month, if you please, Sir Luke Sharpe."

The stateliness of my manner, accompanied with the evident firmness of my resolution, quite took the old Baronet by surprise. As I turned round, before opening the door, to observe the impression I had made upon him, I could see him biting his nail, and twisting it over in his mind, as much as to say, "What on earth shall I do?" Finding he was still undecided, I said in my most pathetic manner, "Good night, Sir Luke!—good night!"

I was just leaving the room, when he called out after me, "Come back! come back! now, don't you be rash. Don't let either of us make up our minds one way or the other till to-morrow. You see, it's always been a maxim of mine to sleep upon any resolution I may form over-night, and I've always said to myself, 'May the evening's determination bear the morning's reflection.' And that, my good girl, I verily believe, is the reason why people say I'm the wonderful man I am. Bless you! if I'd gone galloping through the world with my eyes shut, in such a post-haste hurry to gain my object, as most people do—I should have been worse off than when I started—and that was bad enough, goodness knows. So you take advice from one who has risen from almost nothing to be one of the first men in the first city in the world, merely because he's had his eyes open all his life. Now, you be counselled by me, and listen to one who has got a head upon his shoulders, and let's talk the matter quietly over in the morning."





J. W. Southworth

The Separation



“Very well, Sir Luke, as you please,” I merely answered, and left the *prudent* Scotch Baronet to his own cogitations, whatever they might have been.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the morning, Sir Luke sent up the servant to say he wished to speak to me. Fully convinced from his manner over-night, and from all I had seen and heard besides, that he would rather part with me than so old a friend as that Miss Botty,—I descended the stairs in obedience to his summons.

After I was seated, he began his “morning’s reflections.” However, he did keep beating about the bush so, and made such a long preface, and spoke in such a strange, nervous way, that I couldn’t help saying to myself, “Well, what on earth will all this end in?” All of a sudden, if he didn’t go down upon his knees, in the old-approved style of “proposing,” and offer me his hand and his heart.

I was really so unprepared for this, that I hardly knew what to say. A whole flood of thoughts rushed in upon me; and in the tumult of my conflicting emotions, I told him I could not give him an immediate answer, and requested that he would allow me to take a lesson from him in discretion, and sleep upon it.

Once shut up alone in my own room, I began to look upon the matter as calculatingly and selfishly as I knew Sir Luke had done. My first thoughts were of the pride I should feel at being mistress of an establishment like the Baronet’s. Then again, I should be Lady Luke; and what a victory that would be over my mother, who had only a little while back thrown my poverty in my teeth! Besides, Fanny’s success in life was still a thorn in my side—though I almost loved her now for the kindness she had shown me. Again, when I was mistress of that establishment, I should no longer have any occasion to ask whether the housekeeper “*might go or not,*” but could send her off when and how I pleased. Yet, still my woman’s better nature crept back, after all, and I could not help thinking of the frightful sacrifice at which I was to purchase my victory. There was I, in the very prime of my life, about to swear to love and honour the wretched remnant of a man whom in my heart I loathed and

despised. The more I thought of it, the more wicked such an union appeared to me; and I could not bring myself to believe that any ceremony on earth could consecrate it into marriage. "No," I said to myself, "I'd have nothing to do with it; and without waiting for the morning, I'd go down then and there—while my better thoughts were upon me—and tell Sir Luke that I preferred rather to quit his house." Still, the whole object of my life, that had slipped from me so often, despite all my struggles, seemed now to be within my grasp, and I could not after all consent so readily to forego it. Then I thought to myself of all the alterations I would have done in the house, and what a grand place it might be made—how I should be the possessor of furniture, even more costly than that which had been taken from me. Then every one should talk of the balls and routs I would give, and envy the carriages I would keep, and the opera-box—and as I said the words to myself, the prophecy of my father, spoken but a few years back, rang in my ears:—

"And when you have angled for your carriage and your opera-box, with real love as your bait, you will, after a time, bait, like other anglers, with something so cunningly like the real thing, that it will catch almost as well; and the poor tricked fish will find to his cost, when it is too late, that he has been taken by what is only artificial, after all."

This almost decided me; and I was preparing to go downstairs and tell Sir Luke of my determination, when the house-keeper entered my room, and begged to know "whether I intended my *master* to have any dinner or not to-day."

I no sooner heard the words than my mind was made up, and I hurried down to Sir Luke, to accept the offer he had made me.

## OFFER THE LAST.

OF COURSE I HAVEN'T GONE THROUGH EVERY OFFER I RECEIVED, OR ELSE GOODNESS KNOWS I SHOULD HAVE HAD ENOUGH TO DO. I'VE ONLY DESCRIBED THE MORE IMPORTANT ONES. ANY LADY CAN WELL UNDERSTAND I HAD A NUMBER OF OTHERS, WHO, THOUGH VERY WORTHY INDIVIDUALS, WERE FAR FROM WELL TO DO IN THE WORLD. ONE, I RECOLLECT, WAS FROM A VERY NICE SWISS COTTAGE. ANOTHER FROM A YOUNG FIRM IN THE CITY. I THINK THERE WAS ONE FROM A SMALL ESTATE IN "BUCKS," AND TWO OR THREE REDUCED ANNUITIES. SEVERAL CLUB-HOUSES, I KNOW, WERE VERY ANXIOUS TO CARRY ME OFF, AND I REMEMBER VERY WELL REFUSING NEARLY THE WHOLE OF THE IRISH WING OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

ALL was shortly settled for my wedding with Sir Luke. Though I wrote to my father requesting his attendance at my marriage, he sent me a long letter back, telling me he would not by his presence countenance me in so immoral an union, and moreover, that he had expressly forbidden any member of his family to be in any way party to my "dishonour." At first, this only hardened me the more; but as the fearful day drew near, my father's discountenance made me wish that I could unsay the promise I had given. The night before the wretched day I laid awake till it was nearly morning, restless with my anxious thoughts; and when at last I fell asleep, my dreams were horrible. I fancied I was at the altar, and the priest kept jumbling up the funeral with the marriage service; and that when all was over, and I turned round to see my husband, I thought I found that I had been wedded to a corpse who was standing knee deep in a newly-dug grave.

However, I was not the woman to be turned away from my purpose by an idle dream. The next morning I became Lady Sharpe, though, as I left the church, I could have cried; for I saw the people in the crowd at the church door, as I and Sir Luke passed through them, laugh and nudge each other, and I could hear their ribald jokes as the shrivelled and

tottering bridegroom went by leaning on the arm of the buxom bride.

Of course I was not long in clearing the house of all the old servants who had known who their mistress was, and who, from having lived so long in the house of a single gentleman, were indeed hardly fit companions to be about the person of Sir Luke's new wife.

At the first opportunity I spoke to Sir Luke about the alterations I proposed making in the house, and then I began to find out to my cost, that those habits which I had thought were merely the consequence of his solitary life, were in reality the result of ingrained selfishness and parsimony. No sooner did I propose spending any money on the place, than from the manner in which he told me that he had not earned his money so hard as he had to squander it away in any such nonsense as that, I at once saw the life I should have to lead.

Indeed, if I asked him for a sixpence, the request was followed by such a host of suspicious inquiries, and, even if given at all, was given so grudgingly, that my hot temper would not put up with the niggardliness, and we very soon got to continual bickerings, and each of us most bitterly to repent the step we had taken. His old cant phrases now made me so sick, that when he told me he hadn't lived all his time for nothing, and that it was no use my trying to impose upon him, and asked me whether I took him for a fool or not, my blood would boil up until I could not refrain from telling him what I really *did* take him for. Then the storm of words between us would become more violent than ever, and we would live in the same house estranged for weeks.

Yet, what exasperated me more than all Sir Luke's other suspicions, were his continual doubts of my honour. Never did I move abroad but I felt sure there was some one at my heels to watch me. This was more than I could bear, and I threatened, if it continued, to leave him altogether. But he had the audacity to tell me he wished to goodness I would go, and then he should be rid of the worst bargain he ever made in all his life. When I found out this was his object, it only made me more determined to bear quietly whatever insults he might heap upon me, so that he might be foiled in





Jas. Cruikshank

The Wedding



his purpose. Then we lived in separate parts of the house, and we saw as little of each other as we possibly could. The old thing even taught his children to shun me.

But I was determined to be revenged. I left him to the mercy of his servants for everything he wanted. The little attentions that had once made me so precious to him, I determined he should not have again from me, and that even his very meals he should order for himself. This state of things continued for some time; but Sir Luke was too selfish not to make some resistance. Cut off from his creature comforts, or at least left to devise them for himself, he was not long in seeking for some one who would supply my place, and save him that trouble.

One day, to my horror, I learnt from one of the maids that his former housekeeper had returned.

Stung to the quick, and frenzied with passion, I rushed down stairs to order the woman from the house. But the wretch only laughed at me, and told me to my face that she was there by Sir Luke's orders, and that he had told her that she was to be the mistress of the house.

I immediately sought Sir Luke, and demanded, by the terms of the oath he had sworn at the altar, the woman's instant dismissal. But the more I raged at the indignity that had been put upon me, the more he gloried in the victory he had gained. Now perhaps I should remember, he said, that Sir Luke Sharpe wasn't quite such a fool as he looked, and perhaps by this time I had discovered that he had got a head upon his shoulders, and wasn't born yesterday.

As I lost all command over myself, I reviled him in such terms as I shudder now even to remember; he rang the bell, and, ordering up all the servants, told them in my presence, that they were no longer to obey me, but the housekeeper.

I was fairly beaten. I knew not what a cold, callous monster I had to deal with. Satisfied that any appeals to his heart, his spirit, or his worldly pride were useless, I left the house, saying to myself, "There is but one way by which to wound you, my gentleman, and that revenge at least I *will* have. If the only sensitive part in your frame is your breeches pocket, and your money is your heart's blood, why, at least I will make that flow."

I left the house, and rushed into every extravagance I could think of. Wherever I could gain credit, or contract a debt, on the faith of his rich fame, there I went. Hotel bills, carriages, parties, velvets, silks, satins, jewellery, laces, millinery, every luxury I fancied, I indulged in. And when the bills, all together—as I had taken good care to arrange—were sent in to the niggardly Sir Luke, I felt happy in the pang I knew it cost him.

But the old Baronet was not a man to be trifled with, for the day after the bills poured in upon him, he inserted an advertisement in all the papers, and posted all the walls about the neighbourhood where I was living, with bills, stating that he would not be answerable for any debts incurred by his wife.

This cut off all further credit from me, and for some time I lived upon the valuables I had collected. When these were eaten up, I sent my attorney to demand of him the five hundred a-year he had so often said he would give me as a separate maintenance, to get rid of me. But I had wounded him so deeply with the keen revenge I had taken, that his only answer was, that, as I had taken the law into my own hands, I should now only have what the law would force him to give me, and that was enough to keep me from being a burthen upon the parish. Again and again I sent to him, threatening to expose him in all the papers, and go before the magistrate to force some assistance from him, unless he agreed to settle on me some suitable maintenance.

But it was all to no purpose. He was callous to the last, and the old answer came and came—"I might do as I pleased, I should get no more than parish allowance from him. Those who knew Sir Luke Sharpe knew who he was, and what he was, and as for those who didn't know him, why, he didn't care twopence about them. So I might expose him in the public papers as much as I pleased."

As long as I could, I held out the siege against my pride. At last, fairly starved out, and ill and careworn, I thought once more of home. But even then I could not bring myself to confess to those who had withheld their sanction from my marriage the misery *that* marriage had brought upon me. At

last I scribbled a letter to my father—anonymous, as if coming from some friendly neighbour—stating the distress in which I was, and how I was struggling with my pride for my very life.

Early the next morning my own dear kind father came. He consoled me, and listened to the long story of my sufferings till he almost wept.

“Lotty,” he cried, raising me up in my bed, “let your trials, as I said before, come upon you when they may, here, my child,” he said, pressing me to his bosom, “shall always be a heart ready to console you, when, alas! it is too late to direct and guide.”

Fairly overcome by his kindness, I told him how I had been treated by the old Baronet, my husband. But all he said in answer was to repeat his early warning to me against angling for a husband—

“When you have angled for your carriage and your opera-box, with real love as your bait, you will, after a time, bait, like other anglers, with something so cunningly like the real thing, that it will catch almost as well; *and the poor tricked fish will find to his cost, when it is too late, that he has been taken by what is only artificial, after all.* Lotty! Lotty! you never could have loved this mere shell of a man?”

“Father, I did *not*.”

“Can you wonder, then, my child,” he said, “at the misery it has brought upon you? For, thank God! though I always taught my child that something *more than love* was required to constitute a happy union, still I never gave her to understand that something *less than love* could, by the remotest possibility, do so.”





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