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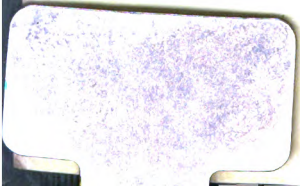




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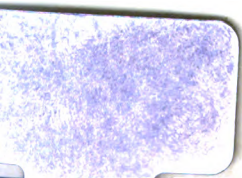




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ADVENTURES
OF
SUSAN HOPELEY.
VOLUME I.

ADVENTURES

OF

S U S A N H O P L E Y ;

OR,

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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SUSAN HOPLEY.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH INTRODUCES SUSAN TO THE GENTLE READER.

WORTHY, excellent Susan! methinks I see her now, in her neat, plaited cap, snuff-coloured stuff gown, clean white apron, and spectacles on nose, plying her knitting needles, whose labours were to result in a comfortable pair of lamb's wool stockings for my next winter's wear, or a warm waistcoat for poor old Jeremy; or in something, be it what it might, that was to contribute to the welfare and benefit of some human being; and I believe, if it had so happened that the whole human race had been miraculously provided to repletion with warm

VOL. I.

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stockings and waistcoats, that Susan, rather than let her fingers be idle and not be doing something for somebody, would have knit jackets for the shorn lambs and blankets for the early calves.

Excellent Susan ! she is dead now ; and sadly, sadly I miss her ; for when by the death of my wife and the marriage of my children I grew a lone old man, she became my companion as well as my housekeeper. During the day, whilst I looked after my farm, or wandered over the fields with my gun in my hand, or wrote or read in my library, she was engaged with her household affairs, and superintending the servants ; but with the tea urn, in the evening, came Susan, so neat, so clean, with her honest, benevolent face, which although it was not handsome, was the pleasantest face I ever looked upon ; and whilst she made my tea—by the by, the flavour of teas is sadly falling off, I observe ; it's nothing like what it was in Susan's time—but whilst she poured me out the pleasant beverage, and sweetened it exactly to my taste—it's very odd ; one would think a man ought to know his own taste, but I always put in too much sugar or too little ; and in trying to repair the error, I regularly make things worse—but as I was saying, whilst she presided at

my tea table, or plied her knitting needles, sometimes I read aloud, but more generally we used to talk over old times and past adventures—and pleasant chat it was ! Some people, if they had listened to us, might have thought there was a sameness in our conversation—a repetition of old stories—but they never wearied us ; I think I liked them better every night ; and so did she.

At length, one evening, it occurred to us that what amused us so much, might perhaps amuse other people. "Suppose, we write our histories," said I, "Susan ; I think we could make out three volumes of adventures before we settled down into this quiet life, which furnishes nothing to tell. In the evening, we can collect our materials and arrange our plan ; and on wet days, when I can't get out, I'll put it all on paper : and we shall then be able to judge how it reads. I've a notion it wouldn't be a bad story. The world don't want extraordinary events, and improbable incidents, to amuse it now. They have found out that, 'the proper study of mankind is man ;' and he who can paint real life and human nature, has the best chance of being read. It has often been said that few biographies would be uninteresting, if people would or could disclose the exact truth

with all its details. Let us make the experiment, and relate simply without addition or subtraction the events of our early years. Nearly all are dead now who would be pained by the disclosures ; and we have but to conceal the names of places and of people, and wait a few years, and perhaps when you and I are both gone, some kind friend may revise our manuscript, and give it to the world ; and we may thus, by furnishing our quota to the amusement of mankind, pay back some part of the pleasure we have derived from the excellent tales that have cheered our evening fire-side."

Susan liked the idea ; and accordingly we lost no time in putting our plan into execution. Whether the result of our labours will ever see the light—whether it will be considered worth publishing "by the trade," or worth reading by the public, is more than I can foresee ; but this I know, that the occupation it furnished, afforded Susan and myself many a pleasant hour ; and that come what may of it, it will not be all *lost labour*.

HARRY LEESON.

CHAPTER II.

WHICH GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF SUSAN'S BIRTH, EDUCATION, AND FIRST SERVICE.

SUSAN HOPLEY was a native of the village of Mapleton—at least, so we choose to call it—in the south-eastern part of England; where her father was a day-labourer on the farm of a Mr. Whitehead. He was an industrious sober man, his wife a worthy woman, and their family consisted only of Susan, and a boy named Andrew, who was a few years younger. But the mother was weakly, and unable to undertake any thing more than the care of her house and children; and the father's wages were only just sufficient to supply his family with the necessaries of life; leaving nothing to spare for education, which was then much more expensive and of much more difficult attainment than it is now. So

Mrs. Hopley brought up her children in the fear of God, taught them to spell out words in the Bible, and to be honest and true, and love their neighbours ; and trusted in Providence for the rest.

Thus they lived happily enough till Susan was thirteen, and Andrew ten ; but then the always infirm health of the mother began to give way ; and with the expense of doctors, and one thing or another, the family were beginning to fall into difficulties ; when the cleanly appearance and orderly conduct of the children at church, happened, fortunately, to attract the notice of Mrs. Leeson. This lady was the daughter of a former curate of Mapleton, where she had been born and bred ; and when very young, had fallen in love with an officer of the king's troops that were quartered in the village. As the regiment was ordered abroad, and the young lady could not part with him, they were married ; and she followed him about the world for several years, and was near him in many battles. It was even said, that she had once saved his life, by seeking him out amongst a heap of bodies where he had been left for dead. He had been desperately wounded, and was lying there so far gone, that he could never have survived the night, had she not stretched

herself beside him on the ground, and, by folding him in her arms, contrived to keep some warmth in his blood till she could get assistance in the morning.

At length, Major Leeson, who was a good deal older than his wife, beginning to feel some effects from the hardships he had undergone, they resolved to leave the army, and set themselves down for life in the village where they had first met. They had not much money; he had his half-pay, and she had two hundred a-year allowed her by her mother's brother, Mr. Wentworth of Oakfield; but as they had no children, and a great deal of love for one another, they had enough. However, after they had lived in this way for some time, Mrs. Leeson, to her own surprise and that of everybody else, found herself in the family way, and was brought to bed of as lovely a little boy as eyes ever looked upon. Great was the joy at his birth, and a happy family they were till the child came to be about six or seven years old; but then the expenses of his education, and the means of setting him afloat in the world began to be thought of; and after much deliberation and many hard struggles, it was resolved that the Major should apply to be placed on full-pay again, in order that at the end of a few

years he might obtain leave to sell his commission ; and thus secure something for little Harry against his parents died.

Sad, sad was the parting, for the husband and wife had never been separated before ; and they still loved each other as they had done in their young days. But they trusted in God and their constant love ; and the Major sailed for the West Indies, where the regiment he was appointed to was stationed.

He had been gone some time, when the illness of the labourer's wife, and the consequent distress of the family, reached the ears of Mrs. Leeson ; who thereupon went to the cottage to see how she could be of use to them. Little as she had to spare, there was nobody in the village so serviceable to the poor as she was, particularly after the Major left her ; and, indeed, alleviating their distresses, and superintending the education of her dear Harry, seemed to be all that constituted her pleasure in life. " I do believe, poor lady," said Susan, whose own words we shall frequently take the liberty of using, " I do believe that she sought to win the prayers of the poor, and to make Heaven her friend, for the sake of her dear husband that was far away."

Many were the comforts and alleviations she

afforded Mrs. Hopley, whose health continued daily to decline ; but the greatest of all was, that she undertook to have Andrew and Susan taught to read and write ; and to procure them such other instruction as was likely to be useful in their situations, and enable them to earn their bread respectably. "Heaven bless her for it!" Susan would say, when she came to this part of our story ; "many's the day I have had reason to say so !"

Mrs. Leeson had a worthy excellent servant called Dobbs, who had been brought up in her father's family ; and who, when the young lady married, had followed her fortunes and accompanied her through all her dangers and difficulties ; and who was still fast by her side, watching over little Harry, and as fond of him as if he'd been her own. "I often think, Sir, when I remember Dobbs," Susan would say, "that there are few friends more valuable than an attached and worthy servant. People that don't think it worth their while to make a friend of a good servant, lose more in life than they think of."

Now, Dobbs had had a very good education from Mrs. Leeson's father ; and as she did not forget that part of her catechism which taught her to do to others as she would they should do

to her, she very willingly undertook, at the request of her mistress, to impart to Susan and Andrew such instruction as was needful.

Whilst Mrs. Hopley lived, the children only spent certain hours of the day at Mrs. Leeson's; devoting the rest to the care and attendance of their sick parent; but when the poor mother died, whose passage to the grave was smoothed by knowing that they had found a friend, and were rescued from the peril she had most apprehended—namely, that when she was gone, they would be thrown amongst the idle and disorderly children of the village, and forget all the good and virtuous principles she had taught them—then, when she was laid at rest in the humble churchyard, Mrs. Leeson took Susan altogether to be under Dobbs, and do what little she was able in the house, till she had learned the duties of a servant. Andrew lived with his father for a time, earning a trifle when he could, by weeding or picking stones; but he still punctually attended Mrs. Dobbs's instructions; and often, when they were over, was allowed to play a game at marbles or trap ball with Master Harry, or take a walk with him in the fields; for Andrew was a steady, well-behaved boy, and to be depended on. As for Harry, his education was superintended by the clergyman of the

village ; at whose house he spent a considerable part of every day, and under whose instructions he made great progress.

As soon as Andrew was old enough, Mrs. Leeson completed her kindness, by procuring him a situation in the establishment of her uncle, Mr. Wentworth of Oakfield ; and there, by his good conduct, he rose from being stable boy to be footman ; and a great favourite with his master he was, as well as with honest Mr. Jeremy, the butler.

Susan had been living about five years in Mrs. Leeson's service, when she learned from Dobbs that the Major's regiment was ordered home. For several weeks before, both she and Dobbs had observed an alteration in Mrs. Leeson ; her step was lighter and quicker, her face brighter, and sometimes as she went about the house they heard her sweet voice carolling a few snatches of some old song ; and Dobbs would say, " There she is, bless her ! singing the Major's favourite tune as blithe as she used to be in old times." She had her husband's picture over the mantle piece in the drawing-room, and her first glance in the morning as she entered the room, and the last at night when she left it, was towards that face she loved so dearly. It was most times a melancholy look—a look of fond affec-

tion, and of deep regret for the precious hours of life so wasted ; for, by her, all that were not spent with him, were scarcely counted. But now the expression changed ; she met his eye with a joyous greeting ; and there was a brightness in her's, and an involuntary smile upon her lip, that told of pleasant thoughts and glad anticipations.

“It's my opinion,” said Dobbs to Susan, “that there's been some good news from the Major in that last letter ! for I saw her sitting before the glass to-day trying a new way of dressing her beautiful hair ; and yesterday she went into the village and bought some pink and blue ribbons to trim her morning caps. I shouldn't be surprised if we see him soon.”

“I declare the same thought struck me,” said Susan, “for since she's given orders to have the carpets taken up, and the house cleaned, I remark, that whenever she's directing what's to be done, she keeps glancing up at the picture every moment, as if she was asking his opinion.”

“And then do you see,” said Dobbs, “how she flings her arms about little Harry every now and then ; and laughs a gay laugh, as if there was a hidden fountain of joy in her heart

that was running over. Mark my words, we shall hear news of the Major before it's long."

Dobbs was right. "One day soon after this," (and here we shall let Susan tell her own story,) "we saw Mrs. Leeson come hurrying up the little garden that was in front of the house with flushed cheeks and an eager step; and presently afterwards her bed-room bell rang twice for Dobbs. We guessed directly that she had been out to meet the postman, and that there was news; and so it proved. The Major was coming home directly; but as the colonel was absent, and he had the command of the regiment, he was not sure whether he should be able to leave it immediately on landing or not. If he could not get away, he promised to send her a line the moment the vessel got into port, that she and Harry might hasten to meet him. He added, too, that he had made a very advantageous arrangement for parting with his commission to a young nobleman, who didn't care for money; but who wanted to get into a regiment that was not likely to be sent to a foreign station for some years.

"Oh, Mr. Harry, there was joy! I shall never forget her sweet face when first I saw it after she had got the news. Beautiful she

always was; but now, as Mr. Poppleton the curate, said, she was radiant, and looked ten times younger and handsomer than ever. She told Dobbs that the Major had hinted that there was an early prospect of their coming home before; but that she had not courage to mention it till she was certain, fancying she could bear a disappointment better if she had never communicated her hope to anybody.

“As this letter had been written immediately before the fleet was to sail, of course the Major himself, or the summons to meet him at Portsmouth, might be hourly expected; and there were such preparations—such a joyous bustle—and dear Harry, he was so busy too! There was the house to be got ready, the clean curtains to be put up, the carpets to be laid; whatever was much worn or looked shabby to be replaced; and there was her own dress, and Harry’s dress to be thought of; and the garden to be trimmed, and the trunks to be packed—Oh heavens! the joy of much loving! But, oh! the pain!

“Well, Sir, all was ready, and we rejoiced that time had been given us to complete every thing; but now it was all listening and watching; every sound of a wheel that was heard approaching, every coach that passed through the

village, even the latch of the garden gate being lifted, brought us all to the window. Master Harry's lessons were laid aside, for he had too much to ask, and too much to hear about his dear papa, to give his mind to them; whilst the mother, anticipating the pride and delight of the father when he looked at his noble boy, had not the heart to chide him—and every morning when the sun rose, it was to be to-day; and every night when he set, it was to be to-morrow. With the earliest dawn, we could hear Mrs. Leeson opening her window to observe the weather; and Harry spent half the day waving his handkerchief in the wind, to be sure it was still blowing from the right quarter. And it did blow from the right quarter; and calm beautiful summer weather it was, as ever shone out of the heavens!

“Well, at last we saw the postman coming with a letter, and we all felt certain it was the right letter, for there were not many came to the house; and sure enough it bore the Portsmouth post mark; and Harry, who got hold of it first, and who did not know his papa's hand, cried out, ‘He's come! he's come!’ But the letter was from Mr. Wentworth. Happening to be in London, he had heard that the telegraph had announced the fleet was in sight, and he had

gone down to Portsmouth to meet the Major. But the letter said, that although the fleet was come in, the transport in which Major Leeson had embarked had parted company with the others, and was not yet arrived, but it was expected hourly.

“I was in the room when my mistress read the letter, for we were all too anxious to keep out of it; and I shall never forget her face. Oh! the change that came over it! The falling from the great hope to the heavy fear! She said nothing, but she turned very pale; and her lips trembled, and her hand shook; and Harry looked at her with an amazed and serious look, for the child felt damped too—‘What ma?’ he said, ‘Soon, love; soon!’ she murmured as she kissed his forehead, and the words came with a deep gasp and a great swelling of the heart. Then she rose and went to her bed-room; and Dobbs and I knew that she passed almost all that day upon her knees. Sometimes we could distinguish her foot pacing the room; but whenever there was silence, we knew that she was praying; and at night it was the same. I don’t think she ever passed another night in her bed till she laid herself down in it to rise no more.

“Well, Sir, the sun rose and set—but still

no tidings' came. For her, the blow had been struck the first day by Mr. Wentworth's letter; there was something prophetic in that deep love of her's—she saw it all from the beginning. Poor Harry couldn't believe it; and he hoped on, and we hoped on; but she hoped no more.

“ She seldom spoke; sometimes she would throw her arms round Harry, and utter such a cry! Surely it was the cry of a broken heart. I never heard any thing like it but from her lips. Few, I hope, ever suffered what she did. Then she would bid Andrew or me take Harry out into the fields and amuse him as well as we could. She didn't like to cloud his young days with sorrow, or inure him to the sight of wretchedness so early. Then the picture! oh that picture! One day I happened to be passing the drawing-room door when it was a little ajar, and hearing a deep sob, I turned my head that way. She was on her knees, and her arms were stretched out towards it, as if she was inviting him to come to her. Her hair was pushed back from the forehead, her lips were apart, and her eyes staring with such eagerness on the countenance, that she looked as if she expected the energy of her grief and love could animate the canvas, and impart life and being to the form she loved so dearly.

“Well, Sir, she drooped and drooped from day to day; I am sure she prayed for death, and her truest friends could not wish her to live.

“It was not many months afterwards, that we knelt by her bedside and closed her sweet eyes—and we that loved her best, thanked God when we did so.”

CHAPTER III.

SUSAN IS PROVIDED WITH ANOTHER SITUATION, AND
HARRY MAKES TWO NARROW ESCAPES FROM IMMINENT
DANGER.

As soon as Mrs. Leeson was dead, Mr. Wentworth, and Miss Fanny, his daughter, who had neglected nothing they could think of to comfort her during her lifetime, took poor little Harry with them to Oakfield, which they had promised his mother should henceforth be his home; and when she was laid in her grave, and the house at Mapleton was given up, Dobbs and Susan followed. Dobbs was only to stay till Harry was somewhat reconciled to his loss, which he felt bitterly, poor child; and till she had met with a situation to suit her; but Miss Wentworth took Susan into the family altogether, and appointed her to the situation of under-housemaid.

Mr. Wentworth was a gentleman who had made a very large fortune in the wine trade; and he had his house of business still in the City, where affairs were conducted under the superintendence of an old and much valued clerk, of the name of Simpson; whilst he himself resided chiefly with his daughter at Oakfield. She was his only child, and the pride and delight of his heart; and well did she merit all the affection he bore her.

Most fortunate, Susan thought herself, on all accounts, to obtain so excellent a situation; and one which placed her near those she most loved, her brother and little Harry. Andrew now wore a livery; he was grown a nice young man, and had won the good will of all the family by his diligence and good temper. As soon as Harry was considered sufficiently recovered, he was placed at a boarding school about ten miles from Mapleton; and then Dobbs quitted Oakfield, and accepted a situation as cook and housekeeper in a gentleman's family in London.

Harry had been at school between three and four months, and Susan was looking forward to the approaching midsummer vacation, when she was desired to prepare a room for Mr. Gaveston, who was expected on a visit: and she soon

learned from the servants, that the visit was to terminate in a marriage. This gentleman was a distant relative of Mr. Wentworth's, who had brought him up, and provided handsomely for him by giving him a share in the wine business. He had hitherto resided a good deal at Bourdeaux, where Mr. Wentworth was connected with several houses of eminence ; always, however, spending some months of every year in England ; and during these visits, he had contrived to make himself so completely master of the affections of poor Fanny, that though, (heiress as she was to all her father's wealth, and endowed with many charms of mind and person into the bargain,) she had hosts of suitors, she would listen to none of them ; but persisted in giving her young heart, and engaging her fair hand, to Walter Gaveston.

It was pretty evident to every body but herself, that Mr. Gaveston was not the husband her father would have selected for her ; but he was too indulgent and too just to oppose her wishes on a subject so material to her happiness, unless he could have given her convincing reasons for his objection ; and this he could not. He had originally been very fond of Walter, who was a clever, handsome, forward boy ; but of late years he had felt a sort of growing dis-

like to him that he could hardly account for ; and that he was himself half inclined to look upon as idle antipathy or weak prejudice. He had nothing exactly to allege against him ; and sometimes after examining his own mind, and searching for the motive of his own alienation, he would end by saying, " D—n the fellow ! I believe it's only that I don't like the expression of his face." Nobody did like the expression of his face, that looked at it with unprepossessed eyes—but poor Fanny's were witched—and if she ever remarked that the prospect of her marriage was disagreeable to her father, she attributed the dissatisfaction wholly to his dread of parting with her, and not at all to the nature of the alliance she was about to form.

In spite of the displeasing expression we have alluded to, there could be no doubt that Mr. Gaveston was a very fine looking man ; and one likely to attract the eye and admiration of the fair sex in general. His features were regular and manly ; he had a beautiful set of teeth, dark hair and eyes, a complexion bronzed into a very becoming hue by the sun of the South, and a figure that formed a perfect model of strength and agility. And, accordingly, there were few men who excelled so much in all manly exercises ; whether he walked, rode, or danced,

the performance was perfect ; he was the best cricket player about the country, the most fearless huntsman, and the best shot. He was equally remarkable for his proficiency in all games of skill—cards, billiards, nothing came amiss to him. Then he was an excellent judge of a horse, very fond of attending races, and understood all the intricacies of betting, edging, and jockeyship in general. Of classical learning or deep reading he had very little ; but he had a great deal of general information ; knew something of most people that were making any sensation in the world ; and was seldom at a loss upon any subject of fashionable or popular discussion.

Such was the man that had won Fanny Wentworth's affections, and to whom she was to be united in the ensuing month of August. Many preliminaries of course, were to be arranged. Dresses to be prepared, settlements drawn up, and entertainments given ; and when Harry returned to Oakfield for the vacation, he found the house full of gaiety and commotion.

“I think it right to inform you,” said Mr. Wentworth one day to Mr. Gaveston, when the subject of settlement was under discussion, “that since the death of Harry Leeson's parents, I have adopted him, and look upon him

as my son. I was always fond of the boy; who is as fine a little fellow as ever lived; and I loved his father and mother, and would do it for their sakes if I did not do it for his own. The arrangement I propose to make, is this—and I have given Olliphant directions to prepare the settlements and my will at the same time. You are at present possessor of a sixth share of the business—I will make that a fourth. Whatever fortune I give my daughter now, or whatever I leave her, I shall vest in trustees for her use, to descend from her to her children; or if she have none, to be disposed of as she pleases; with the exception of ten thousand pounds, of which you will have the life rent, should you survive her. This, with a fourth share of the business, will I hope be considered sufficient. Are you satisfied with that arrangement?"

"Quite, Sir, quite," replied Mr. Gaveston; and he endeavoured to look very satisfied indeed.

"With respect to Harry Leeson," continued Mr. Wentworth, "he will be entitled by my will to two shares of the wine business, and to ten thousand pounds, to be paid free of all deductions. The fourth share, I intend giving to old Simpson, on whom the management of the whole must rest. I shall also appoint him

guardian and trustee for Harry. All this I do with Fanny's entire approbation."

How far these arrangements were agreeable to Mr. Gaveston may be doubted; but, at all events, he reiterated the assurances of his entire satisfaction; and Mr. Wentworth did not trouble himself to investigate further.

Mr. Gaveston's pursuits—riding, cricketing, sporting, and so forth—were naturally very attractive to Harry; and as he was a spirited boy, he was glad enough to be allowed to share in them whenever he was permitted. Mr. Gaveston seemed willing enough to encourage this disposition, and amongst other things he took upon himself to teach Harry to ride; but, on the plea that a boy should be afraid of nothing, he one day set him on a young horse of his own before the child had any seat, and allowed him to follow the hounds; the consequence of which was, that the horse ran away, and if Andrew, (who happening to see Harry start, had felt uneasy and gone after them to observe how he got on,) had not been at hand, and stopped the horse with one hand whilst he caught Harry with the other to break his fall, it would in all probability have proved the poor little fellow's first and last hunt. Mr. Gaveston charged Harry not to tell his uncle, "for," said he, "if

you do, you'll have a log tied to you for the future, and there'll be an end of your sport." Harry did not tell; but Andrew, who thought the boy's life would be in jeopardy if this sort of thing went on, did; and Mr. Wentworth set his veto against any future lessons in equitation from Mr. Gaveston. "He hasn't caution enough," he said, "to be trusted with a boy of that age. Harry shall have proper instruction, and a safe pony to begin with."

It was not long after this that a second accident occurred to Harry, no less likely to have proved fatal than the first.

There was in the grounds at some distance from the house, a large pond or lake on which lay an old boat, which was rarely used, except Harry sometimes got leave to take a row in it with one of the men-servants, but he was strictly enjoined never to enter it alone.*

"One day as I was standing at Miss Wentworth's bedroom window," (for here we shall let Susan once more tell her own story,) "I saw somebody coming through the trees towards the house. He was a good way off when I first caught sight of him, but I observed that

* This incident has some resemblance to one in the Third Number of "Master Humphrey," but it was written many months before Mr. D.'s work appeared.

he was walking slowly, and that every now and then he stopped and seemed to be looking all round as if to see whether any body was at hand. When he emerged from amongst the trees, and got upon the open lawn, he began to run; and I then perceived that it was Mr. Gaveston, with his coat off, and looking very pale. He approached the house rapidly, and I was just wondering what could have happened to him, when I heard a loud scream from Miss Fanny, and a great bustle below; and on running down to see what was the matter, I overtook her rushing out of the house, followed by Mr. Gaveston, and all the maid-servants, crying out, that Harry Leeson was in the pond.

“Now, it happened that it was haymaking time, and as the weather was considered unsettled, every man about the estate was in the fields, at least a quarter of a mile from the pond and quite in an opposite direction from the house; but there was a shorter cut across than going by the water; and Mr. Gaveston said he would run there as fast as he could, and send assistance; and as he set off Miss Wentworth called after him, ‘For God’s sake despatch somebody to the village for a surgeon!’ So away we all ran—we to the pond who could be of no use in the world when we were there; and Mr. Gaveston, who perhaps might, to the hay-

field, in search of aid which never could have arrived in time. What chance little Harry had of being saved by either party may be imagined—but Providence sent him help.

“ My brother Andrew, who, like me, doted on Harry, for his dear mother’s sake as well as his own, was always glad when he could invent any thing to amuse him ; and having something of a mechanical turn, he often employed his leisure hours in contriving toys and playthings for him : and it chanced that the day before this accident happened, he had been down with the child to the pond, to try the sailing of a little vessel that he had been at work on some time. On first launching it, it turned over ; but after hewing it away a little, he brought it to do ; and much delighted Harry was with it.

“ In order that no time might be lost with the hay, Mr. Wentworth, who had gone to town in the morning, had desired that the men should have a luncheon of bread and cheese and beer in the fields, and not return till the day’s work was over. This the maids had carried out to them ; but finding the beer run short, Mr. Jeremy, the butler, told Andrew to step to the house and fetch another can.

“ Now, when Andrew had sat down with the others to eat his bread and cheese he had missed his knife ; and as it was a very nice one that

Harry had saved up his own pocket money to buy, and which he had given him as a birth-day present, he would have been very sorry to lose it. 'I dare say,' thought he, 'I left it at the pond yesterday,' and as it would not make many minutes' difference, he resolved to run round that way and look for it.

"Just as he came in sight of the pond, he fancied he heard a cry that proceeded from that direction, and he hastened forward; but when he reached it he saw no one, nor indeed any thing unusual, except that the boat was reeling from side to side as if it were on the waves of the sea. Now, there was no motion in the water, for as I said before, though it was deep, it was but a pond; and the day was calm, cloudy and still threatening rain, but not a breath of wind was stirring.

"Andrew looked at the boat—thought of the cry—and jumped into the water. He could not swim; but he didn't stop to remember that. Fortunately the boat was at hand, and he was active and strong. He caught the child by the jacket, and when the water threw him up, he struggled to get hold of it. Once he failed, and they went down together; but the second time he succeeded; and when we reached the pond, we found him sitting in the boat with Harry in his lap, rubbing the child's chest and stomach, and doing the best he could to restore him.

“‘Don’t be frightened,’ he cried to us, ‘Master Harry’s coming to, but look for the oars amongst the grass, and push them towards me.’

“We did so; and then he brought the boat ashore, and carried the child up to the house in his arms, where he was soon in a warm bed, and so far recovered that there was nothing to fear for his health.

“It was nearly an hour after this, I dare say, that Miss Wentworth and I, who were sitting by Master Harry’s bedside, heard Mr. Gaveston’s foot entering the hall below, and coming hastily up stairs. He was now as red as he had before been pale, and bursting open the door, he exclaimed, ‘My dear Fanny, I am sure you’ll never forgive me; and if you do, I never can forgive myself. If it hadn’t been for Andrew’s providential arrival, the dear boy must inevitably have been drowned.’ With the noise he made, Harry, who had fallen asleep, opened his eyes; and holding out his hand and smiling on him, he said, ‘It was an accident, nobody could help it; but wasn’t it brave of Andrew to jump into the water to save me when he couldn’t swim?’

“‘I thought you could swim, Walter,’ said Miss Wentworth.

“‘No,’ replied he, ‘I never could learn.’

“‘But how in the world did it happen?’ said Fanny. ‘How came you in the water, Harry?’

“‘I can’t think,’ said Harry. ‘We had got into the boat to sail my little vessel, and I was leaning over the side, when all at once the boat dipped down, and I went over. What made it dip down so suddenly, I can’t tell. Perhaps you came too quickly to my side?’ said he to Gaveston.

“‘I’m afraid I did,’ answered Gaveston. ‘I thought you were leaning over too far, and without reflection I stepped across to take hold of you. However, you know, those that are born to be hanged will never be drowned. It’s all very well as it has turned out; and the less that’s said about it the better.’

“‘I think we’d better not tell my uncle,’ said Harry. ‘He’ll forbid my going to the pond any more, and then I can’t sail my vessel.’

“‘That he certainly will,’ said Mr. Gaveston. ‘You’ll be tied up, depend upon it, if you tell him.’

“‘He must be told,’ said Fanny. ‘He detests concealments; and if he finds it out afterwards, he’ll be much the more displeased.’

“‘How should he find it out?’ said Mr. Gaveston.

“‘Every thing is found out sooner or later,’ replied Fanny.”

CHAPTER IV.

SUSAN HAS AN EXTRAORDINARY DREAM WHICH IS THE
FORERUNNER OF ILL NEWS.

THE period of the wedding was fast approaching, and a day was already appointed for signing the settlements, when Mr. Gaveston received a letter from a confidential friend at Bourdeaux, intimating that the bankruptcy of one of the houses with which Mr. Wentworth was connected, was supposed to be impending; and that it was of the last importance that he, Mr. Gaveston, should lose no time in repairing to the spot.

The serious consequences that might arise from a neglect of this caution, induced Mr. Wentworth to consent to the immediate departure of his intended son-in-law, and the postponement of the wedding; though, at the same

time, he declared, that he did not believe there was any foundation for the report.

“Râoul and Bonstetten are much too steady men to fail,” said he, “however, you may as well go; the marriage can as well take place in October, as now.” Perhaps Mr. Wentworth was not sorry for the respite. “I have an idea,” continued he, “of going down to the sea for a couple of months: and you can join us there on your return. The doctor says, that that poor fellow Andrew will never recover perfectly till he has undergone a course of warm sea bathing; and as he got his illness in doing me a great service, the least I can do is to contribute all I can to his recovery.”

Andrew had never been well since the day he jumped into the water to save Harry. He was very warm at the moment from working in the hayfield and running on his errand; and having remained some time in his wet clothes, being too anxious about Harry to think of himself, the chill had brought on a rheumatic fever, from which he had not perfectly recovered. Nothing could exceed the attention shown him by the family during his illness, and as for Harry, he could scarcely be induced to quit his bedside to take needful rest and sleep. And signal as was their kindness appeared

Andrew's gratitude: he "only hoped," he often told Susan, "that he might find means during his life of testifying his sense of their great goodness to him."

Mr. Gaveston departed; when the young man got better, Harry returned to school; and not long afterwards, Mr. and Miss Wentworth, accompanied by Andrew, set out on their excursion. There had been, at one time, an idea of taking Susan; Miss Wentworth happening just then to be without a maid: the one that was to attend her after her marriage not having arrived. However this was finally given up, and they went alone.

"It was a lovely morning when they set out," said Susan; "just the last week in August; and we all assembled in the portico to see them off. I shall never forget it. Miss Fanny looking so fresh and so pretty, in her grey silk pelisse, and little straw bonnet lined with pink; and the dear old gentleman, with his broad-skirted brown coat, and his wide-brimmed hat, looking so smiling and so benevolent, as he bade us good-by; and then handing his daughter into the carriage as proud as an emperor—he'd reason to be proud of her; for she was a sweet creature, and as good as she was pretty!"

"We shall bring back Andrew to you quite

well, Susan,' said master, putting his head out of the window.

" ' God bless you, Sir,' said I, ' and my mistress too ;' and I wiped the tears from my eyes with the corner of my apron.

" ' Good-by, sister !' said Andrew, giving me a last kiss, and jumping up behind. ' All's right !' cried he ; the postillions cracked their whips, and away they went. Lord ! Sir ; how little we poor mortals know what is before us !

" Well, Sir, nothing particular occurred after this till we received a letter to say the family would be home on the evening of the 16th ; we were then in the month of October. The letter was written by Andrew at his master's desire ; and he concluded by saying that he had quite recovered his health, and was as well as ever he had been. Then there followed a passage which I did not well understand, and which I promised myself to ask him the meaning of when he came back. He said, ' Mr. Gaveston is arrived, and the marriage is to take place in November ; but if I had courage to do *something*, I think I could prevent it ; but I don't know how to act without assistance.'

" On the morning of the 16th, when we were all prepared, there came another letter from Andrew, to say that they should not be back

till the 18th. Mr. Gaveston had a bet on a boat race that he wanted to see the result of; they had therefore arranged to start on the 17th, sleep at Maningtree that night, and reach home the next day to dinner.

“On the same evening, that is on the 16th, as we were sitting in the servants’ hall after supper, there came a ring at the back-door. I remember we were all talking about Mabel the dairymaid, who had just got up and left the room, as she usually did, the moment meals were over. It was very well known that Andrew was in love with her; and as she was a beautiful creature, there was not a man in the house but was his rival; and they were not a little jealous because they fancied she showed him more favour than the rest. But, for my part, I always saw, that Mabel had no thoughts of Andrew more than of the others; and that she was much too proud to listen to a poor boy who had nothing but his livery. However, more out of envy, I believe, than because they thought it, they insisted that she liked him, recalling several little kindnesses that she had shown him during his illness, and prophesying that now he had recovered, it would soon be a match. But Mr. Jeremy, the butler, was of a different opinion. ‘No, no,’ said he, ‘them

little knows Mabel that looks to see her married to a footman. Mabel comes of a proud family—they were gentry once, as I've heard—howbeit, they never knew themselves nor their stations. Mabel was rocked in the cradle of pride, and she fed upon the bread of pride—and she'll have a fall, as all such pride has.'

“ ‘Well, she'll fall to Andrew,’ said the coachman, ‘that'll be a fall.’

“ ‘No, no,’ said Mr. Jeremy, ‘it'll be a worse fall than falling to an honest young fellow like Andrew. Mark my words. I was never deceived in no man, nor woman neither; and I ar'nt now.’

“Just as the butler had said those words, came the ring I spoke of; and as I happened to be going up stairs to look at my fires, I said I would see who it was.

“When I opened the door, I saw by the light of the candle I held in my hand, a stout man in a drab coat with his hat slouched over his eyes, and a red handkerchief round his throat, that covered a good deal of the lower part of his face; so that between the hat and the handkerchief, I saw very little of his features except his nose, but that was very remarkable. It was a good deal raised in the bridge and very much on one side; and it was easy to see that what-

ever it had been by nature, it's present deformity had been occasioned by a blow or an accident. He did not look like a common man, nor yet exactly like a gentleman; but something between both; or rather like a gentleman that had got a blackguard look by keeping bad company. However, sight is quick, or I should never have had time to make out the little that I tell you; for whether he thought I looked at him more than he liked, or what I don't know, but he dropped a stick he had in his hand, and in stooping to pick it up he contrived to knock the candle out of mine, and there we were both in the dark.

“As I did not quite like his appearance, and could not help thinking he had done this on purpose, I got frightened, suspecting he wanted to make a rush and get into the house, so I pushed the door and tried to slam it in his face; but he was stronger than I was; and putting his hand against it, firmly, but without violence, he said, in a quiet sort of a voice, that had certainly nothing in it to alarm me, ‘When do you expect Mr. Wentworth home?’

“Well, Sir, the way he spoke and his asking such a natural harmless question, made me think myself a fool, and that his putting out the candle had been an accident; so answering him as

civilly as I could, to make up for my rudeness, I said, that they would be home on the 18th to dinner, adding, that we had expected them sooner but that they were to sleep upon the road.

“ ‘Thank ye,’ replied he, turning away. ‘I don’t know exactly which way I should go, amongst all these buildings,’ he added, looking round—‘I suppose that’s the stables with a light in the window?’

“ ‘No, Sir, that’s the dairy,’ said I, ‘the stables are on the other side. But if you go straight across you’ll find your way.’ ‘Good night,’ said he, and away he went, whilst I proceeded up stairs to look after my fires. When I returned to the servants’ hall, so little did I think of the matter that I only told them when they asked who had rung, it was a person called to inquire when master would be home.

“On the following day, which was the 17th, nothing particular occurred; and on the 18th we were all prepared for the family, with the cloth laid, and the fires blazing, and every body on the watch for the carriage. But the dinner hour came and passed, and tea time came, and supper time came, and still no signs of those we were looking for. The servants sat up till half-past eleven, wondering and guessing all manner

of reasons for the delay: and then thinking all chance was over for that night, they went to bed. ` But for my part, I somehow or other felt so uneasy, that I was sure I shouldn't sleep, so I fetched a book, and sat myself down in an arm chair by master's bed-room fire, which as well as Miss Fanny's, I resolved to keep in, in case they might have been impeded by accident, and yet arrive, cold and uncomfortable, in the course of the night.

“I scarcely know how it was, but my thoughts, in spite of myself, took a melancholy turn. All the misery that had followed the disappointment about Major Leeson's arrival recurred to my mind, and I could not help anticipating that some ill news was to follow upon this. I thought of the odd passage in Andrew's letter, wondering what he could mean, and what it was he wanted to do. I knew he disliked Mr. Gaveston very much, and that the dislike was mutual. Andrew could not forgive him for having exposed Harry Leeson to so much danger, and, one day, when he was not aware that he was within hearing, he had called him a cowardly rascal for running away and leaving the child in the water. This, together with Andrew's having told Mr. Wentworth of the hunting accident, had made Mr. Gaveston his enemy; and I was often afraid

of my brother's getting into some trouble through it ; for much as he was a favourite with his master and mistress, of course, he could not have stood against Mr. Gaveston's influence if it had been exerted against him.

" All these things now took possession of my mind, and I kept pondering upon them, till insensibly my waking thoughts became dreams, and I gradually sunk into a slumber in which the same train of ideas seemed to be continued. At first, the images were all confused and mingled together—there was something about my master, and mistress, and Mr. Gaveston, and Andrew—there was trouble and strife—but nothing which I could reduce afterwards to any form ; but what followed, was as distinct on my mind when I awoke—aye, and is so still, as any circumstance that ever occurred to me in my waking hours.

" I thought I was sitting in master's arm chair by his bed-room fire, just as indeed I was, and that I had just dropped asleep, when I heard a voice whisper in my ear, ' Look there ! who's that ? ' Upon that I thought I lifted up my head and saw my brother Andrew sitting on the opposite side of the fire in his grave clothes, and with his two dead eyes staring at me with a shocking look of fear and horror—then I thought he

raised his hand slowly, and pointing with his thumb over his shoulder, I saw two men standing close behind him; one had a crape over his face, and I could not see who he was; but the other was the man with the crooked nose, who had rung at the bell two nights before. Presently they moved forwards, and passing me, went into my master's dressing-closet, which was behind where I was sitting. Then I fancied that I tried to rouse myself, and shake off my sleep, that I might look after them, but I could not; and when I turned my eyes again on the chair where Andrew had been sitting, instead of him I saw my master there, with a large gash in his throat, and his eyes stedfastly fixed on me, whilst he pointed to something at my back; he seemed to try to speak, but his jaw fell and he could make no sound. Whilst I was staring at this dreadful sight, shivering with horror, I thought that, though I could not see them, I was yet conscious that the two men had come out of the closet, and were standing close behind me, one with an open clasp-knife in his hand, and the other with a lantern; then I thought my brother Andrew suddenly came between us, and whispered, 'No, no; let her sleep! let her sleep!' and with that the light was suddenly extinguished, and I could see no more.

“Well, Sir, the moment the light seemed to go out, I awoke in reality; and as I did so, I fancied I heard a door gently closed, and the sound of feet moving softly away; but I was almost in darkness and could distinguish nothing. The bit of candle I had taken up with me had burned to the socket and gone out; and the fire, though there were some red ashes yet in the grate, shed but a faint glimmer on the hearth.

“What between cold, and fear, and horror, I felt as if my blood was frozen in my veins; and although I'd have given the world to move, and call the other servants, who slept over head, I found it impossible at first to stir my limbs; and there I sat with my eyes staring on the imperfect outline of the chair where I had seen Andrew and my master sitting just before, expecting to see them there again; and my ears straining for a sound with that dreadful intensity that fear gives one, till I fancied I distinguished the approach of a horse's feet—presently, I became sure of it—I thought there were two horses—they drew near as if they came from the stables—passed under the window—turned the corner of the house—and then receding, I heard no more of them.

“Till the morning light began to peep in

through the chinks of the shutters, I couldn't summon courage to move. Gradually, when it illuminated the objects around me sufficiently, I forced myself to survey the room, and with a great effort to turn my head and look behind me—but every thing as far as I could see, was just as it was when I went to sleep. By and by, as the light grew stronger, I arose and opened the door that led out upon the stairs—but nothing unusual was to be seen or heard. Then I went to the dressing-closet—there too I could perceive no change. I tried my master's drawers and boxes, which had been all locked when he went away—and locked they were still. Finally, I examined the other rooms, both on that floor and below; but all was right. Nothing could I find to induce the suspicion that my dream was any thing but a dream.

“Well, Sir, you know how differently one feels about things in the broad daylight that have frightened and puzzled us in the dark; and you may imagine that the lighter it grew, the more absurd my terror appeared to me; till, at last, by the time the sun was up, I was ready to laugh at myself for my folly, and when the servants came down stairs and found me warming myself by the kitchen fire, and

looking very pale, I merely said that I had fallen asleep in master's arm chair, and had awakened shivered and uncomfortable. I did not mention my dream, for I knew it must appear ridiculous to others—and I had no pleasure in recalling the disagreeable images that the light had dispersed. However, I did remark to Mr. Jeremy, that I had heard horses passing under the window in the night; but he said it was probably nearer morning than I had imagined, and that it was the farm horses going to their work; and this I thought likely enough.”

CHAPTER V.

ILL NEWS.

ON the morning succeeding the night Susan had passed so unpleasantly in her master's bedroom, when the servants assembled at breakfast, it was remarked that Mabel had not made her appearance ; and Mrs. Jeremy the housekeeper, who was a precise personage, sent Susan to tell her, that if she did not attend at the appointed hours, she must go without her meals. Mabel, however, was not to be found in her dairy, nor any where about the house ; and it was concluded that after doing her morning's work, she had gone to visit her sister Grace who lived in the village, a couple of miles off. Nothing more therefore was thought of her till the gardener came in some time afterward, and said that being attracted by the lowing of the

cows, who had all assembled close to the park paling, he had been to see what was the matter, and discovered that they had not been milked. Further inspection of them, and of the dairy, proved this to be the case. Mrs. Jeremy vowed vengeance against the delinquent, and desired Susan, who understood the business, to supply her place for the immediate occasion. But when several hours elapsed and Mabel did not appear, her absence began to excite surprise as well as displeasure; more especially, when one of the men who had been to Mapleton with a horse to be shod, returned saying, he had called at Grace Lightfoot's to inquire if she was there, but that Grace assured him she had not seen her sister since the morning before. Upon this, Mabel's room, which adjoined the dairy, was examined, and from various indications, it was concluded that she had not slept there on the previous night. Her clothes were all found, except her bonnet and shawl, and such as she might be supposed to have worn; and there was nothing discovered that could throw the smallest light on the cause of her absence, except it was, that a man's glove was found on the floor; but whose glove it might be remained an enigma, that time only could solve. Mabel Lightfoot, beautiful and haughty as we have described her, had

never been known to countenance the attentions of any man, either in her own station or a higher; nor was it suspected that any of the latter class were in pursuit of her. Andrew Hopley was the most favoured, or rather, the least disdained of her admirers; and even to him she had never shown any thing that amounted to encouragement.

Conjecture was therefore at a fault; and no one could suggest any probable solution of the mystery, as hour after hour passed, and the messengers that had been sent in search of her returned, and brought no tidings.

One circumstance recurred to Susan's mind, but it seemed almost too vague and unimportant to draw any conclusions from, and therefore she made no mention of it. It was, that on the night the man with the crooked nose had rung at the back-door, she had heard Mabel in conversation with some one as she passed her room; it was as she was returning to the kitchen after she had been up to look at her fires, and consequently not many minutes after she had seen him. The voice was that of a man; she thought nothing of it at the time, concluding it was some member of the family; but it now occurred to her that the stranger's saying he could not find his way, (in which

there was certainly no difficulty,) and inquiring what place that was with the light in the window, might be a *ruse* to discover the dairy-maid's quarters.

Susan, however, kept these reflections to herself; and indeed her thoughts were very much diverted from the mystery of Mabel's departure, by her anxiety for the arrival of the family and her brother, from whom the morning's post had brought no tidings; and when she had finished her household duties, she sat down with her needlework at one of the windows that looked towards the park gate, to watch for the first approach of a carriage.

It was nearly three o'clock in the afternoon when the sound of wheels announced an arrival. Not doubting it was the family, Susan started from her seat, but before she ran down stairs to meet them, she waited a moment to catch a glimpse of her brother in the rumble; but great was her disappointment when the vehicle drew near, to perceive it was not the expected carriage, but a hack post-chaise, in which sat a single traveller—a man, and a stranger.

Concluding it was some one seeking Mr. Wentworth about business, as was not uncommon, she had reseated herself and resumed her work,

when the door opened, and Mr. Jeremy the butler entered with a face announcing "as a book where men might read strange matters," that he had something extraordinary to communicate.

"Is there any thing wrong, Sir?" said Susan, whose apprehensions of some unknown disaster were so much on the *qui vive* as to require little prompting.

"I am afraid there is," replied Mr. Jeremy; "but what I don't know. The man that's come in the post-chaise is a constable from Maningtree; and he says you, and I, and my wife, are to accompany him back immediately; and that you are to take with you all the letters you have received from Andrew since he went away."

"But what can we have to do with that, or Andrew either?" said Susan.

"I can't make it out," replied Jeremy. "However, we must go, that's certain; and as it's getting late, the sooner we set off the better. So tie up what you'll want in a handkerchief, and make haste down. Mrs. Jeremy's gone to get ready."

In a state of amazement and confusion indescribable, Susan proceeded to obey Mr. Jeremy's commands; and in a very short time they were prepared to set off.

"I hope nothing has happened to my brother?" said she to the man when she met him in the hall below.

"Are you the footman's sister?" said he, eyeing her curiously.

"Yes, Sir," replied Susan. "There's nothing wrong with him I hope, is there?"

"Wait till you get to Maningtree," replied the man, shaking his head significantly; "you'll hear it all soon enough."

The unexpected summons, the mystery attending it, and these hints and innuendoes, whilst they perplexed Mr. and Mrs. Jeremy, threw poor Susan into an agony of alarm. That something had occurred in which Andrew was concerned was evident; and again the strange passage in his letter about the marriage, the visit of the man with the crooked nose, Mabel's disappearance, and her own dream, all presented themselves vividly to her mind; and although she could not tell how, nor see the links that united them, she could not help fancying that all these circumstances belonged to the same chain of events.

It was towards nine o'clock in the evening when the chaise drove up to the door of the King's Head inn at Maningtree. Several per-

sous were lounging about the street ; and when the carriage stopped, and the constable who was seated on the dicky, jumped off to open the door, there appeared a manifest desire on the part of the bystanders to obtain a glimpse of the travellers ; and Susan heard a voice in the crowd say—" I believe one of them's the young man's sister ;" whilst some cried, " Which is she ?" and others ejaculated, " Poor thing !" Mr. Jeremy, with whom both Susan and Andrew were great favourites, heard all this too : and leaving his wife to the care of the constable, he kindly gave the poor girl his arm ; who trembling, and ready to sink into the earth with fear and agitation, could scarcely support herself, as, preceded by a waiter, they were conducted to a small parlour at the extremity of the passage.

After procuring her a glass of water and a vial of hartshorn, the butler desired to be conducted to his master—to which the waiter replied, that Mr. Vigors the constable had gone up to let the gentleman know they were arrived ; and presently afterwards Mr. Vigors appeared at the door, beckoning Mr. Jeremy to follow him.

When Jeremy entered the room above, he saw seated round a table, on which were decanters, glasses, and the remains of a dessert, four gentlemen, one of whom was Mr. Gaveston, the

other three were strangers. On missing Mr. Wentworth, his first words were, "I hope nothing has happened to my master, Sir?"

"You have not heard?" said Mr. Gaveston, with an appearance of surprise.

"Nothing," answered Jeremy. "The constable wouldn't tell us why we were sent for."

"You desired me not, you know, Sir," said Vigers, who still stood by the door, with his hat in his hand.

"Very true," answered Gaveston, "I had forgotten. I think you may go now, Mr. Vigers, we shall not want you for the present;" and Vigers withdrew. "Take a glass of wine, Jeremy," continued Gaveston—"you've bad news to hear."

"I should be glad to know what it is at once, Sir," said Jeremy, who was a straight-forward sort of man, and entertained the most entire distrust of Mr. Gaveston's sympathy or civilities.

"Nothing less than the death of your master, Jeremy," replied Gaveston, taking out his pocket-handkerchief and covering his face with it; "that rascal Andrew has robbed and murdered him."

"Andrew!" cried Mr. Jeremy—"Lord, Sir, the thing's impossible!" for, grieved as the honest man was to learn the death of his master,

his astonishment and incredulity at an accusation that appeared to him so monstrous, for a moment overpowered his other feelings.

"I fear it's too true," observed one of the gentlemen, whose name was Sir Thomas Taylor, and who was a magistrate for the county.

"Where is Andrew, Sir," said Jeremy; "does he confess it?"

"Gone off! escaped with his booty!" answered Gaveston, removing the handkerchief from his face.

"When did it happen?" inquired the butler.

"The night before last," answered he—"and though pursuit has been made in every direction—I myself have scoured the country, and hav'nt been off my horse till this evening—yet we can gather no tidings of the rascal. Once I thought I was upon his track—the description answered him exactly, and there was an evident desire of concealment; but the young man had a woman with him—therefore that couldn't be Andrew, you know, Mr. Jeremy."

Mr. Jeremy was silent.

"Andrew was never supposed to be connected with any woman that ever I heard of, was he?" repeated Mr. Gaveston.

"Not that I know of," answered Jeremy. "Andrew Hopley I take to be as good a young

man as ever lived ; and I should as soon suspect myself of such an act as I'd suspect him."

"But the thing's certain," replied Mr. Gaveston, "why else should the fellow make off?"

"It can't be denied that appearances are strongly against him," said Sir Thomas Taylor; "at the same time, we know that these are sometimes fallacious—and previous good character is not without its weight."

"I remember a remarkable case of circumstantial evidence," said the coroner, "where appearances were quite as condemnatory as in this instance, and yet the suspected person was innocent ; and what was extraordinary the real criminal ultimately proved to be—"

"But, I repeat, is there any other way of accounting for the fellow's evasion than by supposing him guilty?" said Gaveston.

"There's no telling," answered Sir Thomas. "I remember a case in which the supposed criminal proved himself to have been one of the vic——"

"Oh, no doubt such mistakes do occur occasionally," interrupted Gaveston : "but they are rare, and cannot by any means be admitted as precedents ; or the consequence would be to throw so much discredit and uncertainty on circumstantial evidence,—which, remember,

gentlemen, is very often all the evidence we can get at,—that the march of justice would be altogether embarrassed and impeded.—But to pursue what I was saying; Andrew was never suspected of an attachment to any woman: was he, Jeremy?"

"There's few young men as havè reached Andrew's years. without," answered Jeremy. "Andrew may have fancied a girl as well as another, but there's no harm in that."

"Oh none—none in the world!" exclaimed Gaveston, with an air of extreme candour. "No, no; all I wanted to know for was because, as I mentioned, a suspicious person was observed on the road in company with a woman."

Jeremy was silent. There was something in all this inexplicable to him. He was an uneducated, but a very clear-headed man, and one who, to use his own phrase, was rarely deceived in man or woman. Of Andrew he entertained the highest opinion, founded on observation and experience, having known the lad from his childhood; whilst to Mr. Gaveston he had an antipathy so decided, that he used to liken it to the horror some people have of cats; and declare that he always felt an uncomfortable sensation when he was near him. Then, as for Mabel's

having gone off with Andrew, which appeared to be the conclusion that would be drawn when her absence was known, and which, in short, he could not help suspecting was the insinuation Mr. Gaveston was driving at, he was as sceptical about that as the young man's guilt. He not only believed her incapable of countenancing or taking a part in the crime, but he was satisfied that she cared very little for Andrew ; and was altogether actuated by views of a very different nature. He was even aware that Mr. Gaveston himself had offered to pay her more attention than was quite consistent with his engagement to Miss Wentworth ; and he had observed them more than once in private conversation.

“To what amount is the robbery, Sir?” said he.

“Forty or fifty pounds,” replied Gaveston.

“At all events, whatever money Mr. Wentworth had in his portfolio is gone ; as well as my pocket book and watch—is your wife below ?” added he.

“She is, Sir,” answered Jeremy ; “and Susan also.”

“I should like to ask her a few questions—Mrs. Jeremy, I mean. I think we may as well have her up ?”

“Just as you please,” said the other gentlemen.

"I'll fetch her," said Jeremy, "if you wish to see her."

"No," said Gaveston; "stay where you are I'll send the waiter for her."

"Mrs. Jeremy," said he, when the housekeeper made her appearance, "I suppose you have heard what has happened?"

"The waiter has just told me as I came up stairs," said Mrs. Jeremy weeping—"Good Lord! that one should be so deceived in any body! I'd have staked my life Andrew was as honest a lad as ever lived."

"And how do you know but what he is still?" said her husband.

"You'd a good opinion of him, too, then; had you, Mrs. Jeremy?" said Gaveston.

"An excellent one, Sir," replied the housekeeper. "I never knew a better young man—at least, than he *seemed* to be."

"It's strange," said Gaveston; "and almost staggers one; only that his making off tells so decidedly against him. If we could only get upon his track, and find where he's gone—by the by, Mrs. Jeremy, Andrew was not connected with any woman that you know of, was he?"

"No, Sir," answered the housekeeper. "Andrew was a very virtuous youth, as far as ever I knew. I believe he was fond of a young woman

—one of his fellow servants, but there was nothing between them more than should be.”

“You’re sure they were not married?” said Mr. Gaveston.

“Oh, no, Sir,” replied Mrs. Jeremy. “Indeed, I don’t think Mabel had any mind to him.”

“Did he correspond with her during his absence?” inquired Mr. Gaveston.

“I believe he did write her a letter,” answered the housekeeper.

“If I had known this before we should have sent for her also,” said Mr. Gaveston; “and I think it would be right to do so still. What do you say, gentlemen?”

“Perhaps it might be as well,” said Sir Thomas, “and desire her to bring the letter with her.”

“We’ll despatch Vigors again,” said Mr. Gaveston; “and we may get her here time enough for the inquest to-morrow.”

“I’m sure I don’t know whether he’ll find her,” said Mrs. Jeremy; “for we missed her this morning, and she wasn’t come back when we left Oakfield.”

“How!” said Mr. Gaveston, suddenly turning round on his chair with a look of astonishment, and glancing at the other gentlemen—“missed her? what do you mean?” Whereon Mrs.

Jeremy narrated the particulars of Mabel's disappearance, and the ineffectual search that had been made for her.

"And you've reason to believe that she did not sleep in her own apartment last night?" said Mr. Gaveston.

"So we think," replied the housekeeper.

"Pray what sort of a girl is this Mabel?" said he. "If I recollect, she's rather pretty?"

"She's very handsome," replied Mrs. Jeremy. "She was thought the prettiest girl in the county, high or low."

"Just describe her person," said Mr. Gaveston. "What was the colour of her hair?"

"Her hair is black," replied Mrs. Jeremy, "and her—"

"Stop a moment," said Mr. Gaveston, whilst he appeared to be searching for something in his pockets, whence he presently drew a scrap of white paper. "This is a memorandum I made from the people's description of the two persons that had attracted observation—the man answers to Andrew exactly. Now let us hear about the woman. Perhaps you'll compare as she goes on, Sir Thomas," and he handed the paper to the magistrate.

"She has black hair, and blue eyes," continued Mrs. Jeremy.

“And what’s her complexion?” said Mr. Gaveston, “and her height?”

“Her complexion’s a beautiful white and red; and she’s neither tall nor short—much about my height,” replied the housekeeper.

The description and the memorandum tallied exactly; and the consequent conclusion was, that Andrew and Mabel had gone off together; and that the persons Mr. Gaveston had heard of were the fugitives. Upon which he declared his determination to spare neither trouble, expense, nor personal exertion, to discover them; and announced his intention of mounting his horse the moment the inquest was over, and never to relax in the pursuit till he had traced them to their concealment. In the meantime a messenger was despatched to Oakfield, to ascertain if Mabel had returned, or if any news of her had been obtained.

Poor Susan first learned her misfortune from the lips of Mr. Jeremy; and it would be needless to enlarge on her amazement, grief, and incredulity; and the only consolation she had was in finding that the butler, of whose discernment she had a high opinion, was as unwilling to believe in Andrew’s guilt as she was. Still, the question of “Where the devil is he?” which the worthy man blurted out ever and anon, in

the height of his perplexity, was a most confounding one, and "where is Mabel?" not much less so.

Susan suggested that he too might have been murdered—but then his body would have been found as well as Mr. Wentworth's—or he might have been carried off for some purpose by the criminals; but Mr. Jeremy objected that carrying off people against their will in England was no easy matter in these days. Finally, she suggested that he might have become aware of the murder, and of the direction taken by those who had perpetrated it, and have gone in pursuit of them. This supposition appeared, at once, the most probable and the most consoling; and to it they ultimately inclined.

Still, through the sleepless hours of the ensuing night, strange thoughts would find their way into Susan's mind; and again and again her dream, and the visit of the man with the crooked nose, recurred to her—though how to connect them with the catastrophe, she could not tell. However, the following morning was appointed for the inquest, when it was possible some light might be thrown on the mystery; and in tears, prayers, and interminable conjectures she passed the intervening hours.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INQUEST.

THE particulars elicited on the inquest were briefly as follows. It appeared that on the evening of the 17th, about eight o'clock, Mr. Gaveston had arrived at the King's Head inn, on horseback, and inquired what beds there were for a family that was following. He was informed that being ball night, there were none in the inn, but that the party could be well accommodated over the way, in a house, that being unoccupied, the host had the use of during the full season. He inspected the rooms and approved of them; but expressed a wish, that as the weather was bad, the young lady might be provided with a bed in the inn if one became vacant. He then went away, and no more was seen of him till towards nine o'clock, when the

family arrived, and he met the carriage at the door. In the meantime, a person had called to say, that "the bed engaged some days before for a Mr. Smith, who purposed to attend the ball, would not be wanted:" and Mr. Gaveston immediately secured this apartment for Miss Wentworth.

It next appeared that Mr. Wentworth had inquired for his servant several times in the course of the evening, but that Andrew was not to be found; but on interrogating the waiter, he admitted, that the house was so full of servants belonging to the gentry attending the ball, and he was himself so busy, that he had taken little pains to seek him. At length, on Mr. Wentworth's becoming impatient, he had discovered him standing amongst others at the ballroom door, where he declared he had been the whole time.

About eleven o'clock the family had retired to bed, and nothing more was heard of them till the following morning; when Mr. Gaveston came over to the inn in a state of considerable agitation, and said he had been robbed of his pocket book and watch. On hearing this, the chambermaid, waiter, and boots, had accompanied him across the way, where they searched every part of his room without discovering the

missing articles. Mr. Gaveston then inquired where that fellow Andrew was ; and they had proceeded to the servant's apartment, but he was not there ; and, on investigation, no one appeared to have seen any thing of him since the night before.

Mr. Gaveston then proposed their visiting Mr. Wentworth, to learn if he had been robbed too ; and after knocking and receiving no answer, they opened the door and discovered the unfortunate gentleman lying on the floor with a stream of blood issuing from a wound in his throat, and a severe contusion of the head, which, it was the opinion of the surgeon, had been occasioned by a blow that had rendered him insensible before the wound in the throat was inflicted. From the appearance of his bed it was supposed he had quitted it in haste on being alarmed. His watch was gone ; and his portfolio, which lay on the dressing table, was found open and rifled.

When Andrew's room came to be examined, there were also evident indications of his having left his bed precipitately. The clothes were dragged nearly off, and as well as the pillow, were lying on the floor. A chair that stood by the bedside was overturned ; and under it were

found a leathern purse containing a few shillings, and a silver watch, which Susan recognized as belonging to her brother. No clothes were found in the room but one stocking, which lay near the window, and appeared to have been dropped. The window was open, and as the room was on the ground floor, there was every reason to conclude he had escaped that way. At the door of his bed-room were found his boots, which the man, whose office it was to clean them, said, he had taken away the night before, and placed there himself in the morning.

But the strongest circumstance against Andrew was a letter found on the table in his room, addressed to A. B., Post-office, Maningtree, and which ran as follows :

“ All’s right—house full—no bed to be had but *Mr. Smith’s*—sky as black as hell. I must cut till after dark. At eight o’clock I’ll be hanging about the Checquers—word, How far to London ?”

The letter was written in a good clerk-like hand, and well spelt.

This circumstance led to inquiries of the waiter as to who had engaged and given up Mr. Smith’s bed ; but he could give no information on the subject. He believed it to be

the same person that had called on each occasion ; and as he wore a drab coat, he had supposed him a servant ; but both visits were after dark ; he had only left the notes at the door, and he could not say he should know him again.

However, he was able to produce the second note ; and on comparing it with the letter found in Andrew's room, the writing appeared to be the same.

The woman who kept the post-office was then interrogated, and admitted, that she remembered on the evening in question, that a man had knocked at the window and inquired if she had a letter for A. B. She knew it was a man by his voice, but had not seen him ; because she had only opened a single panel in the window, and he had stood rather on one side. There was no post mark on the letter, and it must have been dropt in on the spot. The man said, "How much?" she answered, "A penny," which he handed to her, and departed.

When all this evidence had been educed, Mr. Gaveston, and Mr. and Mrs. Jeremy were called to speak to Andrew's character. The two latter avowed the most favourable opinion of him ; but Mr. Gaveston said, he knew too little of the young man to have formed any ; but he

did not omit to mention Mabel's disappearance, and his conviction that the persons he had traced on the road were Andrew and her.

This circumstance, together with the letter found in the young man's room, and the mysterious passage in the one he had written to his sister, combined with his evasion, seemed to point him out so decidedly as the criminal, that even Susan herself could not be surprised at the verdict which was brought in of "wilful murder against Andrew Hopley;" more especially, as the messenger that had been sent to Oakfield returned without any tidings of the dairymaid.

A considerable reward was then offered to any one that would give such information as would lead to the detection of the delinquent, or of that of his accomplices, as from the letter addressed to A. B. it was concluded he had some; and handbills were printed and distributed over the country with a description of his person, and that of Mabel. But little or nothing was elicited by these proceedings. A coachman who drove one of the London coaches, came forward to say that on the morning after the murder, a man wearing a drab coat and mounted on a bright chestnut horse, had passed him soon

after dawn about twenty miles from Maningtree. He was going at full speed, and the horse was covered with foam; but the man having taken off his hat to wipe his head, he perceived that he was quite bald behind. This therefore could not be Andrew. And we may here observe, that although every effort was used, and Mr. Gaveston devoted his time for several weeks to the pursuit, no further information was obtained; and it was finally concluded that Andrew, and his paramour Mabel, had succeeded in making their escape from the country.

“ Well, Sir,” poor Susan would say, when we came to this part of our story—“ you may imagine what my situation was! A few days—but a few hours before, I had been as happy as a person in my circumstances could be. I was in a comfortable service, enjoying the favour of my master and mistress, and the good will of my fellow servants; and I had a dear brother who was all the world to me, and who had the good opinion of every body that knew him; and as we both meant to do our duty to our employers, we had no fears for the future; nor any anxiety, except latterly about Andrew’s weak health. Now, how different was it! My brother, my only connexion in the world, (for

our father had died the year before,) was declared a robber and a murderer—the worst of murderers, for he had murdered his benefactor—he was a fugitive, hiding from justice, and a price was set upon his head—our name was branded with infamy; and I not only knew that I must leave the service I was in, but I doubted very much whether I should be able to get another. Who would trust their life or property to one of such a family? What signified my character or my past conduct? They could not be better than Andrew's had been; yet one night—one single night, had proved him the most barbarous of villains. Why might not I prove the same? How could I hope to earn my bread honestly when nobody would trust me? Where could I look for a friend, having no natural claim on any one, and knowing that my very name henceforth would be a terror to those that heard it? Would it not be better, I said to myself, to end my life at once, than drag on a miserable existence, exposed to insult, want, and every kind of wretchedness, till a lingering death terminates my sufferings; or till the cruelty of the world forces me to some act that might justify the ill opinion it entertains of us?

“But then, again,” I said, “if I could clear

Andrew's character? If I could live to see the day when we might lift up our heads again, and cry to the world, 'You've wronged us!' For my heart still told me he was not guilty; and that if he were alive, he would surely come forward and vindicate himself; and if he were dead, his body would yet be found, and his wounds speak for him. Would it not be worth while to live through all the wretchedness the scorn of the world could inflict on me, to hail that day at last? But how was I to live if nobody would employ me? without money, without friends, without a roof where I could claim shelter, or a board where I could ask a bit of bread?"

Overwhelmed with these mournful reflections, Susan was sitting sadly in her room debating whether to live or die, when the housekeeper who had been attending Miss Wentworth came in, and with tears in her eyes, bade her go to her young lady's room, who wished to speak to her. "I was so glad," said Susan, "to be permitted to see her, for it was what I had not expected, that I started up and followed Mrs. Jeremy immediately.

"Miss Wentworth was still in bed, for she had been seized with fainting fits when she

heard of her father's lamentable end, and had never been able to rise since. I approached her bedside, weeping bitterly; but I met her eye without fear or shame; for I felt certain that neither I, nor mine, had ever injured her; and that much as she deserved pity, I deserved it still more. She held out her hand to me, and said, 'Poor girl! God help you!' and then her tears choked her voice. 'Amen! Madam,' I sobbed out, 'for I have none else to help me now!'

" 'Don't say that, Susan, don't say that!' said she. 'I'll help you; why should you suffer that are innocent?'

" 'I believe in my soul that I am not more innocent than my brother, Ma'am,' said I. 'If you can think that Andrew did this cruel wicked deed, think that I was privy to it—for one is as likely as the other.'

" 'God in heaven only can know that!' said she.

" 'And I on earth, Madam!' I replied; 'and though I may never live to see it—though I may have starved on a dunghill or perished in the street before that time comes—it will come, Madam. God will justify us—the day will come that Andrew will be cleared.'

“‘I wish it may, Susan,’ said she; ‘for your sake, and for the sake of human nature. I had rather believe it was any one than Andrew, to whom my poor father had always been so kind.’

“A sad thought crossed me then—one that would intrude—that I could not keep away—a dreadful thought—and as I looked on her sweet unsuspecting face, I wept *for her*.

“‘However,’ said she, ‘we must leave it to Heaven. If your brother is innocent, I believe, with you, that the truth will some day come to light and prove him so; but in the mean time, my poor girl, what is to become of you? I cannot keep you in my service; and indeed I should think you would not desire to stay.’

“‘I should desire it, and prefer it to all things,’ I replied, ‘if it were possible; but I know it is not. I am aware that, not to mention your own feelings, the world would blame you; and that for many reasons it cannot be.’

“‘I scarcely know what to recommend you to do,’ said Miss Wentworth, ‘and I fear no one in the neighbourhood of Oakfield would be willing to take you into their service. But I have been thinking that if you were to engage a room at Mapleton where you are known, and where your father and mother lived respected,

that you might, perhaps, support yourself for the present by needlework, till time and your own conduct have somewhat abated the prejudice that I am afraid will be excited against you. At all events, you can consider this plan, and in order to preserve you from immediate distress, I have desired Jeremy to give you ten pounds, besides your wages ; and as long as I hear you deserve it, you shall always find me willing to befriend you.'

" All the tears I had shed before were nothing to what this kindness drew from me. I could scarcely find voice enough to bid God bless her ; and to pray that the day might come when she would be convinced that neither I nor my poor brother were ever guilty of ingratitude to her or her's ; or were capable of doing any thing to render us unworthy of her goodness."

It was arranged that Susan should go back to Oakfield on the following morning, for the purpose of gathering together what belonged to her, that she might be away before Miss Wentworth returned. An elderly lady connected with the family had come down to stay with her ; and Susan saw too plainly that the stranger did not regard her with such indulgent eyes as her kind

young mistress did. "Good Heavens! Fanny," she heard her say, as she closed the door, "how can you think of countenancing that horrid woman?" whilst she shrunk away as the poor girl passed her, as if she feared to be polluted by the contact of her skirt.

The most earnest desire Susan had, after she had been dismissed from Miss Wentworth, was to go over to the house that had been the scene of the catastrophe, and inspect every part of it herself. But after Mr. Wentworth's body had been removed, which was at the close of the first day's inquest, the house was shut up, and the gate that led to it locked; and when she hinted her wish to Mr. Jeremy, he advised her to say nothing about it as he was sure it would not be complied with.

Exhausted with fatigue and grief, poor Susan forgot her troubles for some hours in a refreshing sleep; but early in the morning she arose to prepare for her melancholy journey to Oakfield. When she was dressed, finding no one was yet stirring in the house, she opened her window and sat down near it to think over her projects for the future. Immediately beneath the window was a pump, to which with the early dawn came the housewives of the village to

fetch their daily allowance of water : withered crones, and young maidens, and lads who before they went to their labour in the fields carried their mother's pails to fill, and little children who tottered beneath the yoke they bore on their shoulders. Some, busy or diligent, did their errand, and hastened away ; while others less occupied or industrious, lingered to talk over the gossip of the day.

The morning was tolerably bright and fine now ; but it happened that the previous day's rain had affected the water, which looking thick and muddy, drew forth many complaints. " Rain or not rain, it never was over good water to my mind," observed a middle aged woman. " We'd much better at Totcombe where I come from, than any to be got here."

" Na, na," said an old crone, putting down her pails, and setting her hands on her hips ; " there's no better water at Totcombe than there is at Maningtree, if we had the right use on't, but they took it away from us ; and this here pump, I grant you, was never good for nothing. When I was a girl every body in the village fetched their water from the well, at the old house there, over the way ; but they were fine people as lived there in those times—mighty

fine people with carriages and horses, and ladies in their silks and their satins, and their hoops, and what not ; and one day they found out that our slopping about in the grounds with our pails was a nuisance, and not to be tolerated, no how ; so they took the privilege from us, and gave us this here pump in exchange—but the water never was the same thing.”

“And what came of it?” said another—“why they never had no luck arter. The very next summer the little boy, that was the only son they had, fell into the well and was drowned afore ever they missed him ; and then when it was too late they boarded it up.”

“Aye,” said the crone, “they went to the dogs from that time, and many said it was a judgment on ’em for taking away the privilege of the poor that we’d had time out o’ mind. First, the boy was drowned, and the mother pined away after him of a broken heart, then one went, then another. At last Squire Remorden, as owned the place at that time, brought home a beautiful foreign lady—some said she was his wife, some that she wasn’t—howbeit, she sang like a robin-redbreast—but one night there came a carriage with four horses, galloping through the street like mad, till it stopped at

Remorden's gate, and out stepped a dark man—they said he was her father. Then shots were heard, and presently the dark man came out, dragging the lady by the arm, and after flinging her into the carriage away they went as fast as they came. Soon after this Remorden went away across the water and we never saw him again; and then it came out that he had spent more than he should, and was obliged to live abroad till things came round. However, he soon died; and then the estate fell to George Remorden, his nephew; a wild one he was. At the end of two years he hadn't a rap to bless himself with; and then the house was shut up, and has been going to ruin ever since; and this here last business 'll do for it entirely."

"And who does it belong to now?" inquired one of the auditors.

"To that same Squire George, if he's alive," replied the woman; "but it's years sin we see him here. He was a fine young gentleman as you'd wish to see before he took to gaming and bad company—and there wasn't a girl in the village but her head was turned for him. There was Judith Lake—Lake the carpenter's sister—she drowned herself for love of him. I remember the day, as if it was yesterday. We were going

to church, for it was a Sunday morning; and there was Mary Middleton, and Bob Middleton, and Job Lake, and I—and Mary was dressed out in a fine new bonnet with sky blue ribbons that Remorden had given her; and Bob was sulky about it, and so was Job, for he had a mind to her himself—and when we were going through the meadow by the mill stream, Mary called out ‘La! what’s that in the water? I do think it’s a woman!’ and sure enough, when they pulled her out, who should it be but Judith Lake. But that didn’t keep Mary from going the same road. We soon missed her from the village, and Bob saw her in London, where he went to seek her, dressed out like a duchess, sitting in a play-house with Remorden. Bob waited for him till he came out; and then what did he do but fetch him a blow across the face that broke his nose and laid him his length on the pavement—but Mary wouldn’t leave him for all Bob could say to her, and we heard she died at last upon the streets. But the Squire ’ll carry Bob’s mark with him to the grave. Na, na, the family never had no luck after they took the water from us—serve ’em right, I say, devil help ’em!’ and with this charitable conclusion the conclave broke up.

But now that the stage was clear, another dialogue became audible, which was carried on by two girls that were leaning against the house immediately under the window.

"How much are you to have of it?" asked one.

"Mother says she'll give me ten shillings out of it," replied the other; "and I don't know whether to buy a gown or a shawl with the money."

"What luck!" said the first, "what sort of a gentleman was he?"

"I didn't see him," said the other; "at least I'm not sure whether I did or not; I wasn't at home when he came, but I think from mother's description, I did see him, when I was standing by the post-office talking to Lucy Walters. A stout gentleman in a drab coat came up and dropped a letter in the box. I dare say that was to the lady."

"I wonder whether it was one of the Miss Roebucks he comed after," said the first.

"Like enough," said the second—"for they say one of 'em's got a sweetheart that the old gentleman don't like. And he told mother when he came, that he wanted to get speech of his sweetheart as she went to the ball without

any body's seeing him; and that was why he left his horse at our house and wouldn't ride into the town."

"I wonder if he did see her!" said the other.

"I don't know," said the second. "When he came back it was the middle of the night, and I was in bed. Mother said he saddled his horse himself, and threw her the guinea, and away he went without saying a word.—But, come along up to Thomson's, he'd got a beautiful gown-piece in the window yesterday, but I couldn't make up my mind whether to have that or a shawl for the ten shillings;" and away went the two girls to inspect Mr. Thomson's goods, and enjoy the luxury of indecision between two objects so desirable.

When Susan had had her breakfast, she sat down in a room that happened to be vacant, to wait till the coach came up; and as it was in the front, she had an opportunity of inspecting the fatal edifice over the way, more at her leisure than she had hitherto done.

It was a large square brick building, and it had a heavy, antiquated, formal look, that suited well with the name it bore, which was the *Old Manor House*. The place was encircled by a lowish wall and there was a paved walk which

led from the gate to the door; and Susan perceived that one of her objects in desiring to inspect the place would have been defeated. She had a notion that she might make some discovery by examining the ground under the window of Andrew's room; but the pavement extended to a considerable width all round the house, so that no footmarks could remain. Beyond this there appeared a largish wilderness of a garden and orchard, neglected, and overgrown with weeds, shrubs, and fruit trees past bearing.

"It's a dismal looking place," said Susan to the chambermaid who happened to come into the room, "but I should like to have gone over it, if they would have let me."

"You'd have seen nothing," replied Betty, to throw any light on it. There wasn't a corner we didn't look into; but except the young man's watch, and purse, and stocking, there wasn't a thing left behind."

"And his boots," observed Susan.

"That's true," answered Betty; "and unless he'd a pair of shoes in his pocket, he must have gone away barefoot; for he didn't take a single article over with him when he went to bed, that I saw; and I lighted him to his room myself. The only thing I found at all," continued the

chambermaid, "was an old shirt button, such as gentlemen fasten their wristbands with—it was on the pavement under the window of the footman's room; but it may have been lying there weeks before for any thing I know. Here it is," and she drew it from her pocket—"if you like to have it, you're very welcome."

"I should," said Susan, as she examined it. It was a pair of little studs united by a chain, with a bit of coloured glass in each; on one was inscribed W. G., and on the other J. C. The first were the initials of Mr. Gaveston; and though even if the thing were his, the discovery amounted to little or nothing, yet Susan felt anxious to possess it, and accepted Betty's offer with thanks.

Whilst they were yet talking, they heard voices and the sound of a horse's foot under the window; and on looking out, she saw the ostler was bringing out Mr. Gaveston's mare, as he (Mr. G.) was about to start, as he had announced, in quest of the fugitives.

It was a beautiful animal of a bright bay colour, and had a coat that, as the ostler remarked, you might see your face in; and he led her admiringly up and down, patting her sleek sides and stroking her taper legs, waiting till her master was ready to mount.

"A nice bit of blood, that," remarked the blacksmith, who had been summoned to look at her shoes before she started, and was now with other idlers lingering about the door to witness the traveller's departure; "but them high bred critturs ar'n't fit for the road—it shakes the bones out of their bodies."

"It do," returned the ostler—"It knocks 'em to pieces. Two years on the road tells sadly agen a oss. She's shook in the shoulder, surely, sin I seen her last. She was a nice crittur then."

"What, she's an old acquaintance o' yours Jem, is she?" said the blacksmith, winking to the bystanders—for Jem was famous for his recognition of the animals intrusted to his care.

"I never forgets a oss," replied Jem. "We Newmarket lads never do, none on us. Bless you! they be a deal more memorable like than Christ'ans, to them as is used to them. She was a nice crittur two years agone. She won a sweepstakes of a hundred guineas agen some of the best cattle on the course—I mean to say them as wasn't quite thorough-bred, but she's good blood in her too."

"And did she belong to this here chap then?"

asked the blacksmith, pointing with his thumb towards the house.

“I can’t rightly say,” answered Jem. “I remember there was two or three rum coveys came down from Lunnun the night afore the Darby, and bilked the knowing ones—and this here mare was one on ’em. I worked at the Spread Eagle then, where they put up. There war a chap among ’em as went by the name o’ Nosey, that I’d seen afore at Newmarket—my eyes! how he cleaned ’em out!”

Mr. Gaveston now came from the house accompanied by the landlord, and as they stood on the steps, the latter was heard to say—“No, no, Sir, depend on it nobody in this neighbourhood had any hand in it. I have lived here man and boy these forty years, and know every body high and low about the place, from his honour, Sir Thomas, down to black Cuddy, the born idiot. That letter may have been dropped into the office here, and as there was no post-mark on it, I suppose it was. But you see, Sir, on a ball night there’s a concourse of people about, gentry and servants; and nobody knows who’s who, nor thinks of asking any questions. Depend on it, Sir, it’s been some of them London chaps that have got hold of the lad, and

planned the whole thing. But it'll come out sooner or later. Some on 'em 'll peach—when a man's going to be tucked up he likes to make a clean breast of it. He don't care much for his pals then."

"I believe you are not far wrong," said Mr. Gaveston, as he moved off the steps.

"A fine mare, Sir," said the landlord, inspecting the girths to ascertain that all was right—"and a nice 'un to go, I'll warrant her. Had her long, Sir?"

"Almost since she could carry a saddle," replied Gaveston. "She's something the worse of hard work now—ar'n't you, Bess? Your ostler has done her justice, however," added he, drawing some silver from his pocket.

"I always take care to have a man in that situation that knows his business," answered the landlord—"this is a Newmarket lad, and I'll back him against any ostler in England."

"From Newmarket are you?" said Gaveston, eyeing the man.

"Ees, Sir," said Jèm, "but I lived at the Spread Eagle at Epsom since that—and I think I've seen this here mare afore—"

"Very likely," said Mr. Gaveston, drily; and returning the silver to his pocket he drew out

a guinea, which having handed to the ostler, he mounted his horse, and wishing the landlord "good morning" rode away. "Humph!" said the blacksmith, winking at the ostler, "you be Newmarket, sure enough, Jem!"

"I war bred there," said Jem, with a knowing leer, and putting his tongue in his cheek.

Upon this the loungers dispersed; and the coach that was to convey Susan to Oakfield presently coming up, she took a friendly leave of Mr. Jeremy, who promised to call on her when he returned, and with a heavy heart, and a last look at the old Manor House, she mounted the roof and departed from Maningtree.

CHAPTER VII.

SUSAN RESOLVES TO SEEK HER FORTUNE IN LONDON.

SUSAN had a lover, as what young housemaid, or any other maid, at twenty, has not? His name was William Dean, and he was the son of the Miller of Mapleton—a man reputed well to do in the world. It would, therefore, have been a great match for the humble and parentless Susan, who had only her own two hands, and her good character, to make her way withal. But now, alas! the good character was gone, or at least under suspicion; and it was to be feared that the two hands, however industriously disposed, might not be able to earn her bread.

Before reaching Oakfield the coach had to pass through Mapleton, and as Susan cast her eyes towards the mill, she could not help feel-

ing some anxiety as to how William Dean would meet her. As her arrival was not expected, and as the coach did not stop in the village, few people recognized her; but she fancied that in the demeanour of those few she could already perceive a difference. They looked at her, she thought, with more curiosity than kindness; and there was something in the cool nod of the head, and the nudging the elbow of the next bystander, that made poor Susan's cheek burn; and inspired an earnest wish that there were some spot in the world where, unknowing and unknown, she might earn her subsistence, however hardly, and hide her drooping head, till death relieved her from her sorrows, or justification from her shame.

When the coach reached the stile that led across the fields to Oakfield, Susan got down, and with her bundle in her hand, trudged onwards towards the park gates. No one could be on better terms with her fellow-servants than she was, and yet now she dreaded to meet them; and as she drew near the house she slackened her pace, and the big drops chased each other down her cheeks at the thought of her altered fortunes.

“Susan!” cried a well-known voice, “and she

felt a friendly hand laid on her arm—"Susan, how are you? Let me carry your bundle, I have run all the way from the village to overtake you." It was William Dean, the faithful man.

"Oh, William!" said she, giving free vent to her tears—"I little thought you'd ever have seen me brought to this trouble."

"Keep a good heart, Susan," said the young man. "You're not to be blamed for others' faults."

"Sure, you don't think Andrew guilty, William?" said Susan indignantly.

"I hope not," answered he. "But we heard here they'd proved it against him, and that he'd gone away with Mabel."

"I have no right to be angry at any body's believing it," replied Susan. "But, it's hard to bend one's mind to it. It's one of the greatest trials I have to go through—but I must bear that, with the rest, till it please God to bring the truth to light. In the meantime, William, I am very much obliged to you for this kindness. I know it's what few would have done in your place; and I am very glad you have done it, because it gives me the opportunity of saying something that I had made up my mind to say the first time we met—that is, if I saw

occasion—for I thought perhaps you would not wish to speak to me.”

“That was a very unkind thought, Susan,” said the young man.

“It would have been like the world, William,” answered Susan; “but though you and I must keep company no longer, it will always be a pleasure to me to remember that you did not forsake me in my trouble.”

“I have no intention of forsaking you, Susan,” answered William; “I don’t know whether Andrew’s guilty or whether he is not—but as I said before, there is no reason why you should suffer for other peoples’ faults.”

“But I must suffer for them, William,” answered Susan. “When one member of a poor family does a bad act, he takes the bread out of the mouths of the others.”

“Then you’ll have the more need of friends,” replied William.

“Need enough,” returned Susan; “but that’s not the question now. What I wish to say is—and there’s no time like the present to say it in—that we must keep company no longer. I’ll bring no honest man to shame; and unless I live to see the day that I can hold up my head again, I’ll live and die Susan Hopley.”

Many were the arguments William used to shake this resolution, but Susan felt that she was right, and she remained unmoved. It was doubtless a severe trial to resign her lover, and to renounce the support and protection she so much needed; but the pain was much less severe than it would have been had he forsaken her; and she was sustained by the consciousness that she was giving him the best proof of her affection. "He may think himself strong enough to brave the world for me now," said she to herself, "but in after years he might meet many mortifications on my account, that would make him repent of his generosity, and blame me for taking advantage of it."

Susan remained at Oakfield but one night, and on the following day she removed to Mapleton, where she engaged a room, and gave out that she wished to take in needlework. A few charitable people sent her some; but she soon perceived that, from the smallness of the neighbourhood on the one hand, and the prejudice against her on the other, she would be obliged ere long to seek a livelihood somewhere else. In the meantime, she eked out her scanty gains by drawing on the little stock of money Miss Wentworth's liberality had supplied her

with, and bore up against her troubles as well as she could.

One day, about a fortnight after she had been settled in her lodging, she heard a heavy foot ascending the narrow stairs, and presently Mr. Jeremy threw open her room door. It was his second visit, for he had called on her the day after he returned from Maningtree, and she saw by his manner and his portentous brow that he now came charged with ill news.

“What’s the matter, Sir?” said she, “for I’m sure by your face there’s something wrong.”

But Mr. Jeremy only threw himself into a chair, placed his hands on his knees, puffed out his cheeks, and after blowing like a whale, folded in his lips as if he were determined the secret should not escape him; so Susan, who knew his ways, looked at him in silence, and waited his own time. “No will!” said he, after a pause of some duration, and rather appearing to speak to himself than her—“No will! Whew! they may tell that to them as knows no better, but it won’t go down with John Jeremy.”

“What, Sir,” said Susan, “hasn’t master left a will?”

“So they say,” said he, “but I’ll take my oath there was a will, and that I was by when

it was signed ; and not one only but two—and what's more, to my certain knowledge, master took one with him when he went away, and left the other at Oakfield ; for I was myself in his dressing-room the last morning when he took one of them out of the escrutoir where they both lay, and put it into the portfolio just before I carried it down to the carriage."

"Then whoever took the money out of the portfolio took that also," said Susan.

"No doubt," answered Jeremy. "That's as plain as a pikestaff, though one can't see of what use it could be to them—but where's the other, Susan ? That's the question. Master had his keys with him ; and after Miss Wentworth came back, nobody ever opened the escrutoir till Mr. Rice and Mr. Franklyn, who were appointed trustees and executors, went to search for the will."

Again Susan thought of her dream ; but as she had never mentioned it before, she felt that to do it now would be useless ; and perhaps subject her to the suspicion of having invented it for the purpose of shifting the odium from her own family to others.

"As they can't find either," continued Jeremy, "people say he must have taken both with him ; but I know better."

“But after all, it won't signify much, will it?” said Susan. “The whole fortune will go to Miss Wentworth; and I'm sure she'll take care of Master Harry.”

“Miss Wentworth won't be of age these two years,” replied Jeremy, “and if she marries that Jackanapes before she's her own missus—whew!”

The marriage however was deferred for a twelvemonth, and all they had to hope was, that in that interval the lost document might be recovered.

The day before Christmas day, Susan's door was suddenly burst open, and in a moment she found Harry Leeson's arms about her neck. “Oh, Susan,” he cried, bursting into tears, “do tell me the truth about Andrew. I won't believe it—I can't believe it—Andrew that was always so good—and that went into the water to save my life—and that was so kind to poor Rover when he broke his leg—nobody shall make me believe it—but tell me, Susan, where is he?”

“In heaven, my dear boy, I believe,” answered Susan; “for I'm sure Andrew never did a thing in the world that he need hide his head for; and if he were alive, he'd have come forward before this to prove his innocence.”

"But, perhaps," said Harry, "some wicked people have got him, and shut him up in a dungeon. I've read of such things."

"I thought of that too," replied Susan, "but they tell me that couldn't happen now, in this country, at least."

"But if he's dead, what made him die?" said Harry. "Did any body kill him? What should they kill poor Andrew for? He'd no money, had he?"

"No, dear child," said Susan, "if they killed poor Andrew it was not for money."

"Then what was it for?" asked Harry.

"It's hard to say," replied Susan. "Perhaps he had discovered their wicked intentions—or, perhaps, he was killed in trying to save his master."

"That's it!" cried Harry. "I'd bet any thing that's it! But, Susan, where do you think they put him when they'd killed him?"

"Ah, there's the thing, Master Harry," said Susan. "They've made up their minds that he's a thief and a murderer, and they've offered a reward for his apprehension; but if instead of that they'd offered a reward for his body, perhaps the mystery might be cleared up. And there's the misfortune of being poor,

Harry. If we were rich gentlefolks instead of poor servants, they wouldn't have been in such a hurry to condemn him; and if I had plenty of money I might find out the truth yet."

"When I am a man," said Harry, his cheeks flushing and his eyes sparkling at the thought, "I'll find out the truth, I'm determined. Fanny says I shall be any thing I like; and I mean to be a lawyer, or a doctor; and when I am rich, I'll put in the paper that I'll give a hundred pounds to any body that will tell me the truth about Andrew Hopley."

"Although I had little hope," Susan would say, "that the dear child would ever have it in his power to do what he promised, or that if he did, the truth would be discovered by such means, yet it was a great comfort to me to hear him talk in this way; and I shed tears of joy to see the confidence his innocent mind had in Andrew's goodness; for I was sure if my poor brother was in heaven, and knew what was doing on earth, that the words of the child he had loved so much, would rise up to him sweeter than the odour of the frankincense and myrrh that in the old time was offered to God upon the altars."

About a fortnight after this, Harry, who

since he came home for the vacation had seldom passed two days without paying Susan a visit, entered her room with a countenance that plainly denoted something had happened to vex him. His cheeks were crimson, the heavy drops still stood on his long dark lashes, and his pretty lip was curled with indignation.

“Oh, Susan,” he cried, throwing himself into a chair, “I wish I was a man !”

“What for, dear ?” said Susan. “Don’t be in a hurry to wish away time. We know what is, but not what is to come.”

“I do though,” he said, “that I might be revenged on Mr. Gaveston !”

“Hush, Harry !” answered Susan. “We must leave vengeance to God. But is Mr. Gaveston come to Oakfield ?”

“Yes,” said he, “he came the day before yesterday ; and now I shall be very glad when my holidays are over, and I go back to school. I hate him !”

“But what has he done ?” inquired Susan. “You didn’t use to hate him, did you ?”

“No,” replied Harry, “for he didn’t use to give himself such airs. When my uncle was alive, he wouldn’t have dared to treat me as he does ; or to say any thing against Andrew.”

"And what does he say against Andrew, dear?" said Susan.

"Why, when I told him I was coming to see you, he said, 'Upon my word, young gentleman, you show a delicate taste in the choice of your society, and remarkable gratitude towards your benefactors! A promising youth, certainly!' And, oh, Susan, he said it in such a spiteful, scornful manner that it was worse than the words; and I would have knocked him down for it if I had had strength to do it."

"And what did you answer?" inquired Susan.

"I said," replied Harry, "that I loved my uncle and Fanny too as well as ever he did, and better too, perhaps; but that I wasn't going to forget that Andrew had saved my life at the risk of his own, when other people had left me in the water to be drowned; nor that you had helped Dobbs to nurse my poor mama through all her sickness; and that I should go to see you as often as I liked."

"Well, and what then?"

"Then, he said, in the same spiteful disagreeable way, 'Pray do, Sir, by all means; I should be sorry to balk your inclinations. But I shall take care that if you choose to keep up a connexion with that rascally family, that you

shall pay your visits to them elsewhere, and not in this neighbourhood. Pretty associates, truly, you've selected for a chap like you, that depends on charity for his bread and butter. Now, I dare say,' said he, 'if you choose, you could tell us where that scoundrel is hiding from the gallows—of course, you're in the secret.' Yes, said I, I do believe I know where Andrew is, and that's in heaven, where spiteful people can't hurt him—but when I am a man, and have got money of my own, Mr. Gaveston, I'll spend it all to find out the truth, and get justice for Andrew and Susan; and I'll advertise in the papers a great reward to any body that'll tell me what's become of him.—Oh, Susan, if you had but seen his face when I said that! He turned as white as that muslin you're hemming, with rage; and I do believe, if he dare, he would have killed me. He did lift up his hand to strike me, but though I am but a boy, I wouldn't stand still to be beat by him, for I'd have given him blow for blow as long as I could have stood up to him. But then he seemed to recollect himself. I suppose he began to think how Fanny would like his treating me so, if she heard of it; and he said in a taunting jeering way—'You're really a nice young gentleman!

It's a pity your mother had no more like you ; Go your ways, Sir, to the devil, if you please ! and the sooner the better ;' and then he turned away. But one thing, Susan, I'm so glad of—though I couldn't keep from crying as soon as he was gone, I did keep in my tears while he was speaking to me. I wouldn't have had him see me cry for a hundred pounds !”

This conversation alarmed Susan a good deal, for she saw in it the confirmation of what she had always feared, that whenever Gaveston had the power, he would show himself no friend to Harry ; so she told him, that though his visits were the only real comfort she had known since her misfortune, that she must forbid his coming ; “for,” said she, “remember, dear, you have only Miss Wentworth to look to for your education, and for every thing ; and although she might not herself object to your visits, yet husbands and lovers have great power over women, and can not only oblige them to do as they please, but very often can make them see with their eyes, and hear with their ears—and if you offend Mr. Gaveston there is no telling what may happen ; he may do many things that you can't foresee, nor I neither. By and by, Harry, when you're a man, and your own

master, it will be different; then, perhaps, we may meet again."

"And then," said he, brightening up with the glowing hopes of a young heart that could not believe in disappointment—"And then, Susan, when I have got a house of my own, you shall come and live with me, and be my housekeeper. Won't that be nice? I'll go back to school the very day the holidays are over, and take more pains than ever to get on, that I may soon be able to go into a profession, and keep a house;" and then he ran on with all sorts of plans for their little establishment, amongst which he proposed that Susan should be treasurer—"for," said he, "I am very bad at keeping money; somehow or another I always spend it in nonsense, and things of no use, and afterwards I'm sorry—and so, by the by, I wish you'd do me the favour to accept this half-crown that Mr. Gaveston gave me the other day. I don't want it—and, besides, if I did, I shouldn't like to keep any present of his," and as he said this, he laid the half-crown on the table.

"Keep it, my dear," said Susan, "you'll be glad of it at school; and I assure you at present I am not distressed; if I were, I wouldn't scruple to accept of it, for I know I should be

welcome ;” but as she pushed the piece of money towards Harry, she perceived something on it which led her to examine it more closely.

Over the royal effigy was cut the following inscription, “6th June, 1765.” The characters appeared to have been made with a knife, and Susan felt perfectly sure that she had seen that half-crown before, and under circumstances that induced her at once to alter her mind and accept of Harry’s gift.

It happened the day before Mr. Wentworth left home on his last fatal journey, that she was in his dressing-room when he was arranging some papers in the portfolio he took with him. He had emptied it of most of its contents, and laid them on the table beside him, when in turning round he jerked the table, which was but a small one, and they all fell to the ground. Susan assisted him to pick them up—and when she had done so, he asked if that was all.

“Yes, Sir,” replied she—“it’s all I see ; but I thought I heard something roll away like money.”

“No,” answered Mr. Wentworth—“don’t trouble yourself further—there was no money here.”

“Yes, Sir,” said Susan, “there was—here it is under the drawers. It’s a half-crown.”

“Keep it then,” said he, “for your pains,” and he locked the portfolio and left the room.

Whilst Susan was yet looking at it, however, he returned.

“Show me that half-crown,” said he. “Is there any thing on it? Ah!” continued he, with a sigh, as he examined it, “I must not part with this. Here’s another, Susan, in its place;” and then he folded the one she had found in a bit of white paper, and replaced it in a corner of his portfolio.

Now Susan felt perfectly satisfied that this was the same half-crown; but how it should have come into Mr. Gaveston’s possession she could not imagine. That Mr. Wentworth had no design of parting with it was evident; and from the manner in which he had put it away, there was no possibility of his doing so by mistake. It seemed almost certain that it must have been taken from his portfolio at the time of the murder—but it was inexplicable, not only that Gaveston should have had it, and kept it so long, but still more so, that if he knew whence it came, he should have given it to Harry.

Susan, however, who was resolved to neglect nothing that could throw the faintest light on the mystery she was so anxious to penetrate, consented to keep the half-crown, and after making Harry observe the inscription, she folded it in paper, and deposited it in the same little box with the shirt studs.

Much did she debate whether or not to mention the circumstance, but the apprehension of not being believed on the one hand, and of injuring Harry still further with Gaveston, on the other, decided her to remain silent for the present. Indeed, although from foregone conclusions she attached much importance to the accident herself, she could not expect it to have any weight with other people. Gaveston would naturally deny any acquaintance with the previous history of the half-crown; and his having given it to the boy, would be a strong confirmation of the truth of his assertions.

The displeasure she found she was likely to bring on Harry by remaining in the neighbourhood of Oakfield, quickened a determination she had been some time forming, of trying her fortune in London; where her unhappy story being less known, she hoped she might get employment. With this view, she wrote to her

friend Dobbs, explaining her motives, and requesting her advice ; and Dobbs, whose kindly feelings towards her were in no way diminished by her misfortunes, recommended her to come up without delay, assuring her that "Lunners were not so nice as country people, and that she did not doubt being able to get her into a respectable situation."

With this encouragement, Susan, glad enough to leave a place where she was looked on coolly, and where she had no tie but little Harry, lost not a moment in preparing for her departure ; and having with many tears embraced her dear boy, and taken a kind leave of Mr. Jeremy, she mounted the coach that passed through Mapleton, and bidding adieu to the place of her birth, and the scenes of her childhood, she started to try her fortune in London.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUSAN'S ARRIVAL IN LONDON—SHE FINDS A FRIEND
IN NEED.

As SUSAN understood that the coach would not reach London till between ten and eleven at night, she made up her mind not to trouble her friend till the following day; and with this view, she requested the coachman to set her down at some inn where she would be able to get a bed, as near as he could to Parliament Street, where Dobbs resided.

In compliance with this request, when they reached Charing Cross, the driver suddenly pulled up; and calling out, "Now young 'oman, here you are!—Quick if you please! Help her down, Jack! Box in the boot—that's it!"—Susan in a moment found herself standing in the middle of the area with her luggage beside her.

“Which is the inn, Sir?” said she.

“Please to remember the coachman,” said he.

In her confusion, Susan put her hand in her pocket; but, in truth, she knew she had nothing there; for she had only kept out the money she expected to want on the road—the rest she had packed for security in her box; and the expenses having exceeded her calculations, she had not a single sixpence left.

“If you’ll show me the inn and wait till I’ve unlocked my trunk”—she was beginning to say to the man—but without staying to hear the conclusion of her speech, he mounted his box, ejaculating “d—n all such passengers!” and with a smack of the whip, the coach was gone, and out of sight before Susan had recovered her astonishment. “And there I stood,” she used to say, “in the middle of the place, close to the figure of the king on horseback, with my luggage beside me, perfectly bewildered, and not knowing in the world which way to turn, or what to do next.”

Coaches and carriages whisked by her, but no one paused to ask her what she was standing there for; and there were plenty of foot passengers going to and fro on the pavement, of whom

she might have inquired her way ; but she had heard so much of the dangers and dishonesty of London, that she trembled to turn her eyes from her boxes lest they should vanish from her sight for ever. Just, however, as she had made up her mind to encounter this peril, and venture as far as the pavement, rather than stand where she was all night, a man who had been observing her from a distance, crossed over and inquired if she was waiting for a coach.

“No, Sir,” replied Susan ; “I have just left the coach, but I am a stranger in London, and I don’t know which is the inn.”

“Oh,” said he, “if that’s all, I’ll show you the inn in no time.—Is this your luggage?”

“Yes,” replied Susan, “but I want somebody to carry it.”

“I’ll carry it,” said he. “The inn isn’t two minutes’ walk—just hoist up the trunk on my shoulder—that’s your sort—now give me the bandbox.”

“I won’t trouble you with that, Sir,” said Susan, grateful for this unexpected aid—“I can carry it myself.”

“No, no,” said he—“give it to me ; you do not know London. Somebody’d snatch it out of your hand before you got the length of a

street;" and so saying, away he trudged with the two boxes, and Susan after him, as hard as she could go. But with all her efforts, she found it impossible to keep up with him. Whilst he held along the Strand, as the way was straight, and the lamps pretty thickly set, she contrived to keep him in view; but when he approached the neighbourhood of Drury Lane, and turned up a street to the left, that was rather on the ascent and worse lighted, he got the advantage of her, and she soon lost sight of him altogether.

Poor Susan called out "stop! stop!" and ran as fast as she could, but little thought had he of stopping, and after being nearly knocked down several times, and getting repeated blows from people she ran against in her confusion, out of breath, frightened, and exhausted, she gave up the chase, and sitting down on the step of a door, she burst into tears. They were bitter tears, for it was a sad beginning—all her little stock of money gone, how was she to live till she obtained a situation? And when she had found one, how was she to go to it when she had not an article of clothing in the world but what she had on?

It is admitted that no loneliness can be worse

than the loneliness of a great city; and Susan felt it so, as passenger after passenger passed, hurrying on their errands of pleasure or of business, or hastening to the shelter of their own roofs, heedless of the poor stranger, houseless and homeless, whose sobs met their ears. A few turned their head to look at her; but none stopped or spoke; for there, where vice and misery walk the streets by night, or keep unholy vigils in unblest abodes, the sight of women's wretchedness is too common to excite either curiosity or compassion.

At length, the cold and damp, for it had come on to rain hard, forced her to get upon her legs and move on; and considering her desperate condition, without a penny in the world even to procure a night's lodging, she thought, unwilling as she was to disturb the family, that she had better try and find her way to Dobbs, late as it was. But the difficulty was to find the way. Some to whom she ventured an inquiry abused her—some insulted her; one man flung his arm round her waist and said he'd go with her any where she liked; and she had much ado to get rid of him; and another told her if she didn't leave him alone he'd call the watch. As for the women she addressed

they were still worse ; and one, who being very gaily dressed she took for a lady, swore a big oath, and bade her go to h—ll !

After running the gauntlet in this way for some time, without advancing in the least towards her object, Susan gave up the point ; and resigning herself to what seemed inevitable, faint and weary as she was, she once more seated herself on a door step, and folding her cloak about her, resolved to wait there till morning.

She had sat some time and had nearly cried herself to sleep, when she was aroused by the opening of the door behind her, and looking round, she saw a lady stepping out, who, however, paused upon the threshold to speak to some one, that with a candle, appeared to be standing within the passage.

“Be sure you’re ready in time,” said the lady. “Remember the coach starts at six.”

“Never fear that,” replied a voice that struck upon Susan’s ear, as one not unfamiliar. “I am too glad to get away from this place to risk staying an hour longer in it than I can help.”

“Well, good by,” said the lady. “I hope you’ll have a pleasant journey, and meet with no disappointment.”

“Good by!” answered the voice within. “I wish you were going with me.” “I wish I were!” said the other. “Oh, I forgot to say, that you are to be sure and travel in the veil Mr. Godfrey sent you.”

“Yes, he told me,” replied the voice. There was another “good by!” and a shake of the hand; and then the door closed and the lady stepped forward.

She was attired in a silk dress, red shawl, and straw bonnet; and by the light from the lamp which fell upon her face as she advanced, Susan discerned that she was young and pretty. Her voice too was gentle; and emboldened by that and the countenance, the poor wanderer determined on making a last attempt to obtain the information she needed. Rising therefore to let her pass, she dropped a curtsy, and said, “Would you have the goodness, Ma’am, to tell me the way to Westminster? I am a poor stranger from the country, and am quite lost.”

At first she was about to pass on without heeding the question, but at the last words she paused, and looked back. “To Westminster!” said she, “you’re a long way from Westminster. What part of it do you want to go to?”

“To Parliament Street, Ma’am,” replied Susan.

“And don't you know your way about London at all?” said she.

“Not a bit, Ma'am,” answered Susan. “I never was in it till about two hours ago, when I got off the coach that brought me from the country; and since that,” she added, giving way to her tears, “a man that offered to carry my luggage has run away with my boxes, which contained all I had in the world; and here I am, without money, or a lodging for the night, and but one friend in the whole place, and I can't find my way to where she lives.”

“It's impossible you should without some one to guide you, and it's not my road,” answered the lady. She hesitated a moment, and then drawing nearer to Susan, she looked hard in her face under her bonnet, as if to see whether she were speaking the truth. The result of the investigation appeared to be satisfactory; for she added as if moved by a sudden impulse of compassion—“Come with me! I'll give you shelter for a few hours; and in the morning you can find your friend. There was a night in my life when if some charitable soul had done as much for me, I mightn't be the miserable wretch I am now. Come along!” And with that she turned and walked rapidly up the street, Susan keeping close by her side.

As she was young, pretty, well dressed, and according to Susan's notions appeared to be a gentlewoman, the poor girl was so surprised at her last words, that she forgot every thing else in wondering what they could mean ; and as the lady herself seemed to be in a reverie, they proceeded for some time in silence, which she at length rather abruptly interrupted by saying, "What's your name, and where did you come from?"

"My name's Susan Hopley, ma'am ; and I come from Mapleton," answered our heroine — "And as I spoke the words," she used to say, "I fell rather behind her ; for I expected nothing else but that she would have driven me away from her directly, and left me to pass the night in the street. But, to my great relief, the name didn't seem to strike her at all ; and I felt much comforted to see that the people in London were not so much occupied about Andrew and me, and what had happened in the country, as I had supposed."

"And what was your employment there?" said she.

"I was a servant," replied Susan. "But latterly being out of a situation, I took in needlework."

“And you are come to seek a situation here, I suppose?” said the lady.

Susan answered that she was; and after this there was no more conversation till they reached the neighbourhood of Oxford Street, where she lived, and then slackening her pace a little, she said, “I’ll put you into the room with my little girl; but as my husband might not be pleased at my taking a stranger into the house, you’ll make no noise till I come to let you out in the morning. He’ll be gone away before that.”

She then, having stopped at a respectable-looking house, drew a key from her pocket and let herself in; and beckoning Susan to follow her up stairs, she conducted her to the second floor, where there was a candle half burnt down standing in a basin.

“Take this,” she whispered, giving her the light, and opening the door of a room which she motioned her to enter; and laying her finger on her lip, once more to enjoin silence, she closed the door and disappeared.

On looking round, Susan found herself in a comfortable, well furnished apartment, with a four-post bed on one side and a child’s crib in the corner, in which lay sleeping, as lovely an infant, of about four years old, as eyes ever

looked upon. It was enjoying a sweet, calm sleep, with one little hand under its rosy cheek, and with a half smile playing round the pretty red lips, that showed its baby dreams were pleasant.

“What,” thought Susan, as she hung over it admiringly, “can make the mother of such a cherub call herself a wretch? She cannot be very poor, or she couldn’t afford to live in such a house as this. But we poor people are too apt to think there’s no evil so great as poverty. Perhaps there are many as bad, and worse—and I ought to learn to bear my own trouble patiently, when I see that this pretty kind young creature is not without her’s. Heaven bless it, sweet soul!” she added, as she stooped down to kiss the infant’s cheek; and as she lifted up her head again, she saw the lady standing beside her with a piece of bread and a glass of wine on a plate.

“My husband is not come home yet,” said she, laying her hand kindly on Susan’s arm, as if she were pleased at finding how she was engaged—“Take this, it will do you good.” She then kissed the child, and once more bidding the grateful Susan “good night,” left her to her repose. Without undressing, the weary

traveller stretched herself upon the welcome bed, and was soon in a sound sleep.

This blessed oblivion, however, had not lasted long, when she was aroused by the sound of a man's voice, which although proceeding from the next room, reached her distinctly through the thin partition. In the confusion of first awakening she started up, imagining herself still on the top of the coach, and that the man was abusing her for not paying him; for the first words she distinguished were, "D—n it! no money! Don't tell me! What's become of the last ten pounds?"

"Gracious, George," said a voice which Susan recognised as that of her compassionate hostess, "how can you ask? Why, you know we owed every farthing of it, and more; and I was obliged to divide it between the tradespeople just to stop their mouths."

"Well, if you can't get any money from him, you must walk the streets for it," replied the man, "for devil a rap I have to give you. I suppose he gave you thé allowance for the child? If he stops that you can have him up before the magistrates, and he won't like that just now, I can tell you."

"Yes," answered the lady, "he has pro-

mised me the allowance ; but that is not enough to pay the rent, and all the other things we owe. Besides, how are we to get on when that's gone? I dare say I shall get no more from him till you come back."

"I'll be d—d if I know what you're to do," answered the man, "unless you choose to do what I tell you. I can't afford to pay the piper any longer, and I won't, that's flat. And now I'll thank you to let me have a little sleep, for I must be up at daylight to be ready for the coach. I hope that girl will be ready. Did you tell her to be punctual?"

"Oh, yes, she'll be ready," answered the lady. "But before you go to sleep do listen to a few words I have to say to you ; for, perhaps, it may be long before you return. I have been thinking that if I could contrive to get money enough to set me up in some sort of little shop that would provide me and my child with bread, that I needn't be a burden to you or any body else ; and I want you to help me to this."

"I can't help you to what I haven't got," answered the man in a drowsy tone.

"Yes, you could," answered she, "if you would persuade him to do it. Tell him that I would on that condition renounce the allowance

for the child, and undertake to maintain her myself. Will you, George?"

"Very well," said the man, in a tone that denoted he was half asleep.

"I say, George, listen to me, will you ask him to do this?" persisted she.

"D—n it, woman, hold your tongue, will you? or I'll make you!" exclaimed the man, in a louder key.

"Only promise to do what I ask, and I'll not speak another word," returned she. "I know very well, George, you're tired of me now; but you did like me once; and then you promised that I should always share whatever you had. I don't complain that you have changed, and I have no right to reproach you. But do me this one favour; it's all I'll ever ask of you!"

"Very well," replied the man, in rather a softer tone. "Perhaps, I'll try what I can do; but he's devilish hard to deal with. He was a different sort of chap when he wanted me. And as to my wishing to get rid of you, Julia, you know as long as the game lasted I've kept you like a lady, and you've wanted for nothing; but now it's up, I tell you, and you must shift for yourself."

"And so I will," replied she, "if you could

only get him to put me in an honest way of getting my living."

"Well, I'll see what I can do," said the man; "and now, d—n it, do let me get a little sleep!"

Here the conversation terminated; and much as Susan was impressed with it, her fatigue soon put an end to her reflections; and in a few minutes she was again buried in a profound sleep; from which she did not awake till she was roused by the joyous infantine laugh of the child in the morning. The mother was dressing it, and between every article of clothes she put on, it was running away and hiding itself behind the curtains of the bed. "It would have been a pretty sight to look on," Susan would say, "the fair young mother and the lovely child, if I had not had in my mind the conversation I had overheard in the night—but that spoiled the picture; and I could have wept to think of the misery that was gathering round them. 'And that sweet face of thine,' thought I, as I looked at the infant, 'may be but a snare to thee, as thy poor mother's has doubtless been to her!' She was a pretty young creature, the mother, with delicate features, and soft dove-like eyes, but already, although she was not more than twenty years of age, there were traces of melan-

choly and deep anxiety in her countenance. Perhaps, if I had not been so much in her secret, I might not have understood them so well; but as it was, I fancied I could read her story in her face."

When she had finished dressing the child, Susan arose and wished her good morning. She answered very kindly, hoping she had rested well, and had recovered her fatigue.

"Quite, Ma'am, thanks to you," replied Susan; "and I am sure I shall never forget your goodness the longest day I have to live. It's what few would have done for a poor stranger."

"You are very welcome," replied Julia; "I wish I could do more to help you out of your difficulties. But I suppose when you have found your friend you'll do pretty well; so after we have had some breakfast I'll walk part of the way with you and put you on the road."

They then adjourned to the front room, where there was a fire; and Susan having assisted her to prepare the breakfast, they sat down together.

"And what made you leave the country, where I suppose you had friends, to come to London for the chance of doing better among strangers?" inquired Julia.

"I had plenty of friends in the country,

ma'am," answered Susan; "and very good ones; and six months ago I never expected to be as badly off as I am now, or to be obliged to look further for a home; but a circumstance happened that threw a suspicion on one of my family, and since that I found people began to look coldly on me."

"Ah," said she, "that's the way of the world; at least, towards the poor," and then she fell into thought and was silent.

As soon as breakfast was over, she put on her bonnet and shawl, and they set off towards Parliament Street, leading the child between them, who, pretty soul, went skipping and prattling along as gay as the morning.

They had walked some distance, and had reached the neighbourhood of Soho, when in passing through a narrow shabby street, Julia requested Susan to take charge of the child a moment whilst she called at a shop, and presently she turned into one that, by the watches and trinkets in the window, Susan concluded was a jeweller's; but a longer acquaintance with London life would have taught her to recognise it as a pawnbroker's. She had a small parcel in her hand when she went in, but she came out without it; and after walking a few steps, she

said, "Here, Susan, take this; it's not much, but it's better than nothing;" and she had placed five shillings in her hand, before she knew what she was doing.

"My dear lady," answered Susan, who after what she had heard in the night could not bear to think of accepting her bounty, "pray take it back again; I don't fear but I shall do very well when I have found my friend. And at all events, I am alone and able to bear up against a deal of hardship—but you have this dear child to provide for; and I could never find in my heart to spend the money if I took it."

"She turned a sharp eye on me," Susan used to relate, "when I said this, and I saw in a minute that I had betrayed myself; for certainly there was nothing in her appearance or way of living to justify me in supposing that she could not spare so small a sum. The colour came into her cheeks, for she guessed how I had gained my information; and I turned away my head, for I felt my own getting red, too. 'No,' she said, when she had recovered herself, though her voice was slightly altered—'no, keep it; it won't make my situation better or worse; but it is awkward for you not to have a shilling in your pocket in case of need.'

“I couldn’t keep the tears, that were already in my eyes, from running down my cheeks, at these words, to think of her goodness, her youth, her troubles, and her sweet young child, and I thought what a blessed thing it would be for any body that was rich, to put her in the decent way she wanted to earn her bread, and so perhaps save her from being driven by poverty and want to more misery, and a worse way of life; but I could only bid God bless her, and look down upon her with pity.”

When they had reached the neighbourhood that Dobbs inhabited, and there was no further danger of Susan’s losing her way, Julia stopped, and said, “Now you are within a few doors of your friend’s house, and I may leave you.”

“Dear lady,” said Susan, “it’s not likely that such a poor creature as I am should ever have it in my power to make any return for your goodness but my prayers, but if there ever should be any thing that a poor servant can do, be sure that I would go as far to serve you or your dear little child here, as I would for myself.”

“I don’t doubt it,” replied Julia, “for I see you’ve a grateful heart; and I wish I was so situated that I could keep you with me. Such a

friend would be a great comfort. Heaven knows I want one! But that's impossible; so good by, and God bless you!"

"Amen, Madam, and you!" said Susan—
"and so shaking hands kindly, we parted, after a few hours' acquaintance, with our hearts as warm to each other, and as much trust and good will, as if we had been friends all our lives."

CHAPTER IX.

LOVE AND MURDER.

IN an old château on the banks of the Garonne in the neighbourhood of Cadillac, and about fifteen miles from Bourdeaux, dwelt an antique cavalier, called Don Querubin de la Rosa y Saveta. As his name implies, he was a Spaniard by birth; and was, in fact, a native of Upper Navarre; but a rather premature explosion of gallantry having brought him into perilous collision with a powerful and vindictive family of Arragon, his parents despatched him across the Pyrenees, to the care of Monsieur Râoul, a worthy exporter of claret, and an old acquaintance.

Although Don Querubin could show some quarters of nobility, he was the youngest son

of a very indigent family ; and after residing some months in the house of Monsieur Râoul, he began to discover that there was better fare to be met with at the table of an opulent Bourdeaux merchant, than *uña de vaca*,* *caldo de cebollas*,† *tripas y pan*,‡ or unsavoury *ollas* ;|| and that it was more agreeable to relish his fricandeaux and salmis with a good glass of Château Margaux, than with the poor produce of the paternal vineyard. Overlooking the degradation, therefore, he consented to defile his pure blood by connecting himself with commerce ; and in process of time became a partner in the house of Râoul, Bonstetten, and Company ; of which firm he was still a member, although being now advanced in years, an inactive one.

His Spanish pride, which although subdued to his interest, was by no means eradicated. caused him to prefer inhabiting in solitary state the old château we have mentioned, which he had christened the Château de la Rosa, to residing in the more gay and bustling city, although he sacrificed a great deal of comfort and society to his dignity. But in Bourdeaux he was simply called Monsieur Rosa de la Maison Râoul, whilst in the neighbourhood of his château he

* Cowheel. † Onion broth. ‡ Tripe and bread. || Stews.

was styled Monsieur le Marquis ; a variation of nomenclature that made an incalculable difference in the old gentleman's happiness and self-complacency ; and fully compensated for all the advantages he was content to forego to enjoy it. Besides, after the vengeance of his enemy was supposed to have relaxed, he frequently revisited the place of his nativity ; and he found it more agreeable to his haughty relations to be invited to the Château de la Rosa, where his remnant of nobility still adhered to him, than to busy Bourdeaux, where it was neither esteemed nor acknowledged.

Now, it happened that Monsieur le Marquis had the misfortune to be fitted by nature with some rather incongruous attributes ; he was very ugly, very vain, and, withal, an inordinate admirer of beauty—of beauty of all shades and countries, but more especially of English beauty. He had been in love all his life ; but he had been one of the most unsuccessful of lovers, particularly amongst the goddesses of his peculiar worship the fair Englishwomen ; not one of whom had he ever been able to persuade to listen to his vows. Nevertheless, he did not despair ; he loved on as sanguine people live on, through a thousand disappointments ; reviving

again after each overthrow, ready to enter with fresh vigour on a new pursuit; and willing to attribute his failure to any cause in the world but his own want of merit; although with an extremely tall, spare figure, a sallow complexion, high aquiline nose, and long, yellow teeth, he certainly made but an ill representation of Cupid; especially as these charms were usually attired in a black velvet skull cap, called a calotte; a crimson damask dressing gown, and yellow slippers. But he found his consolation and his encouragement in his favourite song, which, with a cracked voice, he daily and hourly carolled out of tune :

“ Que amor sus glorias venda
 Caras, es gran razon, y es trato justo,
 Pues no hay mas rica prenda,
 Que la que se quilata por su gusto ;
 Y es casa manifiesta,
 Que no es de estima lo que poco cuesta.”

Which may be thus rendered :

That Love his triumphs dear should sell,
 Is sure most just and fair,
 Since none but he rewards so well,
 With joys beyond compare.
 Besides, 'tis clear the urchin's wise,
 For what is cheap we never prize.

“ Here is a letter for Monsieur le Marquis,”

said his servant, entering his dressing-room, one morning, where he was shaving, and singing—

“*Que amor sus glorias venda.*”

“*Voyons, Criquet,*” said the Marquis; “where does it come from, *mon garçon*, eh?”

“It comes from England,” said Criquet, holding it up to the light, and compressing the sides, that he might get a peep into it.

“Give it me,” said Don Querubin, laying down his razor, though but half shaved.

“*Tenez,*” said Criquet, still endeavouring to penetrate the contents of the letter, “I see the words, ‘beautiful girl.’”

“Comment? you see that?” said the Marquis, turning briskly round on his chair.

“‘Beautiful girl,’” repeated Criquet slowly, “‘her eyes are’—ah! I can’t make out the colour of her eyes.”

“Blue, Criquet!” cried Don Querubin, smacking his lips. “Blue, by my marquissate. For doubtless she’s an Englishwoman. But let us see; give me the letter, that we may ascertain what it’s about.”

“It’s about a pretty girl,” said Criquet; “that’s clear.”

“Nothing better, Criquet,” said the Mar-

quis with a knowing wink, whilst he broke the seal. "A-h!" continued he, drawing a long breath as he threw himself back in his chair, and stretched out his legs, that he might the better relish a communication on so interesting a topic—"or, voyons;" and he commenced reading aloud as follows:

"Dear Sir,

'In compliance with your request, I have ever since my return to England been looking out for something likely to suit you— ("Comment?" exclaimed the Marquis, a little puzzled by this beginning;) 'and I trust I have at length been so fortunate as to discover an object exactly to your taste.' ("What can it be, Criquet?" said the Marquis. "Go on," said Criquet.) 'The young lady to whom I have ventured to promise your favour and protection, is exceedingly desirous of travelling and visiting foreign parts.' ("C'est aimable, ça;" observed Criquet. "Doucement, mon enfant," said Don Querubin; "where were we? Ah, I see—'travelling and visiting foreign parts.')" 'She is a most beautiful girl!—'

"Didn't I say so," said Criquet.

"'Hic cyes,'" continued Don Querubin.

“ Ah ! ça, voyons les yeux ! ” said Criquet, rubbing his hands.

“ ‘ Her eyes are of a heavenly blue—’ By the blood of my ancestors ! ” exclaimed the Marquis, “ I was sure of it. ‘ Her hair is perfectly black, and her complexion positively transparent.’ Heavens ! what incomparable charms ! ” cried the Marquis, dropping the letter, as if paralysed by the force of the description.

“ Let us see the rest, ” said Criquet, picking it up, and proceeding to decipher it’s contents. “ ‘ Her teeth are like pearls ; ’ (c’est bon, ça,) ‘ her figure graceful, and her hands and feet models for a sculptor.’ Cien milagros ! ” “ Why she’s an angel Criquet, ” exclaimed the Marquis. “ I like the hands and feet, ” said Criquet. “ But stay, there’s more to come. ‘ This young person, ’ ” continued he, “ ‘ is remarkably prudent, and entertains a peculiar preference for individuals of a certain age.’ ” “ The very thing we want, ” said Criquet. “ I admire her taste, ” said the Marquis. “ Mais allez toujours, mon enfant. ”

“ ‘ But, ’ ” continued Criquet, (“ ah ! voilà ce vilain mot qui se fourre partout,) ‘ but I will not conceal from you, that this lovely creature is ambitious.’ ”

“Et pourquoi pas ?” said the Marquis.

“‘Ambitious,’” repeated Criquet; “‘and desirous of raising herself to an elevated rank.’”

“She shall be a marchioness, Criquet,” said Don Querubin. “I hope that will content her. De la Rosa y Saveta, eh ?”

“‘Nevertheless,’” continued Criquet reading, “‘being very young, for she is but seventeen.’”

“Le tendre agneau!” exclaimed the Marquis.

“‘Knowing little of the world, and being entirely ignorant of all foreign languages and customs—’”

“I’ll teach her the language of love,” said the Marquis, sentimentally.

“‘Or customs,’” reiterated Criquet, “‘some slight ceremony, and a few unmeaning words read from a missal by our friend Criquet, who will make a capital priest,’ (‘the devil I shall!’ said Criquet;) ‘will be all that is necessary on the occasion.’”

“Voilà une péroraison qui gâte la première partie du discours!” said Criquet, nodding his head significantly.

“Mais c’est déloyal, ça !” said the Marquis, in an indignant tone.

“And pray who does the letter come from ?”

"It's signed, *Walter Gaveston*," answered Criquet. "Here's a postscript too."

"Lisez, mon enfant," said Qeurubin.

"I have addressed the young lady, whose name is Mademoiselle Amabel Jones, to the house of Monsieur Râoul and Co., Bourdeaux; where I expect she will arrive, escorted by a particular friend of mine, shortly after this reaches you."

"Voilà tout," said Criquet, as he closed the letter, with a strong expression of contempt on his countenance.

"We shall marry her in reality," said the Marquis.

"To be sure we shall," replied Criquet. "What do they take us for? wretches without principle, without honour, to deceive a young creature that puts her trust in us! The very idea shocks me."

"You are an honest fellow, Criquet," said the Marquis. "Vous avez de l'honneur, vous."

"I hope so," said Criquet. "As for that coquin, Gaveston, he was never much to my taste. I'd never much opinion of him."

"Nor I," replied the Marquis. "C'est un homme dur; sans cœur, sans sentiments."

"And it is said some awkward misunderstandings arose at the card table when he was

last here," said Criquet. "I know some gentlemen refused to play with him."

"A man that will deceive women will deceive men when he hopes to do it with impunity," said the Marquis.

"I have always remarked it," replied Criquet.

"L'honneur, mon enfant," continued the Marquis, "est pour tous les jours; pour tous tems, et tous lieux. Celui qui l'a ne s'en défait pas à son gré."

"C'est vrai," said Criquet. "He was not a man to employ on so delicate a mission."

"It was rather a jest than any thing else," returned the Marquis. "I have never thought of it since."

"But since she is coming," said Criquet, "we must make up our minds what we are to do."

"Marry her, of course," replied Querubin.

"C'est bien," responded Criquet, "provided always—"

"Provided what?" said the Marquis.

"Why, there are certain points to be considered," said Criquet. "Suppose, for example, she was not exactly—hem!" and he shrugged his shoulders significantly.

"What do you mean, mon garçon?" asked

the Marquis. "Isn't she as beautiful as an angel?"

"There's no denying that," replied Criquet, "at least, if she answers the description; but what's to become of us if she should not happen to be as virtuous as one?"

"But he particularly mentions her prudence," observed the Marquis.

"C'est vrai," replied Criquet; "mais, aussi c'est lui qui le dit."

"Fi donc! mon ami," said Querubin. "We must not suspect the lovely creature."

"But, unfortunately, lovely creatures are not always as irreproachable as they should be," said Criquet.

"Je les ai toujours trouvé d'une vertu impregnable!" said the Marquis.

"Je crois que cela dépend," said Criquet. "Mais passe pour cela; there's another question. What are we to do with Ma'm'selle Dorothée?"

"But if she does not love me?" replied Don Querubin. "Have I not persevered for three years without a shadow of success? I am satisfied she has some other attachment, or the thing would be impossible."

"That may be," answered Criquet. "I don't

dispute it; but there are certain little emoluments that the young lady has touched occasionally, which she may, perhaps, be less willing to dispense with, than with the vows that accompanied them. Besides, if I mistake not, it was only yesterday that I found you at her feet."

"I can't deny it," replied Querubin. "And moreover, I promised her a new shawl which I was to give her this morning."

"And here she comes to claim it," said Criquet. "I hear the pattering of her feet in the corridor."

"Open the door, mon ami, open the door, and we'll confess the whole affair to her with honour and candour," said the Marquis.

"Entrez donc, Ma'm'selle Dorothée," said Criquet, as he threw open the door, and admitted a pretty, arch-looking, black-eyed grisette, who walked into the room with all the consciousness of power in her step.

"Bon jour, Monsieur le Marquis," said Dorothée. "Comment cela va-t-il?"

"À ravir, mon amour—hem! that is Ma'm'selle Dorothée, I mean."

"Ha! ha!" thought Dorothée. "He's angry because I wouldn't let him have a kiss yes-

terday. Il faut le cajoler un peu. Dieu ! que vous avez l'air bien portant aujourd'hui ! Tenez, que je mette votre calotte un peu plus à coté—comme ça. Voilà, que vous avez l'air de trente ans, tout au plus ; et vous savez que je ne vous flatte jamais."

"Not often, certainly, Dorothée," replied the Marquis. "But the good news I have just received has cheered me, I confess."

"From Spain, perhaps?"

"Au contraire, it's from England," replied the Marquis. "It announces the approaching arrival of a young lady—"

"A young lady!" said Dorothée, raising her eyebrows.

"As beautiful, Dorothée, as yourself."

"And I hope a little more amiable," thought Criquet.

"It's to try me," thought Dorothée. "And pray what is she coming for?"

"For the sole purpose of honouring me with her hand and her affections," replied Don Querubin.

"Bah!" said Dorothée. "Before she has seen you?"

"Pourtant, c'est vrai," replied the Marquis, "Cette jeune personne est douée d'une sagesse

extraordinaire, and entertains a decided preference for gentlemen of a certain age."

"Et vous vous laissez attraper comme cela?" said Dorothée.

"Besides," said the Marquis, "she is ambitious, and aspires to a distinguished alliance."

"For that part of the story, it's likely enough," said Dorothée. "And what do you mean to do with her when she arrives?"

"Marry her, assuredly," said the Marquis, in as firm a voice as he could assume, for he felt rather awed by the thunder-cloud he saw gathering on Ma'm'selle Dorothée's fair brow; there was something very like truth in the Marquis's manner, and she did not quite admire the aspect affairs were taking.

"You're telling me this to put me in a passion; I'm sure you are," said Dorothée, as the angry blood suffused her cheeks.

"By the blood of my ancestors, no!" answered Querubin. "Here is the letter—let Criquet read it to you. You will there learn her qualifications, and the favourable disposition she entertains towards me."

Not too much delighted at the office, however, Criquet undertook it; since the art of reading formed no part of Ma'm'selle Dorothée's

accomplishments. She waited quietly till he reached the end of the epistle, (a certain passage of which, regarding the false marriage, he had the precaution to omit,) and then settling herself firmly on her feet, putting her two hands in the pockets of her apron, and fixing her bright black eyes on the Marquis, she said, "Or, écoutez, if this woman comes here, I'll poison her!"

"Bah!" said the Marquis. "You're joking."

"Vous croyez?" said Dorothée. "You had better not put me to the proof. For three long years you have been courting me—it was but last night you entreated me to accept your hand—"

"And you refused it," said the Marquis.

"No matter," answered she, "I mightn't always have refused it. Perhaps, I came here this morning with certain intentions—I shall not say what, now—Ou n'avoue pas toujours ses sentimens; et puisque vous me traitez ainsi, vous ne les saurez jamais!" And passion here supplied the fountains that grief would have left dry.

"Mais, belle Dorothée!" said Querubin, who was at a loss to find an argument against the tears. "Señora de mi alma!"

“I am not belle Dorothée in your eyes,” sobbed she. “You never loved me; I see it plainly, now’s that it’s too late.”

“Valame Dios! but I did, and do,” said Querubin, quite overcome.

“Then you won’t marry her?” said Dorothée.

“But if she come to me all the way from England on purpose?” said the Marquis. “What can I do, as a man of honour, but marry her?”

“Fort bien,” said Dorothée. “Let her come; that’s all. Je ne demande pas mieux. But mark me, for what I say I’ll do. If she comes here, I tell you again, I’ll poison her!” and so saying she quitted the room.

“Gran Dios!” exclaimed Don Querubin, throwing himself back in his chair, and dropping his arms—“la pauvre enfant! Elle m’aime épendument! She loves me to distraction!”

“It’s to be regretted she never mentioned it before,” said Criquet.

CHAPTER X.

THE DUKE AND THE DAIRYMAID.

ON a certain evening, nearly about the period that the conversation detailed in our last Chapter took place in the dressing-room of Don Querubin, in the Château de la Rosa, the unwieldy diligence from Harfleur, entering by the Barrière de Neuilly, rolled into the city of Paris, containing in the interior of its massive body its full complement of six goodly souls; and in the coupé, two, a lady and gentleman bearing in air and aspect the most unequivocal symptoms of a recent importation across the channel. The lady was very young, exceedingly handsome, and neatly attired in the costume of her own country; and though without any appearance of fashion or of artificial polish, there was an air of simple and natural grace

about her person and demeanour that left no room for regret, that art had done little where nature had done so much.

The gentleman was many years older, perhaps about forty, with a countenance that yet showed some remains of beauty, and that appeared to have suffered more from dissipation and bad company, than from time. Its expression was so mixed as to be almost undefinable. There were some traces still surviving of good nature, and of a disposition to enjoy and be happy, that occasionally struggled through and illuminated the dark and complicated mask that puzzled the beholder; but then such a heavy cloud would suddenly fall and obscure these gleams of light, that the spectator felt as if a black crape veil had been unexpectedly interposed betwixt him and the object of his contemplation.

The prevailing expression, however, the one most frequently pervading both the countenance and manner, was that of extreme recklessness, mingled with a considerable degree of intrepidity. With respect to the costume, and general air and carriage of the person in question, it partook, in about equal degrees, of that of the horse jockey, prize fighter, and gentleman.

The evening was dark and excessively wet ; and Paris, noisy, dirty and ill lighted, as it then was, did not present a very alluring aspect.

“Is this Bourdeaux?” inquired the lady of her companion, as they drew up at the Barrière to deliver their passports.

“Not exactly,” replied he; “we shall be there by and by. But I propose remaining here to-night, and perhaps for a few days to recruit, if you have no objection.”

“Not any,” answered she; “I shall be very glad of a little rest, for I am very tired, and my head aches dreadfully with jolting over those stony roads.”

“Allons, messieurs et mesdames!” cried the conducteur, when he had safely lodged the cumbersome vehicle in the court of the Bureau des Diligences, in the Rue Nôtre Dame des Victoires; “Allons! We are at the end of our journey. Have the goodness to get down. Permettez moi de vous assister,” added he, taking the fair traveller round her slender waist, and placing her on the ground.

“We want a lodging,” said the gentleman, in indifferent French, and addressing himself to one of the clerks. “Is there any thing to be got near here?”

"It is in apartment superieure au service de Monsieur," said a respectable looking man, advancing with his hat off and bowing to the ground. "Allow me the honour of showing you the way; it's not five minutes walk from this." And the luggage being entrusted to a commissionaire, the party immediately moved off, and were conducted by the stranger to a respectable looking house in the Rue des Petites Ecuries; where after ascending a considerable number of dirty stone stairs they found themselves in a very tolerable suite of apartments, decorated with faded yellow damask, and a due proportion of cracked mirrors, tarnished gilding, and marble slabs; and when the stove was heated, the girandoles lighted, and a good supper from the kitchen of a neighbouring traiteur was placed upon the table, accompanied by a bottle of Vin de Bourdeaux, the travellers began to find themselves tolerably comfortable and disposed to conversation.

"You've heard of Paris, I dare say?" said the gentleman.

"Yes," replied the lady. "It's in France, isn't it?"

"Precisely," returned he. "The chief city, as London is of England; only much gayer and more agreeable."

"It may easily be that," replied she; "at least, for all I saw of London."

"That was not much, certainly," answered the gentleman, smiling. "But you'll see Paris under different circumstances."

"Is it on our road?" said she.

"Why, to say the truth," returned he, "it did not make much difference, and I thought it a pity to lose the opportunity, so here we are!"

"In Paris?" said she.

"In Paris," returned he; "where I think we may kill a little time pleasantly enough. You must not judge by what you've seen yet," added he, observing that the impression made by the dirty streets and dim lights was not altogether favourable. "You'll see things under a different aspect to-morrow. Besides, we are not in the fashionable quarter, exactly."

"I should like to live in the fashionable quarter," observed the lady, "if we are to make any stay."

"By all means," replied the gentleman. "It's precisely what I intend. There is no place in the world where beauty sooner attracts notice than in Paris, especially foreign beauty. It has

only to be seen in public places—the Thuilleries for example.”

“What sort of a place is that?” inquired the lady.

“It’s the garden of the royal palace—the king’s palace.”

“Does he live there?” said she.

“He does usually,” answered her companion.

“I should like to go there very much,” responded the lady.

“I thought so,” replied her companion. “Of course it’s the resort of the court, and myriads of gay cavaliers, young, handsome and rich are to be met with. I think it will be time enough to go to the Château de la Rosa when we have shown ourselves here a little. What say you?”

“I should like to go to the Thuilleries, by all means,” returned the lady; “but I don’t intend to give up being a marchioness.”

“Certainly not, unless you gave it up for something better,” replied the gentleman. “But there are more marquises in the world than Don Querubin who have an eye for beauty; young, handsome, and rich ones into the bargain; not to mention counts, dukes, and princes, all as plenty as blackberries here. At all events you can give it a trial. A little delay can do no harm;

and we can go forward if we find things here don't answer our expectations. To-morrow, if you like, we'll move into a more fashionable quarter ; and by the by, we must think of how we'll call ourselves. We're in the passport as Mr. and Miss Jones—Colonel Jones would sound better, and be more likely to get us on."

"Why not Lord Jones?" said the lady.

"I'm afraid that won't do," returned he. "Lords are too well known. But there are fifty Colonel Jones's, and I may be one of them for any thing the people here will know to the contrary."

"I don't like the name of Jones, at all," replied the lady. "I like names of three syllables, at least ; and I like two or three names. There were some people in our county that had two or three names, and they were always thought more of than others on that account."

"But we'd better stick to Jones," returned the gentleman, "for fear of accidents, as it's in the passport."

"But we can add some more names to it," said the lady. "In our county there were the families of the Arlingtons, and the Darlingtons. I think Arlington Darlington Jones would sound very well."

"It's coming it rather strong," said the gentleman.

"I like it," said she.

"Then, Arlington Darlington Jones, let it be. We'll get some cards to-morrow, the first thing we do."

On the following morning after breakfast, Colonel and Miss Arlington Darlington Jones sallied forth in quest of fashionable lodgings, and at the Hotel Marbœuf, in the Rue St. Honoré, they found a suite of apartments likely to answer their purpose. On the first floor, large, lofty, and elegantly furnished, they appeared to the fair Englishwoman, every thing that was desirable.

"I think they'll answer extremely well," said the Colonel to the showily dressed lady who condescended to treat with him on the subject. "We'll order our luggage to be sent, and sleep here to night."

"Pardon!" said the propriétaire, "but perhaps Monsieur would have the goodness to favour me with a reference—it's extremely unpleasant, but we are obliged to be cautious."

"Oh, by all means," replied the Colonel, with the most *déagée* manner imaginable. "You are very right, very right indeed. Here is my

card—Colonel Jones, Arlington Darlington Jones, you observe. You've only to send to the British Ambassador's, they'll recognise the name immediately. There are few better known in England, I flatter myself than Jones."

"J'en suis persuadée," responded Madame Coulin, with a deferential curtsy and a winning smile, dazzled by the éclat of the reference. "On reconnaît aisément les personnes distinguées."

"As I am assured your inquiries will be answered satisfactorily," pursued the Colonel, "I shall desire the luggage to be sent immediately. In the mean time as we want to make a few purchases, you can perhaps favour us with the address of a marchande de modes, a tailor, and so forth?"

"Assurément," replied Madame Coulin. "Voilà ce bon Monsieur Truchet, vis à vis, homme respectable; et par parenthèse, mon cousin; artiste de la première force. Et puis pour une marchande de modes, ah! c'est Madame Doricourt, ma sœur, que je vous recommanderai. Elle tient un des premiers magasins de Paris; tenez, voilà son adresse, Rue de Richelieu, numero 7. Ah! c'est elle qui a du talent. Je me flatte que Madame se trouvera éminemment satisfaite."

“I don’t doubt it,” responded the Colonel; “and every thing being arranged I believe we may take our leave for the present. You’ll have the goodness to receive our luggage; and we shall ourselves return in the course of the day. Bon jour, Madame!”

“Au plaisir, Monsieur!” said the lady, as she curtsied them out of the saloon. “Vous aurez la bonté de vous rappeler l’adresse de ma sœur; et ce digne Mr. Truchet, qui demeure justement vis à vis?”

“Certainly,” said Colonel Jones. “They may rely on our custom; the being connexions of your’s is quite a sufficient recommendation; and we shall not fail to make use of your name.”

“Dieu!” said she, as she looked over the gilt balustrade, and followed them with her eyes down the stairs, “Dieu; ces Anglois! Never to ask the rent! Mais c’est qu’ils sont si riches. I’d made up my mind to take six hundred livres—but eight won’t be a sous too much. Indeed, the apartments are cheap at eight; and eight it shall be. Sans doute, cela lui sera égal—it will be just the same to him—” a conclusion, in which Colonel Jones, had he been appealed to on the subject, would have perfectly coincided.

The next visit of our travellers was to the gate of the British Ambassador's Hotel, where having inquired if his Lordship was at home, and being of course answered in the negative, the Colonel threw down his card, begging it might be delivered to him without fail; so that when presently afterwards Madame Coulin arrived to make her perquisitions, the porter was prepared to say that he believed the gentleman was an acquaintance of his excellency, as he had just been there to make a visit.

The assistance of the worthy cousin Monsieur Truchet, and of the sister, Madame Doricourt, were next put in requisition; and the Colonel suggested to his fair companion the propriety of not exhibiting themselves in the more fashionable resorts till their appearance was improved by the result of these admirable artists' taste and science. They accordingly confined themselves to the obscurer parts of the city, taking their dinner at an inferior restaurateur's; after which the Colonel conducted Miss Jones to the Hotel of Madame Coulin, who received them with the most flattering empressement; and then proceeded to finish his own evening at a *Maison de jeu* in the Palais Royal.

On the second day, being duly equipped, they repaired at the accustomed hour of promenade to the Thuilleries, where the transcendent charms of Miss Jones soon attracted such a swarm of admirers, that their way was absolutely impeded by the flutter around them.

“What exquisite beauty!” cried one.

“Who is she?” cried another.

“Does no one know the name of this divine creature?” cried a third.

“I’m sure she’s English;” said a fourth.

“She’s certainly a foreigner,” said a fifth—in short the aristocratic crowd was in commotion.

“What’s the matter?” said the Duc de Rochecouart, who at that moment came out of the palace.

“The most incomparable beauty has just appeared,” replied the Comte d’Armagnac; “and we cannot make out who she is.”

“Where is she?” inquired the Duke.

“There, just before,” answered De L’Orme. “The man that accompanies her has the air of a fanfaron.”

“Elle sent le province,” said Rochecouart, eyeing her figure through his glass.

“C’est vrai qu’elle est sans tournure,” answered D’Armagnac. “But her face is divine.”

“Voyons,” said Rochechouart, calmly, and with the air of a man certain of accomplishing whatever he chose to undertake; and advancing hastily, close behind the Colonel and his fair companion, he contrived slightly to entangle the hilt of his sword in the drapery of Miss Jones’s dress.

“Mille pardons!” cried he, taking off his hat in the most irresistible manner in the world; and exhibiting a head that Adonis himself need not have disowned; whilst under pretence of extricating the sword he took care to entangle it still further—“Je suis vraiment desolé.”

“Miss Jones does not speak French,” replied the Colonel, who easily penetrated the manœuvre; “or I am sure she would be happy to accept your apologies.”

“You are extremely obliging,” returned Rochechouart. “I have the happiness to speak a little English, having been ambassador in your country for a short time; but I did not make myself so much acquainted with the language as I might have done, which I always regret when I have the good fortune to meet any of your charming countrywomen. Jons,” said he, “Jons—I am sure I met a family of that name in England.”

“Nothing more likely,” replied the Colonel. “Our name, if I may be excused for saying so, is pretty well known in most parts of the island.”

“And you have very lately arrived in Paris, I presume?” said Rochechouart, “avec Mademoiselle votre fille.”

“Miss Jones is my niece,” replied the Colonel. “We arrived three days since, and are lodging at the Hotel Marbœuf, Rue St. Honoré.”

“Where I hope Mademoiselle will permit me the honour of paying my respects,” returned Rochechouart, handing his card to the Colonel.

“We shall be particularly happy,” returned the Colonel; and with another elegant salutation, Rochechouart retreated, and joined his companions.

“Eh bien!” cried D’Armagnac, “I’ll bet you haven’t learnt the name of this divinity.”

“Then you’ll lose,” returned the Duke. “Her name is Jons—she’s the niece of the man that accompanies her—she arrived three days since, and she lodges at the Hotel Marbœuf, where to-morrow I shall have the honour of presenting myself.”

“Diable!” cried D’Armagnac; “et vous savez tout cela déjà!”

“Cospetto!” muttered De L’Orme. “En voilà une autre.”

In the meantime the travellers had studied the card with infinite satisfaction.

“A duke!” said Miss Jones. “I never saw a duke before.”

“A duke he is, indeed,” replied the Colonel; “and one of the first dukes in France, I assure you. Young, handsome, and devilish rich I’ve no doubt. What think you of him instead of the old Marquis?”

“Perhaps he won’t think of me,” said Miss Jones.

“I’ll answer for that,” returned the Colonel. “What is he coming to call on us for? Not to see me you may take your davy.”

The Colonel held some debate with himself the next morning whether it would be advisable to await the Duke’s visit, or to go out and leave Miss Jones to receive him alone; and after a due calculation of probabilities, he resolved on the latter. Miss Jones was extremely clever indeed for an extempore Miss Jones, and had a natural genius for her part; and though certainly she was singularly ignorant, and the Duke singularly fascinating, he relied on her beauty to charm, and her ambition to preserve.

“Monsieur le Duc de Rochechouart,” said Grosbois the French servant the Colonel had engaged, as he threw open the door and introduced the noble visitor.

“Je suis enchanté,” said the Duke, with the most captivating *abond*.

Miss Jones rose and dropped him a curtsy.

“And is this the first visit of Mademoiselle to Paris?” said he, seating himself beside her.

“Yes, Sir,” replied Miss Jones. “I never was here before.”

“I flatter myself you’ll be delighted when you see more of it;” said Rochechouart. “C’est un séjour incomparable. You have not been to the Opera, I dare say?”

“I don’t think I have,” answered Miss Jones.

“What sort of place is it?”

“Comment?” exclaimed the Duke. “You have never seen an Opera?”

“I believe not,” replied she. “What is it like?”

“C’est inconcevable,” said he. “Mademoiselle has probably been educated in a convent?”

“I was brought up at Mapleton,” replied Miss Jones.

“Is Mapleton a convent?” inquired the Duke.

"I'm sure I don't know," answered Miss Jones. "It's a village."

"Elle n'a pas le sens commun," thought Rochechouart. "Belle comme un ange et bête comme un âne!"

"But what is a convent?" inquired Miss Jones.

"Ah! I remember," said the Duke. "You have none in your country. A convent's a place where we shut up pretty young ladies to prevent their falling in love."

"But that must make them more inclined to fall in love when they come out," said Miss Jones.

"Elle n'est pas si bête que je croyais," thought Rochechouart. "C'est de l'ignorance. —I believe it does, indeed," answered he, "but we don't let them out till they're about to be married; and after that, they may fall in love as much as they like, you know."

"May they?" said Miss Jones, opening her eyes with astonishment.

"Certainly," replied he. "It's the custom; everybody does."

"Do they?" exclaimed Miss Jones, looking still more amazed.

"Mais que voulez vous?" said the Duke.

“On ne peut pas vivre sans amour. There’s no living without love.”

“Then it don’t signify who one marries in this country,” returned Miss Jones, “if one may fall in love with whoever one likes afterwards?”

“Precisely,” replied Rochechouart, “a young lady naturally marries for an establishment—for a fortune or a title—and having secured that which is indispensable, she must of course console herself with a lover for the sacrifice she has made.”

“But the people that have fortunes and titles are sometimes young and handsome themselves,” said Miss Jones, looking at the Duke. “How is it then? Don’t they marry?”

“Occasionally we do, certainly,” replied Rochechouart.

“And don’t your wives love you?” asked she.

“*Quelquefois!*” said he, “a little; but it don’t last.”

“And what do you marry for? Is it for love?” asked Miss Jones.

“Sometimes,” said he, “now and then; but more generally for an alliance, or a fortune. But, *ma belle dame,*” continued he, observing that Miss Jones looked rather disappointed.

at this avowal, "although we seldom marry for love, we very often love without marrying—marriage has nothing to do with love."

"But it has something to do with the establishment you speak of," answered Miss Jones.

"She attacks me with my own weapons," thought Rochechouart.

"True," said he, "and we sometimes sacrifice interest to love."

"Would you?" said Miss Jones, with the greatest naïveté imaginable.

The Duke, experienced as he was, found some difficulty in answering the question. "Hem!—It's not impossible," he said. "I might certainly under great temptation;" and he darted mille amours from his beautiful black eyes.

It was a decided hit. Miss Jones cast down her beautiful blue ones, and a delicate blush suffused her fair cheeks.

"C'est un crise," thought the Duke, "il faut retirer. I shall hope for the honour of seeing Mademoiselle in my box to-night," said he, rising to take his leave. "One of my carriages will be wholly at your orders; and you will find it at your door at eight o'clock, to convey you to the theatre. As I am in wait-

ing at the palace, and must dine at the king's table, I may be late; but I shall have the honour of attending Mademoiselle the moment I'm released. Adieu ! till the evening."

"C'est singulier," thought he, as he drove away. "Her beauty is exquisite; yet she is without the slightest education, and has the manners of a peasant. I much doubt whether this man's her uncle. Why leave her alone to receive me? There is a mystery which I am determined to solve."

"Eh bien, Rochechouart?" said D'Armagnac, when they met presently at the palace. "Comment trouvez vous votre déesse?"

"Absolument divine," answered Rochechouart, who had no idea of depreciating the value of his own anticipated triumph; and who was oftener urged to these pursuits by the silly ambition of outstripping his companions, and the desire to show them that he could accomplish whatever he chose to undertake, than by his own passions or inclinations. "She is charming, and her naïveté is as captivating as her beauty."

"I have been making acquaintance with the uncle," said D'Armagnac; "and he has invited me to visit him."

"Invited *you*?" said Rochechouart, looking not very well pleased.

"Pourquoi pas?" said D'Armagnac.

"You will be nothing the forwarder," answered Rochechouart, "for she cannot speak a word of French, and you do not speak English."

"Bah!" said D'Armagnac, "what does that signify? Faut il de la grammaire pour parler à une jolie femme?"

"Well," said Colonel Jones, to the young lady, when he returned home, "how do you like the Duke?"

"I like him very well," replied Miss Jones.

"And did he tell you he liked you?" asked the Colonel.

"I believe he's courting me," answered the niece; "but I'm not sure it's for marriage."

"Leave that to me," returned the uncle—"If you take care of yourself, we shall bring him to that, I warrant."

"I'll have nothing to say to him else," answered Miss Jones. "I would rather go on to Bourdeaux directly to the old Marquis. Mr. Gaveston said he was sure he'd marry me."

"May be he would, but there's no telling," replied the Colonel. "And, at all events, a young Duke in the hand is well worth an old

Marquis three hundred miles off. Besides, you will have dozens of lovers, and may make your own terms. If one won't another will. There's one of 'em coming here to-morrow, the Count D'Armagnac, just such another swell."

Precisely at eight o'clock, an elegant equipage with two powdered laquais in gorgeous liveries, drove up to the door of the Hotel Marbœuf.

"The Duc de Rochehouart's carriage for Madame," said Grosbois; and the Colonel presenting the young lady his arm, they entered it and drove off.

"Limed, said the birdcatcher," murmured Grosbois to himself, as he stood at the gate and looked after the carriage.

"Entrez, entrez, mon bon Monsieur Grosbois," said Madame Coulin, as he passed the door of her entresol; "Entrez et prenez un petit verre."

"Vous êtes bien aimable, Madame," replied Grosbois, accepting the invitation.

"Tenez, Monsieur Grosbois," said she, handing him a glass, "c'est de l'eau de vie de cerise de ma propre facture. Je me flatte que vous ne la trouverez pas mauvaise."

"It's excellent," said Grosbois. "Rien de mieux."

"Take another," said Madame Coulin, "and I'll join you. Ah! c'est bon ça! Eh bien, Monsieur Grosbois," continued she as they sipped the liqueure, "c'est gens, là haut, vont leur train, il me semble. C'étaient des armoiries ducales, si je ne me trompe pas, que je voyais tout à l'heure."

"Ce roué de Rochechouart," replied Grosbois. "C'est un homme extraordinaire celui là. Pour les jeunes filles, il les dévore absolument comme un ogre."

"Mais, l'oncle!" said Madame Coulin, "il n'entendra pas malice la dessus—il porte une épée, lui."

"For the uncle," said Grosbois, "I don't exactly know what to think of him; for to tell you the truth, I have discovered that he has but three shirts; and even they bear decided marks of a very venerable antiquity."

"Oh, ciel! Monsieur Grosbois!" exclaimed Madame Coulin, "you've taken away my breath. N'avoir que trois chemises et prendre mon appartement! Mais, c'est un anachronisme!"

"C'est vrai," answered Grosbois; "and I even suspect that the young lady's wardrobe is not too well provided."

"Dieu!" cried Madame Coulin, "je suis

toute en eau ! Que peut on penser de gens si mal pourvus ?”

“ Sans doute,” replied Grosbois, “ il est difficile de respecter un homme qui n’a que trois chemises.”

In the meanwhile the uncle and niece were conveyed to the theatre, and conducted to the Duke’s box by Dillon, his servant, who was an Englishman, and therefore appointed to attend on the young lady till the Duke arrived ; and if she was amazed at the splendour of the scene to which she was for the first time introduced, the effect of her beauty, and appearance in that situation, produced no less effect on the audience. The honest bourgeois pitied *her*, and the young exquisites envied *him*.

“ What a pity !” cried the first, as they directed their lorgnettes to the box she was in, “—so young, so beautiful ! Hélas ! et avec l’air d’une vestale !”

“ What a fortunate fellow that Rochechouart is !” cried the second. “ Now there’s a young beauty that has been in Paris but three days ; whose existence was positively unknown to him a few hours ago ; and she’s in his net already ! Sans doute il a quelque manière de les ensonceler qui leur font tomber ainsi dans sa bouche.”

“Ce qu’il a,” said the old Marquis de Langy, “c’est l’hardiesse et la promptitude. He takes the fort while you are looking about for the pontoons and the scaling ladders.”

“C’est vrai,” said D’Armagnac. “We’d a fair start—il y avait champ libre pour tous ; but whilst we have been discussing who she is and where she came from, Rochechouart pays her a visit, and persuades her to accept his carriage and his box.”

“He ought to make a capital commander, Rochechouart,” said De L’Orme.

“And so he would,” answered De Langy. “I am old, and may not live to see it ; but you’ll find that when Rochechouart has discharged the unhealthy humours that disfigure his character, il sera tout autre homme. There are the germs of much good in him ; but they are stifled by his passions and his vanity.”

“I have a mind to go round and introduce myself,” said De L’Orme, “before Rochechouart comes.”

“You may as well remain where you are,” said D’Armagnac. “I’ve tried my fortune already, and that scoundrel Dillon, literally shut the door in my face, declaring he’d the Duke’s special orders to admit no one. ‘I dare not for

my life,' said he; 'the commands of Monseigneur were absolute, and extend even to you, Monsieur le Comte.'

"Then he's not sure of his game, and it may not be too late to enter the lists," said De L'Orme.

"Look! look!" cried several voices, "there's Rochechouart just arrived; now we shall see how she receives him."

"That's capital! she has absolutely risen to salute him!" said De L'Orme. "Elle n'a pas de l'usage, c'est clair."

"Ah! elle est très gracieuse!" said the old Marquis. "Ce n'est pas la grace d'une duchesse, je l'avoue; mais c'est celle de la belle Laitière."

"Par exemple, c'est le ballet qu'on donne ce soir, je crois," said D'Armagnac.

"Et croyez moi," said De Langy, "si la danseuse qui va remplir le premier rôle pourrait imiter la grace simple, et tant soit peu paysanne, de la belle Anglaise, la representation serait parfaite."

"I will explain to you the argument of the piece we are about to see represented," said the Duke to Miss Jones. "It is called *La belle Laitière*, which means, the pretty milkmaid."

"Does it?" said Miss Jones, looking round at him.

"Yes," replied he, "it does. It has been very popular here all the season; and the danseuse who performs Nina, the heroine, is extremely clever—there she is now; that's her, appearing with her milk-pails. That youth who follows her, is a shepherd who is deeply in love with her—but she disdains his suit. See, he kneels, but she is inexorable. Now, observe the cavalier who enters at the back of the stage, and is watching them; that is a prince who, captivated by her charms, has come in disguise to seek her."

"Does he intend to marry her?" inquired Miss Jones.

"Diable!" muttered Rochechouart. "You will see presently," said he. "Now, observe, he kneels at her feet, and vows eternal love. Ah! she says, you must prove it by making me a princess."

"And will he?" asked Miss Jones.

"Look; he says she shall be mistress of his heart, but that being a prince he cannot marry her."

"Then I wouldn't listen to a word more he has to say, if I were her," said Miss Jones.

"You think so," said Rochechouart; "but you wouldn't be able to help it."

"Indeed I should," replied the young lady.

"Not if you were in love," said he, tenderly.

"But I'm not in love," answered Miss Jones.

"That alters the case, certainly," said the Duke. "C'est singulier," thought he; "elle ne ressemble pas du tout aux autres femmes que j'ai connu;" and he fell into a reverie, forgetting for a time to continue his explanations.

"He's gone," said Miss Jones.

"Who?" said the Duke, starting.

"The prince," said she. "Has she dismissed him?"

"Yes," replied Rochechouart; "she has sent him away discomfited; and there is the shepherd returned to try his fortune again; but she can't bring herself to listen to him."

"I don't wonder at it," returned Miss Jones. "Who would, after being made love to by a prince?"

"I admire your sentiments," said Rochechouart, with animation.

"Monseigneur," said Dillon, opening the box door. "Voici Monsieur le Comte D'Armagnac, qui veut absolument entrer."

"Had you not my positive orders to admit no one?" said the Duke.

"True, Monseigneur," said Dillon; "mais

Monsieur le Comte est peremptoire—he will take no refusal.”

“C’est à dire, qu’il vous a glissé cinq louis dans la main,” said Rochechouart.

“Parole d’honneur, Monseigneur!” said Dillon, laying his hand on his heart.

“Well, I suppose he must be admitted,” said Rochechouart.

“This is the gentleman I mentioned to you,” said the Colonel to his niece—“The Count D’Armagnac, Miss Jones.”

D’Armagnac could not speak any English; but he was very handsome, and dressed à ravir; and if he could make no effective use of his tongue, he made amends with his eyes.

“But, look,” said Rochechouart; “we are forgetting the ballet, all this while.”

“There is the prince again at her feet,” said Miss Jones; “and he has changed his dress.”

“He hopes to be more successful in his present brilliant costume,” said Rochechouart.

“But she’s dismissing him again,” said Miss Jones. “And, see, she’s accepting the her?”

peasant after all. Then thé prince won’t marry

“No,” replied Rochechouart. “He says

he would if circumstances permitted ; but he can't."

"Well, I would never have married that shepherd, with his coarse clothes, and his crook, if he had knelt there for ever!" exclaimed Miss Jones.

"To be sure not," replied Rochechouart. "I was sure you'd end by being in favour of the prince."

"I'm not in favour of the prince," said the young lady; "I should have blamed her much more if she had listened to him."

"How then?" asked Rochechouart. "What would you have had her do?"

"Waited for another prince," replied Miss Jones, glancing at D'Armagnac—"there are more princes in the world than one."

CHAPTER XI.

SUSAN FINDS ANOTHER SITUATION—THE LOST LETTER.

IT was with a sad heart that Susan knocked at her friend's door, and a humble doubting knock she gave; for bad as had been her situation when she wrote to Dobbs, it was now, from the loss of her clothes and little stock of money, much worse; and she felt mortified and ashamed at presenting herself before her in so destitute a condition.

Her first reception did not tend to encourage her; for the pert footboy that answered the summons, on seeing who had rang, banged the door in her face and told her to go down the *hary*. Susan, who was not accustomed to cockneyisms, or London areas, was looking about for the means of accomplishing his behest,

when a well-known voice bidding a butcher's boy not to forget the beefsteaks, drew her eyes in the right direction, and in a minute more she had shaken hands with Dobbs, and was comfortably seated by the kitchen fire.

"As for losing your boxes," said Dobbs, "it's just my fault and nobody's else. I should have told you to let me know what coach you were coming by, and have sent somebody to meet you. How should you know the tricks of the Lunners? Bless you, it takes a life to learn 'em! However, when things come to the worst, they'll mend; and what's done can't be undone; and so there's no use fretting about it. Now, I've got a place in my eye for you, that I think will do very well for a beginning. By and by, when all this here business is blown over and forgotten, you can look for something better; and I'll lend you a trifle of money, just to set you up in a few necessaries for the present, which you can pay me when you get your wages."

Grateful indeed was Susan for this kindness; but she still expressed some apprehension that the family, when they had heard her name, might object to take her.

"No fear of that," answered Dobbs; "they'll

be quite satisfied with my recommendation and ask no questions. Their name's Wetherall—he's a clerk, or something of that sort in the post-office; and she's sister to our baker's wife; I meet her sometimes when I go to the shop, and that's the way I know her. They've been living hitherto in lodgings, where the people of the house did for them; but he's just got a rise, and so they've taken a small house in Wood Street, and mean to keep a servant. She asked me the other day if I knew one to suit her, and thinking how pat it would do for you I said I did. You'll have every thing to do, and the wages are low; but you musn't mind that for a beginning."

Susan was too glad to get into any decent service, and thereby break the spell that she feared fate had cast over her honest exertions, to make any objections; and therefore, in the evening, as soon as Dobbs was at leisure to escort and introduce her, they started at once in quest of the situation, lest some other candidate should forestall them.

As Dobbs had foreseen, no difficulties were raised on the part of the lady; and as Susan made none on hers, the treaty was soon happily concluded; and she engaged to enter on her

service the next day, which she accordingly did, after spending the intervening time with her friend, who was no less anxious to hear and speculate on the state of affairs at Oakfield, more especially all that regarded Harry Leeson and his fortunes than she was to tell them.

It was impossible for any master or mistress to be more good-natured, and more disposed to be satisfied with her exertions to please them, than were Susan's. Mr. Wetherall was a little pursy man, with a very *enjouée* expression of countenance, although much marked with the small pox; he delighted in a laugh, and was extremely fond of a pun or a joke practical or otherwise; and was by no means sparing in the indulgence of his fancy. Mrs. Wetherall was a handsome young woman about eight and twenty years of age, rather disposed to be fat, of an excellent temper; and extremely fond of her husband. Though their means had hitherto been restricted, their contentment and good spirits had helped to feed and clothe them; but now that their circumstances were improved, they proposed to indulge in a few amusements and a little society, to which they had both a natural tendency, and therefore with a view both to profit and pleasure, they had arranged to take

a boarder, a gentleman of the name of Lyon, who performed in the orchestra of one of the Theatres.

“I don’t doubt,” observed Mr. Wetherall to his wife, “that we shall find Lyon a very agreeable acquisition. People in his situation see so much of life, and have so many good stories to tell, that they are generally the pleasantest fellows in the world. Besides, I dare say, he’ll be able to give you tickets for the theatre sometimes; and though I can never have much leisure, I shall have more than I had, and I hope we shall enjoy ourselves a good deal.”

“We’ve always been very happy,” replied his wife, “and have no right to complain; but I certainly should like to be a little more gay than we have been; and as we have no children to provide for, I don’t see why we need be too saving.”

“Certainly not,” answered her husband, “it would be folly not to make hay while the sun shines. Besides, things will improve, I’ve no doubt. There’s poor Davenport with just one foot in the grave already; it’s impossible he can hold out long, and that’ll give me a step; and then when Bingham’s father dies—and he has had two seizures, I know—that will be another;

for Tom will never stick to the office when he's got a thousand a year, and a nice house in the country. So I reckon our worst days are over, and that we shall get on now we're once set going."

"If we never see worse days than we have done," said his wife, smiling, "we shall have no reason to complain, either."

As Mr. Wetherall had foreseen, Mr. Lyon proved an extraordinary acquisition. He was not only a capital fellow himself, but he knew a number of other capital fellows who were all as willing to be introduced to Mr. Wetherall as he was to them, and who unanimously agreed that Mr. Wetherall himself was also a capital fellow. The consequence was, that there were dinner parties on a Sunday, and supper parties four or five times in a week, at which the only contention that arose was, who should be the merriest, and say or do the funniest things. The visitors were mostly actors of an inferior grade, who if they could make nobody laugh when they were on the stage, could keep Mr. Wetherall's table in a roar; and who if they could not act themselves, had a particular talent for imitating those who could. The host was little behind them—he could bray like an

ass, and crow like a cock, and do a great many other humorous things ; and as from the retirement in which he had lived, these talents had hitherto been much in abeyance, he was the more sensible to the honour and glory of exhibiting them now to actual professors in the art of being funny ; more especially as the applause they drew was certain, loud, and long. It is so easy to please a set of capital fellows at your own table, when they have no other table to go to.

But, unfortunately, these delights, like most others, have their sting. It is impossible to entertain a set of capital fellows four or five days in a week without cost ; and, however unaristocratic the nature of the potations, it is equally impossible to consume a great deal of liquor without liquidating a great deal of cash. After these things had been going their train for some months, the butcher and the baker began to be extremely importunate ; and Mr. and Mrs. Wetherall took a particular dislike to single knocks at the door, and hated the sight of little bits of dirtyish-white paper that Susan was ever and anon forced to present to their notice. At the same time, the man that kept the public-house at the corner, discontinued

his morning salutation to Mr. Wetherall as he passed, and his evening commentaries on the state of politics and the weather; and it was not long before the clerk, who missed these civilities, turned to the left instead of the right when he quitted his house for his office, and preferred going farther about to meeting the cold eye of the once obsequious publican. When matters get to this pass without a very vigorous effort, they rapidly get worse; and as neither Mr. nor Mrs. Wetherall had the resolution to shut their door against their pleasant friends, nor to retrench the flood of their hospitality, their difficulties daily increased, and ruin stared them in the face.

It was in this crisis of affairs, that Susan, one morning when she was cleaning the parlour grate, found amongst the ashes some remnants of a letter, which appeared to have been torn up and thrown on the fire, but which the flames had only partly consumed before it had fallen beneath. She was about to thrust them in with her coals and wood to facilitate the operation of ignition, when the words "*Harry Leeson,*" caught her eye, and induced her to examine further. But except the first syllable of the word "*Oakfield,*" and part of the address,

which appeared to have been to Parliament Street, there was nothing more remaining that could throw any light either on the writer of the letter or its subject: but the writing of the few words she had found was a scrawl so remarkable, that Susan fancied she could hardly be mistaken in attributing the epistle to Mr. Jeremy.

But how could a letter from the worthy butler, addressed to Dobbs, have found its way under Mr. Wetherall's parlour grate, without her knowledge or intervention? It was not easy to imagine, unless Dobbs had sent it or left it at the house some day when she had been out, and that it had got amongst Mrs. Wetherall's papers, and been torn up by mistake. She finally decided that this must have been the case: and regretting that she had thus lost the opportunity of learning something about her much loved Harry, she resolved to go to Parliament Street the first day she could get out and inquire the particulars of Dobbs.

However, the distance being considerable, and her moments of leisure rare, some weeks elapsed without her being able to accomplish the enterprise; and at length one Sunday evening it was rendered unnecessary by the arrival of Dobbs herself.

"Here's a kettle of fish," said she, seating herself in Susan's kitchen. "You haven't heard from Jeremy, have you?"

"No," replied Susan, "that's just what I wanted to speak to you about."

"About what?" asked Dobbs.

"About the letter from Jeremy," answered Susan. "Did you leave it here yourself, or did you send it?"

"Oh, then, you have had it?" said Dobbs.

"Not I," returned Susan; "I never got it at all; and I want to know who you gave it to."

"I don't know what you mean," said Dobbs, looking bewildered. "If you never got it, how do you know there was any letter at all?"

"Just because I found some bits of it torn up, and half burnt, lying under the parlour grate," answered Susan—"Here they are;" and she handed Dobbs the remnants she had found.

"Well, that's the funniest thing!" said Dobbs, "that's Jeremy's hand sure enough; but how in the world did it come here?"

"Did you send it?" said Susan.

"Not I," replied Dobbs. "I never had it, I tell you. I never so much as knew there had been a letter sent, till a few days ago when a

young man called and left a few lines from Jeremy, asking if I had received his letter; and expressing much surprise at your not having written immediately to acknowledge Miss Wentworth's kindness."

"Well, that's the strangest thing," said Susan, "I ever heard."

"The fact is," said Dobbs, "he must have directed the letter to you instead of to me by mistake."

"But still, as 'Parliament Street' is on it," said Susan, "it would have gone to your house, not here; and then you must have heard of it. No; I think it more likely that he sent it up by a private hand, somebody that knew I lived here, and who found it less inconvenient to leave it in Wood Street, than at the other end of the town; and thought it would do quite as well."

"That's not unlikely," replied Dobbs, "but how in the world it got under your grate, I can't conceive, without your ever seeing it."

"It must have been left here some time when I was out of the way, and got mixed up with some of my master's or mistress's papers," said Susan, "and been overlooked. But it's very provoking to have lost it."

“Jeremy’ll write again, no doubt,” replied Dobbs. “I sent him a line by the young man, who called for my answer next day, to say that I had received no letter, and to beg he’d write immediately and tell me how he sent it, and what it was about. But at all events we had better ask Mrs. Wetherall if she knows any thing about its coming here.”

“She’s not at home now,” replied Susan, “but I’ll take an opportunity of mentioning it to her to-morrow;” and after a little more chat, Dobbs said “Good night,” and departed.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ALARM.

"It's a very odd thing," said Mrs. Wetherall, when she was pouring out the tea, a day or two after the visit of Dobbs, mentioned in the last Chapter, "Susan's been telling me something about a letter that was left here for her, and that must have got amongst our papers, and been torn up. You didn't take it in, did you, Mr. Lyon?"

"No," replied Mr. Lyon, "I have never taken in any letter."

"And it isn't likely you should, Wetherall," continued the lady, "unless it was left on a Sunday. You didn't, did you?"

"What?" inquired Mr. Wetherall, looking up from the newspaper on which he was intent.

"You haven't at any time taken in a letter for Susan, have you?"

"Not I," replied Mr. Wetherall, helping himself to another slice of bread and butter, and resuming his perusal of the paper.

"Well," said Mrs. Wetherall, "it's a very remarkable thing! How it can have got here, I can't conceive. I'm sure I never saw it."

"Did it come by the post," said Mr. Lyon.

"She don't know how it came," replied Mrs. Wetherall; "nor, indeed, is it clear that the letter was addressed to her at all. It appears to have been written to a friend of her's called Dobbs—"

"Dobbs?" said Mr. Wetherall, looking up suddenly from his paper.

"Yes, Dobbs," answered his wife—"that's the person that recommended Susan to me; she's housekeeper to a family in Parliament Street, and—"

"In Parliament Street?" reiterated Mr. Wetherall.

"Yes," replied his wife, "and there the letter was directed. But it seems Dobbs never got it nor did she know a letter had been sent, till the man who wrote it sent a second to inquire for the answer."

"It was forwarded by a private hand and never delivered, probably," said Mr. Lyon.

"Well, but the most extraordinary part of the business is," continued Mrs. Wetherall, "that Susan found the letter torn up, and partly consumed, lying under the grate. Look, my dear Wetherall, you're dipping the paper into the slop basin."

"She must have been very much gratified with the warmth of the epistle," said Mr. Lyon, facetiously. "But it's really singular."

"It certainly is," answered Mrs. Wetherall. "How it should have come here being directed to Parliament Street, and who could have taken it in, I can't make out. My dear Wetherall, do come and finish your tea; you've no time to lose. What are you looking out of the window at?"

"He's looking for the lost letter," said Mr. Lyon.

"You don't know how late it is," said Mrs. Wetherall. But Mr. Wetherall, with his body stretched half out of the window, paid no attention to the summons.

"What the devil *are* you looking at?" said Mr. Lyon, giving his host a smart slap on the shoulder, and thrusting his own head out to ascertain what was to be seen.

"D—n it, I wish you'd keep your hands to yourself!" ejaculated Mr. Wetherall, turning round, at last, and discovering a face as white as the handkerchief that was round his throat.

To Mr. Lyon, who had seen a good deal of the world and something of the indifferent part of it, this sudden ebullition of temper in a man usually so forbearing and patient of jests, combined with the altered hue of the complexion, was a *trait de lumière*.

"My dear Wetherall, you're not well," said his wife rising, and concluding that he had been hanging out of the window to breathe the air.

"I'm very well," replied the husband; "give me another cup of tea, as strong as you can."

"I'm sure you are not," said she, taking the cup and saucer from his hand, which were rattling against each other as he held them out. "Can't you eat your bread and butter?" said she.

"No," said he. "I'm thirsty, give me some more tea. I suppose it's time I was off," added he, as he tossed off the fourth cup.

"It is," replied Mr. Lyon, who had for the

last few minutes been standing with his eyes fixed on him in a state of painful surprise. "As we're going the same road, I'll walk part of the way with you."

"I really believe I am not quite well," said Mr. Wetherall, as he staggered across the room to look for his hat; "have you any brandy in the house, Eliza?"

His wife fetched him a glass of brandy, which having swallowed, he said he didn't doubt but it would set him right; but in attempting to place the glass on the table, he set it on one side and it fell to the ground. "I feel giddy," said he, "and I have a dimness before my eyes, but it will go off when I get into the air;" and accompanied by Mr. Lyon, who seeing the condition he was in, offered him his arm, he left the house.

"It's a singular thing about that letter," said Mr. Lyon, when they had walked a little way; "isn't it?"

"Letter?" said Mr. Wetherall, interrogatively.

"The letter found under the grate," replied Mr. Lyon. "I wonder how it came there; or indeed how it ever got to the house at all."

"Oh, servants' letters are so ill directed that

there are constant mistakes about them," said Mr. Wetherall.

"But it's being ill directed wouldn't account for its getting under your parlour grate," returned Mr. Lyon, "it certainly was not directed there."

"No, it wouldn't account for that, certainly," answered Mr. Wetherall.

"Nor for its coming to the house at all, you know, when it was legibly directed to Parliament Street."

"No, it wouldn't," said Mr. Wetherall.

"I hope there was no money in it," observed Mr. Lyon.

"I dare say not," replied Mr. Wetherall. "Nobody said there was, did they?"

"I believe not," answered Mr. Lyon, "but we shall hear more on the subject, no doubt. But I must step out now, for I'm late, so good by."

When Mr. Lyon left him, Mr. Wetherall was very near his office, but instead of going straight towards it he turned down towards Cheapside. He wanted a little time to compose his countenance and his demeanour before he presented himself to what he now apprehended would be the scrutinizing eyes of his

fellow clerks ; for although it was but an hour and a half since he quitted them, who could tell what might have occurred in that brief space? No doubt, the person who wrote the letter, as well as the one to whom it was addressed, would lose no time in applying to the post-office for an explanation ; and it would be easily ascertained that it had passed through his department. To present himself with an agitated countenance was meeting discovery half way ; and he felt that if he could only get over this—if he could but escape suspicion this time, no embarrassment, no temptation however powerful, should ever again induce him to risk his soul's tranquillity on such a fearful cast.

But it is not easy for a man with his hat over his brow, and his hands behind his back to compose his thoughts in Cheapside, where he stumbled over a truck one minute, and was pushed off the pavement the next, and Mr. Wetherall, after making the experiment, found that he was staying away from his office, which was itself an offence, and might look suspicious, without any chance of regaining the requisite composure, so he braced his nerves as well as he could, and walked in.

“Mr. Wetherall!” cried one; “Mr. Wetherall!” cried another—“You’re wanted directly—Mr. Russel wants you—you’re to go to his room—he has sent out half a dozen times to inquire if you were come.” More dead than alive Mr. Wetherall turned his steps to Mr. Russel’s room. “You’re late, Sir,” said that gentleman in a tone of displeasure. “I have been wanting you this half hour to speak about a very unpleasant affair that has occurred in your department—But you’re ill, Sir,” added he, observing that Mr. Wetherall had sought the support of the table to keep himself from falling.

“I am not very well,” answered Mr. Wetherall, passing his hand over his brow.

“Then I had better put off what I have to say to another opportunity,” said Mr. Russel.

“Oh no, Sir,” replied Mr. Wetherall, somewhat relieved by this last speech, which seemed to imply that the thing was not so very important. “I feel better now. There’s been no neglect in my department, I hope, Sir?”

“There has been something very wrong in your department,” replied Mr. Russel, “but I have got to learn who is the delinquent—but I see you’re getting ill again, Sir; you had better send for a coach and go home. Here,

Bingham," continued he, opening a door, "just step here and look to Mr. Wetherall a moment. You had better go home, Sir; what I have to say will do as well at any other time as now."

So that all this agony of apprehension had been suffered about a communication that was of so little weight, that it would do as well at one time as another! Such a tyrant is conscience, and so does it play the bully with our fears!

However, relieved of his terrors for the moment, Mr. Wetherall declared himself better again, and forthwith addressed himself to the business of his office with what attention he could command.

On the same evening, not long after Mr. Lyon and Mr. Wetherall had left the house, Susan was surprised by another visit from Dobbs, who accosting her as before, with "Here's a kettle of fish!" announced that she had had a letter from Mr. Jeremy, by which she learned that the former despatch had contained a present of ten pounds for Susan, from Miss Wentworth, who was to be married in a few days; and who had heard from Jeremy of the misfortune the poor girl had sustained on her first arrival in London.

"Now," said Dobbs, "that's a loss not to be put up with; and I'm going to the post-office to have it inquired into. But I thought I'd step round here first, to ask you if you'd mentioned it to Mrs. Wetherall?"

"I did," answered Susan, "but she knows nothing about it; and just now, when I was taking away the tea-things, she told me she'd been asking the gentlemen about it; and they know no more than she does."

"Well then," said Dobbs, "there's nothing to do, but to go at once to the post-office. There's nothing like going to the fountain head—and the sooner it's done the more chance there is of the truth coming out."

"I should like to go with you," said Susan, "if Mrs. Wetherall can spare me. I think I'll go and ask her."

"Do," said Dobbs, "for as the money was yours, you've the best right to complain;" and Susan's leave being obtained, the two friends were soon on their way to the post-office; pausing only, for a moment, at the end of the street, to borrow an umbrella of Miss Geddes the milliner, as it was just beginning to rain.

In the mean time, Mr. Lyon, when he left Mr. Wetherall, had proceeded to the theatre,

and taken his seat in the orchestra, in a state of mind little less agitated than his friend. He was a roué sort of young man, of dissipated habits enough, but neither bad-hearted nor ill-natured. He had never taken the trouble to consider whether the Wetheralls could or could not afford the expense they were at in entertaining the pleasant fellows he had introduced at their table, nor what might be the consequences if they were exceeding their means; but now that these consequences burst upon his view, and that reflection told him he was in a great degree the cause of the mischief, he was struck with terror, remorse, and pity. From the condition in which he had left Mr. Wetherall, he could not help fearing that the slightest accident would make him betray himself; and he regretted very much that he had not been bolder, and persuaded him, under the pretext of illness, to stay from the office, till he had himself tried what he could do by speaking to Susan on the subject, to prevent an exposure.

Under these circumstances it may be imagined that the instrument he held did not contribute very much to the harmony of the evening. He made all sorts of mistakes; played when he should have rested, and rested when he should

have played; threw the leader into a passion, and drove an unfortunate debutant whom he was to accompany in "Water parted from the sea," almost insane, by forgetting every direction he had given him at rehearsal. At length finding he was of no use where he was, and eager to learn what was going on at the post-office, he pleaded indisposition, and obtained leave to retire.

"I'll make some pretence or another to go in and speak to Wetherall," thought he; and urged by anxiety, he walked at a rapid pace towards the office. When he reached it, however, he found he had not made up his mind under what plea he was to excuse his unexpected appearance; for as Mr. Wetherall believed him at the theatre, he would naturally be surprised, and perhaps alarmed, at so unusual a visit. Whilst he was considering this matter, and as he did so, pacing backwards and forwards before the door, two women passed him, one of whom held an umbrella. As he was wrapped in reflection, and looking on the ground, he did not observe them till the umbrella happened to come in contact with his hat, which it nearly knocked off. "I beg your pardon," said the woman—the voice struck him as

familiar, and he turned to look after her. The two women were just stepping into the office, but the one that carried the umbrella turned round to shake off the wet before she put it down—the light of a lamp at the door fell upon her face—and he saw that it was Susan!

“Gracious Heavens!” cried he, darting forward and seizing her by the arm, “what are you doing here?”

“I’m only going to speak about a little business—about a letter, Sir,” answered Susan, surprised by the vehemence of his address.

“Stop,” said he, “I beg of you to stop a moment whilst I speak to you—who is this woman?”

“She’s a friend of mine, Sir, Mrs. Dobbs,” replied Susan. “The letter was sent to her, but there was some money in it for me, and we’re going to mention that it has never come to hand.”

“If you’ll leave this business in my hands, Susan,” said Mr. Lyon, “I will undertake to say you shall not lose your money—you’ll oblige me very particularly if you’ll not stir further in it, at present—I can’t explain my reasons to you now, but—”

“There’s no occasion, Sir,” replied Susan,

who from the energy of his manner, and his evident agitation, began to suspect something like the truth—"we'll go back directly, and I'm very glad I met you; I'm sure I wouldn't be the occasion of any thing unpleasant for twice the money."

"You're a good girl, Susan," said he; "and you shall lose nothing by it, depend on it. Say nothing on the subject to any body till you and I have had some conversation; and if you can persuade your friend to be equally cautious—"

"I'll answer for her," replied Susan, and thinking better of Mr. Lyon than she had ever done before, Susan turned her face homewards; whilst he, relieved from present anxiety, resolved not to disturb Mr. Wetherall at the office, but to speak to him after supper.

"They say there's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip," said Dobbs, as Susan and she commented on what had passed, "and so I suppose there is betwixt a man's neck and the halter."

But all was not so secure yet as they and Mr. Lyon imagined.

CHAPTER XIII.

A CONVERSATION IN A MERCHANT'S COUNTING HOUSE,
AND A NIGHT SCENE ON BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE.

ON the same evening that Mr. Wetherall underwent all the horrors of anticipated detection that we have described in the last chapter, and that Mr. Lyon's opportune intervention preserved him from the imminent danger that threatened him, in a certain counting house in Mark Lane, might be seen an elderly gentleman in deep cogitation over various letters and ledgers that were spread on the table before him. The room was one evidently devoted wholly to business; a couple of desks with high stools before them, shelves loaded with heavy account books, two well-worn black leathern arm chairs, and a table, also covered with black leather, on which stood a lamp, formed nearly all its furniture.

The occupant of the apartment, for there was but one, was a gentleman of about fifty years of age, of the middle height, rather stout than otherwise, and of a cheerful agreeable aspect. He was attired in a full suit of brown, with gold buckles in his shoes, his hair well powdered, and tied in a queue behind, as was the fashion of the time, and with the wristbands of his shirt, which as well as the handkerchief round his throat were delicately white and fine, just appearing below the cuffs of his coat.

He was seated by the fire in one of the arm chairs, with his left side to the table, on which rested his elbow, whilst he appeared to be deeply considering the contents of the papers, to which he ever and anon referred, comparing some of them with the ledgers, making notes, casting up columns, and balancing sums total. Most of the letters bore a foreign post-mark, but there was one which bore that of Mapleton.

Several times the gentleman looked at his watch, and listened, as if expecting somebody; and as the hour grew late, and he impatient, he frequently arose and took two or three turns about the room.

At length, towards ten o'clock, when a foot was heard ascending the stairs, he resumed his

seat, thrust the letters under a ledger, and prepared to receive his visitor with composure.

"I'm afraid I'm late, Simpson, and have kept you waiting," said a tall good-looking man, in a great coat and comforter round his neck, who entered the room with the familiarity of easy acquaintance; "but I came up by that d—d coach, for Bess had taken a mash when I received your summons, and I couldn't bring her out."

"I'm afraid you are wet," replied Mr. Simpson, stirring the fire, and drawing forward the other arm chair, whilst the visitor took off his great coat and comforter, and hung them on pegs appropriated to such uses.

"But what's the matter?" said he, "there's nothing wrong, is there?"

"How's Miss Wentworth, Sir?" inquired Mr. Simpson.

"Quite well," returned Mr Gaveston, for it was he; "you know we're to be married in a few days, and she desired me to say that she hoped you would come down and be present at the ceremony."

"I fear that will not be in my power," replied Mr. Simpson, with a sigh, and casting his eye on a handsome mourning ring that he wore on his little finger.

“But what’s the matter?” said Mr. Gaveston, without urging the invitation. “You must have had some particular reason for sending for me.”

“I had, Sir,” replied Mr. Simpson, “a very particular reason.” Here he paused, as if he found some difficulty in announcing the motive of his summons. “In short, Mr. Gaveston, I have made up my mind to resign my situation. I do not think I can be of any further use here; and I propose to retire, and end my days in the country.”

“You don’t think of such a thing, I hope, Simpson,” replied Mr. Gaveston, with an unusual appearance of sincerity. “You have been conducting this business for many years to the entire satisfaction of every body concerned with you; why should you leave it now?”

“Because, Sir,” returned Mr. Simpson, “I feel that I cannot henceforth conduct it to my *own* satisfaction; without which the approbation of others will be of very little avail to me.”

“Why not, Sir?” asked Mr. Gaveston, with a less complacent voice and countenance. “If you mean because after my marriage with Miss Wentworth I shall become sole proprietor of the concern, you need not throw up your

situation on that account. I am very sensible that nobody can conduct the business as well as yourself; and I shall interfere very little with you, I assure you."

"Nevertheless," answered Mr. Simpson, "I must beg leave to adhere to my resolution. You may not propose to interfere with my management; but as sole proprietor, your power will be absolute; and things may happen that I may disapprove, without the power of controlling."

"Nonsense, nonsense, my dear Simpson," exclaimed Mr. Gaveston, assuming an air of frankness. "I dare say the truth is you feel yourself ill used—I ought to have proposed of my own accord to raise your salary—I know it's not equal to your merits."

"I have always been quite satisfied with my salary, Mr. Gaveston;" answered Simpson. "If I had not, I had only to have mentioned the matter to Mr. Wentworth, and he would have met my wishes on the subject; but I had quite enough for any single man, and never desired more, whilst he lived—but circumstances are now changed."

"Well then, what do you say to a couple of hundred a year in addition?"

“That it would not make the slightest difference in my determination. I should be exactly as much subject to the disagreeables I apprehend as I am now. In short, Sir, to be more explicit, you will understand my motives better when I tell you, that I have received letters from Messrs. Râoul and Bonstetten, and also from the houses of Durand and Co., and the brothers Dulau, by which I learn that sums long ago intrusted to you by Mr. Wentworth to settle the accounts between us, have never been received—that we are in debt to those firms to a very large amount—so large, in fact, that they have begun to be apprehensive of our stability, and our credit totters at Bourdeaux—the credit of a house, Mr. Gaveston, that was never impeached till now.”

The annoyance and confusion betrayed by Mr. Gaveston at this unexpected intelligence, are not to be described. A few days more, and all would have been secure. From the precautions he had taken he had reckoned with certainty on being able to accomplish his marriage before any stir was made in this business; and the ceremony once over, and he sole proprietor of Miss Wentworth's fortune,

and the concern in Mark Lane, he would have had immediate means of discharging these debts, and of hushing up the whole affair. There were reasons of the most powerful nature, besides the care a man generally has for his own reputation, that made it of the last importance to him that this defalcation, this misapplication of sums intrusted to his faith, should not come under public discussion. Investigation, inquiry, gossip, once set afloat, who shall say into what port the wind may waft them? In what direction might suspicion, once raised, conduct the curious? It was a peril not to be encountered, and must be fought off at any cost—but how? He knew Mr. Simpson to be a sturdy, straightforward, upright man; a man whom he feared was neither to be cajoled, bought, nor intimidated. Nevertheless, the case was desperate and urgent; and hopeless as he considered the experiment, he resolved to try the first; and if that failed, to have recourse to the second.

At Mr. Simpson's alarming announcement, Mr. Gaveston had risen from his chair, and during these reflections had been pacing the room with an agitated step, his hands in the pockets of his trowsers, and his eyes bent on

the ground. He now, however, re-seated himself, and drawing his chair nearer to the worthy clerk, he said, "I will not deny that I had hoped these early imprudences of mine would never have become known to you. It was my intention to discharge those debts as soon as I had the means, which you know my marriage in a few days will give me. I shall still do so, and you need be under no apprehensions of similar follies recurring on my part. I have sown my wild oats, and intend henceforth to be a sober steady man; and I trust therefore, Simpson, for the credit of a concern you have so long conducted, and for the interest of Miss Wentworth and myself, that you will not refuse to keep your present situation. I will make any addition to your salary you desire."

Mr. Simpson shook his head. "Your intentions may be very good," replied he, "but you are yet a young man, and—excuse me—I have heard, much addicted to the turf and high play. As long as you are sole proprietor you may draw upon me for every shilling the concern yields, and I must answer your demands; till, at last, we shall not be able to pay our way, and the house will stop disgracefully. Now, I do not choose to involve my character nor my

peace of mind in this perilous contingency. And as I am disposed to agree with you, that when I have left it the concern will be even less likely to prosper than it is now, I intend recommending Miss Wentworth to dispose of it at once, without a day's delay, whilst it is in her power to do so. I have made up and balanced the accounts as they stand, debtor and creditor; and I have a purchaser ready to sign and seal the moment I get her consent."

"But she's not of age," returned Mr. Gaveston.

"I shall recommend her to defer her marriage till she is," replied Mr. Simpson—"or we can throw the business into Chancery till she can dispose of it."

"Consider the sacrifice!" urged Mr. Gaveston—"such a business, such a connexion."

"The first loss is the least," returned Mr. Simpson. "If the concern gets involved, Miss Wentworth's whole fortune may go to pay the deficit."

"I see but one way," said Mr. Gaveston, after a pause, "since you are so mistrustful. Suppose you take a share in the business—a fourth we'll say. I'll give you this, and leave the whole management of the concern in your hands."

A faint smile might have been observed stealing over Mr. Simpson's features at this proposal, but he hastened to convert the expression into a look of dissent.

"I should still be nearly as much at your mercy, Sir," replied Mr. Simpson, "with the additional disadvantage of having the savings of my life perilled with the fortunes of the firm."

"What would induce you to remain, Mr. Simpson?" said Gaveston. "If my offer don't satisfy you, name your own terms."

"They are what you probably will not accede to, Sir," replied Mr. Simpson, "therefore it would be useless to name them."

"Name them, nevertheless," returned Gaveston.

"Half the concern, Sir, instead of a quarter; and that all payments and receipts of every kind whatsoever be permitted to pass through my hands. I dare say you do not doubt my honour; besides, you will be welcome to inspect the accounts whenever you please."

This was a hard morsel for Gaveston to digest. Again he started up and walked about the room, and bit his lips, and knit his brows; and as they trembled on his tongue, swallowed a

volley of oaths that might have shaken the welkin; but exposure was ruin in every way—there was no alternative but to submit.

“As soon after my marriage as I can come to town,” said he, when he had expressed his acquiescence in Mr. Simpson’s demands, “I will settle this business to your satisfaction—in the mean time you can get a deed drawn up.”

“That, Sir,” replied Mr. Simpson, “can be done to-morrow; and if this agreement between us is to stand, the whole affair must be arranged, signed and sealed, before your marriage.”

When the conference had terminated, the triumphant clerk conducted his visitor with great deference to the door; and then with a satisfied smile, and rubbing his hands with delight, he returned to his arm chair and prepared to write a note. “I’ll send a line to Olliphant immediately,” said he to himself, “to beg he’ll get the deed put into hand early to-morrow morning. He’ll be as much surprised at my success as I am—I couldn’t have believed he’d be so easily frightened, or that he’d have cared half as much about his reputation—however, since the poor girl’s so infatuated that she’ll listen to no advice, it’s fortunate there’s some hold over him, be it of what nature it

may. I've half a mind," thought he, pausing as he was about to ring the bell, "that I'll take the note myself—the walk will do me good after that battle. By the by, there's that letter of Jeremy's, too, I must attend to to-morrow—it's a disagreeable business, and one I'm not very fond of interfering in; I wish I knew the safest way of setting about it—but I don't know who to consult—" and thus soliloquising, he put on his great coat, and telling the porter he should be back presently, he took his way to the solicitor's.

Nothing could exceed the rage that boiled within Gaveston's breast at finding himself thus in the power of a man whom he at once feared, despised, and respected. He clenched his hands as he went down the stairs, and strode along the streets towards the west end of the town, where he intended to sleep, figuring to himself the joy with which he could have closed them round the throat of the man that had found the way to take such advantage of his fears. He was astonished too as well as incensed—"He, too, with all his parade of honesty," he said, "is to be bought—a fellow that has no use for money—that will never spend it: but every man has his price."

In this state of mind he felt it was useless to

go to his lodging with the view of sleeping ; and when he drew near the river, the cool air from the water blew pleasantly on his heated brow, and he turned towards it. He wanted to think—to reflect if there were yet no way of escaping his dilemma without such a sacrifice ; and when he reached Blackfriars Bridge, it looked so inviting for a nocturnal walk, that he directed his steps that way, and began pacing backwards and forwards, reviewing the conversation that had passed ; anon regretting his own precipitation, and then again rejoicing that even that way remained of escaping the éclat and danger of an exposure.

It was now approaching to midnight, and his cogitations were undisturbed by noise or jostle. But two human beings besides himself were on the bridge—a woman, who with a child on her lap, was sitting on a stone. She had a bonnet on, and a shawl, the ends of which were folded round the infant ; and she sat silently rocking herself backwards and forwards as if in trouble, but she said nothing ; and Mr. Gaveston passed her again and again unheeded, till the words, “ Mamma, I’m so hungry !” reached his ears ; and then he abruptly crossed over to the other side to escape the interruption to his reflections.

He had not taken many turns here, before he heard the sound of feet approaching from Bridge Street. The passenger was advancing along the side that he had just quitted, and as he drew near, he perceived it was a gentleman. There was something about the air and carriage of the new comer that struck him, and he retired into the shade to observe. A slight cough and a "hem!" confirmed his suspicions; he had heard that voice too recently to be deceived.—"It's Simpson himself!" said he. "He's going to Olliphant's about the deed, I'll be sworn!" and he stepped lightly after him to observe his movements. "He'll drop the letter in the box and return," thought he—"and, now, if fortune favours me—" and he grasped more firmly a stout stick with a thick knob at the end of it, that he held in his hand—"One good blow, and a heave over the parapet, and I'm at once revenged and safe!"

In the mean time, the unconscious Mr. Simpson proceeded on his way. He too was deep in thought, looking neither to the right nor the left, till the sound of a feeble moan from a child, followed by a groan from a more mature voice, attracted his attention, and looking back he perceived the mournful group whose proxi-

mity had driven Mr. Gaveston away. "Poor thing!" said he, feeling in his pocket for some silver—"I shall return in a minute, and then I'll give her something—I wish I'd done it at once: this is a dangerous neighbourhood for misery at midnight," and he hastened forward to Albion Place, which is just at the farther extremity of the bridge, dropped his note into the solicitor's box, and hurried back.

"Here he comes!" thought Mr. Gaveston, who, concealed in a recess with his bludgeon poised, awaited his victim. On came Mr. Simpson—but just as he arrived at the spot where his enemy was lurking to take his life, the faint outline of a figure mounted on the parapet caught his eye—"Gracious Heavens! It's that wretched creature going to drown herself," exclaimed he—and with a loud cry to arrest her desperate purpose he darted across the road, whilst the weapon raised for his destruction, descended through the unresisting air.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RENCONTRE AND THE DISCOVERY.

GREAT was Mr. Wetherall's relief when the hour arrived that released him from his confinement, and from the importunate eyes of his fellow labourers. As he stepped off the threshold he turned his eyes back upon the building which he doubted he should ever enter again as a free man, and then with a slow and melancholy pace he sauntered onwards. He felt that he could not go home to encounter the anxious though unsuspecting inquiries of his wife, nor the scrutinizing questions of Mr. Lyon; so instead of bending his steps towards Wood Street, he turned them in the direction of the river.

The streets were nearly empty now, and he could deliberate without interruption on the

unhappy situation to which his folly and crime had reduced him. He was a man untried in affliction ; for till that one fatal error had planted a thorn in his pillow, his days had passed in cheerful contentment and his nights in unbroken sleep. From that moment he had been restless, abstracted, and occasionally irritable ; humours so unusual with him, that his wife had imagined him ill ; he had denied it ; but the moment was now come when concealment and denial could no longer avail—probably the next post—at all events a few hours must tell her all, and expose him to the vengeance of the law, and the scorn of mankind. It was true, there might be yet time to fly—if he mounted one of the earliest coaches, he might possibly reach the coast, and be across the channel before pursuit could be commenced. But in the first place he had no money ; in the second he felt remorse at the idea of taking care of himself and leaving his poor wife to bear the horror of the surprise, and the ignominy of the exposure alone—and thirdly, he hadn't energy for the enterprise. He was utterly cast down and depressed—what would be the use of escaping ? He could never be happy. Even if he could find the means of supporting life, it would not be worth sup-

porting—and, but for the disgrace and horror of a public execution, he would have preferred death.

As he sauntered forwards in this mood, he kept almost insensibly bending his steps towards the river—"there," thought he, as his eye glanced on the broad expanse, "there is a quiet bed where a man might sleep;"—but then rose again the thought of his poor wife—it was so cowardly to desert her—to leave her to weather the storm alone. But on the other hand, would she not rather—would she not rather know him dead, and at rest, than see him dragged a prisoner from his home? Than behold him a culprit at the bar, a criminal at the scaffold! "If we could only escape together—but the thing's impossible without money—and wouldn't this be the next best alternative for her interest, as well as for myself? She'd be deeply grieved—but time alleviates all grief when it's unaccompanied by remorse—and how much better it were, than to drag her from her home, her country, her friends, to pass her life in an exile of poverty and wretchedness, with a husband disgraced and broken hearted—a criminal escaped from justice!" Thus he reasoned, and every glance of the river

became more inviting, and every review of life, of such a life as must henceforth await him, less so.

“She, too, and the world, will see that I preferred encountering death to shame. My name will not stand in the calendar of crime, a disgrace to all connected with me. At first, they’ll think I have fled—and there’ll be a reward offered—and the police will seek me—and the coast will be on the alert—but, ere long, the body will be found and my fate ascertained—there’ll be a little noise about it—a few remarks in the newspapers—and then the whole will be forgotten;” and so saying he quickened his pace and walked briskly forwards towards Blackfriars Bridge. “That will be the best place,” thought he—“a leap from the parapet and all is done—and since my mind’s made up, there shall be no pause—” he stepped upon the bridge—“since I am to die, hesitation would be weakness—and how much better is it thus to die a death of my own choosing, than to have my shame and my agonies made a scoff and a spectacle to assembled thousands!—Farewell Eliza,” he whispered, as he prepared to mount the parapet—“farewell, dear wife! Forgive me, and be happy!”

At that moment a cry reached his ears—absorbed in his own reflections, he had looked neither to the right nor to the left—but at the sound of a human voice, he lifted up his eyes and beheld on the opposite side of the bridge the figure of a woman exactly in the very act he had himself contemplated a moment before—she too had been for an instant arrested by the cry, and in that interval he rushed across the road and caught her by the dress.

He had scarcely lifted her to the ground, when a gentleman, out of breath with haste, came running towards him from the further extremity of the bridge—"Thank God!" cried he, as soon as he perceived the group—"when I lost sight of her, I didn't know which side she'd gone down—I was afraid she was in the water—child and all!"

"I was but just in time," said Mr. Wetherall—"another moment and she'd have been gone."

"And I should never have forgiven myself," said Mr. Simpson, "that I hadn't stayed to relieve her the first time I passed."

During these brief words they were both supporting the unfortunate woman, who either from weakness or agitation, appeared unable

to support herself. "Give me the child," said Mr. Simpson, taking it from her arms.

"I'm so hungry!" said the little girl in a feeble voice.

"Oh give her food!" cried the mother—"or let me die at once—for I cannot live and hear that cry!"

"She shall have food, and plenty!" said Mr. Simpson—"God! that such things should be! Have you a home?" he asked—"Where can we take you?"

"I've no home," replied she—"I've no roof to shelter myself, nor my child, nor a bit of bread to give her!"

"Where can we take her?" said Mr. Simpson, abruptly. "She should go home with me, but I have no woman in the house—it's so late that no respectable place will be open—besides, unless they know us, they will object to let her in. I don't like to take her to the watch-house."

"She shall go home with me, Sir," said Mr. Wetherall, carried away by his own good-nature, and the benevolence of the stranger. "I can give her shelter for to-night, at least."

"God will reward you for it," returned Mr Simpson—"after to-night she shall be no bur-

den to you—I'll take her off your hands to-morrow. But I don't think she can walk—we must look for a coach."

This they had no great difficulty in finding and handing her into it, Mr. Simpson still keeping the child in his arms, they proceeded to Wood Street; whilst Mr. Wetherall was so bewildered, and the current of his ideas so changed, that he almost forgot his own misfortunes and the dread he had entertained of meeting his family. Besides, the presenting himself accompanied by the two strangers under circumstances that would necessarily turn attention from himself, was very different to going home alone to be the subject of scrutiny and wonder.

The moment the coach stopped at the door, Mrs. Wetherall, Mr. Lyon, and Susan, rushed into the passage—the first expecting to see him brought home ill—the two last expecting something much worse.

"My dear Wetherall, how you have frightened us!" cried his wife. "Mr. Lyon was just going off to the office in search of you."

"Never mind me!" answered Mr. Wetherall, "but see what you can do for this poor woman."

"Whose life your husband has been for-

fortunate enough to save, with that of her child," said Mr. Simpson, carrying the little girl into the parlour, where the mother was laid on a sofa by the fire, whilst the worthy clerk began rubbing the child's hands and feet, which were numbed by cold and starvation; and when in a few minutes, by the active kindness of Mrs. Wetherall and Susan, food was placed on the table, he fed her like a young bird, bit by bit, lest the too hasty indulgence of her eager appetite should injure her.

In the mean time the circumstances under which the party had met were narrated—and Mrs. Wetherall was loud in her wonder as to what could have taken her husband to Blackfriars Bridge at that time of night—"he that always comes home the moment he is released from the post-office! I dare say he never did such a thing in his life before. Did you Wetherall?"

"I believe not," replied he. "But there were a great many letters to sort to-night; and I came away with such a headache, that I thought a walk would do me good."

"Do you belong to the post-office, Sir?" inquired Mr. Simpson.

"I do," replied Mr. Wetherall, casting down

his eyes, for he said to himself, "you'll learn that soon from other channels."

"Well," said Mr. Simpson, "that is very singular! I have been all this day wishing I knew somebody connected with the post-office, whom I might consult confidentially about an awkward circumstance that has occurred—but it's a matter I shall not trouble you with to-night. To-morrow, if you will allow me, I shall take the liberty of calling, to make some arrangement for this poor woman and her child; and then we can talk it over at our leisure."

"But Wetherall is out all day," said the wife.

"I feel so unwell that I think I shall not be able to go to the office to-morrow," said Mr. Wetherall—for he felt in the first place that he could never go voluntarily to the office again; and in the second place, he couldn't help feeling some curiosity to hear Mr. Simpson's communication.

Soon after this the worthy clerk took his leave; and the poor woman and her child were conducted to a comfortable bed that Susan had prepared for them.

"You don't remember me, Ma'am?" said Susan to the stranger, after Mrs. Wetherall had left the room.

“No,” replied the other.

“I have good reason never to forget you, Ma’am,” returned Susan; “for you gave me food and shelter when I needed it as much as you did to-night.”

“Oh, no!” replied Julia, “for you had no child! ah, I remember you now,” said she; “and I remember your words, too, when you refused the five shillings. I had never known the agony then of seeing Julia want bread.”

“I went to Oxford Street, Ma’am, to inquire for you the first moment I could, but you had left the lodging, and I couldn’t learn where you were gone,” answered Susan. “But I won’t talk more to you to-night. Please to stay in bed till I come to you in the morning, and bring you some breakfast.—Please God, your worst days are over; for I think that gentleman, by his looks, means to be a friend to you.”

During the progress of all this bustle and interest, Mr. Wetherall had scarcely leisure to remember that he was a criminal with the sword of the law suspended over him; and that probably after the post came in on the following morning, he should be torn from his home, and dragged away to a prison; but as soon as he lay down in his bed, and the world was quiet around him, whilst

his wife slept the calm sleep of innocence, he, with burning hands and throbbing brow, was tossing from side to side in all the agonies of terror and remorse. How few people, if they had sufficient acquaintance with the nature of the human mind to calculate the sufferings consequent on crime, would ever commit it! and how necessary it must be to educate them into this acquaintance, and to dissipate the ignorance that veils the future from their view!

Now, that the excitement was over, he looked back with regret at the interruption his design had met with—a moment more and all would have been over, and he at rest. The struggle was past, his mind was made up—in short, the worst part of the desperate enterprise was overcome; but it was not easy to work his resolution up to the same point—his sufferings returned on him with two-fold force, but he had lost the energy necessary to fly from them. In vain, he painted to himself the horrors of being seized—the arrival of the police officers—the tears of his wife—the wonder of his neighbours—the ill-natured triumph of the discontented butcher, baker, and publican, as he was carried past their doors—the imprisonment—the trial—the execution. In vain, he asked himself why it was too late to escape it all still by the very means

he had intended—the river still awaited him ; his wife slept soundly, and would never miss him from her side—but the rain was pattering against the windows, and the wind blew—and it is altogether a different thing to rise deliberately from a warm bed to jump into the water from the parapet of a bridge, to performing the same feat on the spur of a sudden resolution and in the fever of excitement.

In this way like one of Dante's wretched souls on the burning lake, he tossed and turned till morning dawned, then came brief and uneasy slumbers, filled with confused and dreadful visions dimly figuring forth the fate that awaited him, till he opened his eyes and found that it was broad day, that his wife had already risen, and that he was now irretrievably tied to the stake, the hour for escape being past. "Ere this," thought he, "the morning mails are in—and they'll soon be here." And at every knock and ring, and at every foot on the stairs, his heart sunk within him. His wife brought him some breakfast, and told him she had requested Mr. Lyon to call at the office when he went to rehearsal, and say he was ill ; and willingly Mr. Lyon undertook the commission ; for he thought no place so safe for Mr.

Wetherall as his bed, where he could not betray himself, until he had an opportunity of speaking to him in private on the subject of the ten pounds; a thing he had neither had the means of accomplishing, nor the resolution to attempt.

But time crept on—the hour for the arrival of the mails passed—and an interval sufficient to admit of the *éclaircissement* at the office, and the police being sent in pursuit of him, elapsed also. The letter then could not have reached the post-master, and there was another day left at his disposal; and perhaps another night; and then he might yet execute his first intention, and leave his shame and his sorrows behind him.

Under these circumstances, towards the middle of the day he ventured to rise and come down stairs, and he had not been long in the parlour, when his wife, who was standing at the window, announced the approach of Mr. Simpson.

With a cordial and friendly salutation the good man entered, and was pleased to learn that his protégées of the night before were still in bed, which Mrs. Wetherall thought the best place for them, at present, “for,” said she, “although I have made no inquiries about her history yet, I am sure the poor things have been

for many days exposed to cold and want; and that a good warm clean bed must be the greatest luxury they can enjoy."

"I love and honour you for your goodness, Madam," said Mr. Simpson. "How few of your sex there are, especially of the young and handsome members of it, (and here by a bow he appropriated the compliment to Mrs. Wetherall,) would have admitted this poor creature under their roof and given her a night's lodging, until they had ascertained the cause of her destitution, and whether her child was born in lawful wedlock. But you opened your doors and administered food and shelter to the wretched, without demanding that poverty should be perfect, or human frailty, exposed to temptations that the prosperous never know, exempt from error. Yours, Madam, is real charity, and I feel honoured in having made your acquaintance. With respect to this poor creature, as you think she is not yet fit to be moved, and are willing to give her another night's shelter, I'll not disturb her to-day; and perhaps by to-morrow you may have learned something of her history, and in what manner I can best serve her. That she is not altogether blameless, is extremely probable; but young, and pretty, as amidst all her wretch-

edness she is, I am inclined to think she need not have been reduced to the extremity in which we found her, if there had not been some virtue left in her; and her devotion to her child, to my mind, speaks volumes in her favour."

After this matter had been sufficiently discussed, Mr. Simpson turning to Mr. Wetherall, reminded him that he wanted to speak a few words with him in private; upon which hint the lady having retired, he drew his chair closer to his host, and having given three taps on the lid of his gold snuff box, and refreshed his nose with an ample supply from its contents, he drew a letter from his pocket, and opened the business as follows.

"The affair that I want to consult you about is one of a very delicate nature; and I must premise, before I begin, that the communication I am about to make, must be upon honour, strictly private between us. It is not that I have so bad an opinion of human nature—and still less of yours, of whose character as well as that of your amiable wife, I have formed the most favourable opinion—as to suspect mankind of wishing to injure and expose each other gratuitously; but there are contending interests and enmities, and Heaven knows what, in the world,

that one must guard against; especially where the reputation, and probably the life of a fellow creature are at stake. The fact is," continued he, unfolding the letter he held in his hand, "there has been something wrong about a letter—a money letter, sent from the country by a worthy friend of mine—at least, he was the esteemed servant of a very dear friend who is unfortunately dead—and he has written to me to request I will go to the post-office, and inquire into the business. The letter came from a place called Mapleton, and contained ten pounds; and it was addressed to a woman in Parliament Street. My friend Jeremy says, that he has no suspicion of the people at the country post-office, and that he put the letter in himself. He therefore feels assured that the delinquent is to be looked for in London; either at the office, or amongst the men that deliver the letters. Now, Sir, no man respects the laws more than I do; and I am aware of the great importance in a commercial country of viewing breach of confidence as a capital crime. Still, I confess, I am one of those who think we are apt to make too free with human life—very young men are sometimes placed in situations of great temptation—a single error, and perhaps the hope of a family—the only son of a widowed mother—a kind brother,

or a beloved husband, perishes on the scaffold. I know the laws cannot afford to make these distinctions, nor descend to the detail of private suffering; but, as an individual, before I have recourse to the law, I think it my duty to weigh all these considerations.—I don't know, Sir, how far your views on the subject may accord with mine—” here Mr. Simpson, who had been hitherto bending forward, with his eyes directed to the letter in his hand, raised them to Mr. Wetherall's face. What he saw there, it would be vain to attempt to describe. . . . Whatever it was, it occasioned him, for a moment to draw himself up erect—*se redresser*, as the French would say—and then to stoop forward again and bend his eyes on the letter more perseveringly than before—“What I mean to say, Sir, is,” continued he, “that I—I—should be sorry—I wouldn't for the world be the occasion of—of any thing—” and he stammered, and got red in the face, and finally broke down in his oration altogether; whilst the unfortunate culprit before him laid his head upon the table and wept like a child.

Mr. Simpson arose and walked to the window—took out his handkerchief and blew his nose—and cleared his throat—and wiped away the

tears that were gathering in his eyes. At that moment there came a loud double knock at the street door—Mr. Wetherall started from his seat, rushed to the door of the room and turned the key, and then trembling like a leaf in the autumn blast, he sank pale and breathless on a chair.

“It is only some women—visitors to your wife,” said Mr. Simpson, interpreting his fear aright. It proved so, and Mrs. Wetherall being denied, they went away; but this little shock had broken the ice. Mr. Simpson turned round, and advancing to Mr. Wetherall, held out his hand, saying—“Come, Sir, let us talk over this matter coolly;” and leading him back to his former seat, took one beside him—“Perhaps,” said he, “you have some interest in the person who has been guilty of this breach of trust?”

But Mr. Wetherall was not a person to have recourse to a subterfuge on such an occasion. He understood the man he had to deal with; and he now opened his bosom, and poured out the whole truth, as he might have done to an earthly father; or to his Father in heaven; and never was confidence better placed. “It was my first and my last crime,” said he. “An

urgent necessity, a pressing occasion for a few pounds, made me do it—but I have never known a moment's peace since. So confused, indeed, was I at the time, that it appears I didn't even destroy the letter; and it was found and recognised by our servant, who, strangely enough, happens to be acquainted with the woman in Parliament Street to whom it was addressed. I am afraid, therefore, I am not yet even safe, in spite of your kindness and indulgence; for they will naturally speak of the circumstance, and endeavour to recover the money; and, God knows, I have not ten pounds in the world to replace it. In short, to confess the truth, such has been my imprudence, that I am in hourly dread of being arrested; in which case, whether the letter business is discovered or not, I shall probably lose my situation."

"How much do you owe?" inquired Mr. Simpson.

"I'm afraid, almost two hundred pounds," replied the other.

"Well, Sir," said Mr. Simpson, "you shall not lose your situation for two hundred pounds. For your wife's sake, as well as your own, I'll lend you the money. You can pay me by quar-

terly instalments ; and the habits of economy that this will require, will be beneficial in their effects, and bring you round to a more prudent way of living. With respect to this woman, your servant, if you'll give me leave, I'll speak a few words to her in private, and find out how she's to be dealt with."

With a heart glowing with gratitude, and lightened of a load of care, Mr. Wetherall thanked his benefactor, and retired to send up Susan to the conference.

Poor Susan entered the room with a very nervous feeling. She judged from Mr. Wetherall's disturbed countenance and agitated manner, that she was going to be interrogated about the letter, and with what intention she could not tell. Mr. Simpson, for any thing she knew, might belong to the post-office, and her testimony might be of the most fatal importance to her master ; and poor as she was she would not have been instrumental in bringing him into trouble, for a hundred times the sum she had lost.

"Come this way," said Mr. Simpson, beckoning her to advance, when she had closed the door. "You have a friend called Dobbs, I believe, who lives in Parliament Street?"

"Yes, I have, Sir," replied Susan.

"I understand there has been some mistake about a letter addressed to her?"

"Has there, Sir?" said she.

"So I understood," returned Mr. Simpson. "I thought you were aware of it?"

"No, Sir," answered Susan.

"Come a little nearer," said he. "Are you not aware that a letter, containing a ten pound note, which was sent to this Mrs. Dobbs, is missing?"

"No, Sir," persisted Susan, turning at the same time very pale.

"Excellent girl!" said Mr. Simpson to himself. "Then I am to understand," continued he, "that you know nothing at all of the affair in question?"

"Nothing in the world, Sir," answered she, growing still paler than before.

"But your friend does, I suppose? This Mrs. Dobbs, I dare say, knows all about it?" said Mr. Simpson.

"I don't think she knows more about it than I do," replied Susan.

"Do you mean to say that you don't think she could give me any information on the subject?"

"I'm sure she couldn't, Sir," answered Susan.
"Then it would be useless for me to question her about it?"

"Quite useless, Sir," returned she.

"Well," said Mr. Simpson, nodding his head and smiling, "of course if any body has lost any money it will be repaid. How long have you lived here?"

"About nine months, Sir," said she.

"You appear to me a sensible, good-hearted girl," said he; "my name is John Simpson, and I'm a wine merchant, in Mark Lane."

"Are you, Sir?" said Susan, thrown off her guard, for she recognised immediately who she was speaking to.

"Yes," returned he. "Why are you surprised at that?"

"I thought I'd heard the name before; that's all, Sir," replied she; for she apprehended that the acknowledgment of who she was would not recommend her to the favour of her new acquaintance. "Then you don't belong to the post-office, Sir?"

"No," returned Mr. Simpson. "What, you thought I did?"

"I didn't know but you might, Sir," answered she, casting down her eyes and blushing.

“No,” replied he—“I’m a friend of your master’s. But what I was about to say is, that my name is John Simpson, and that if I can ever be of any service to you, you may apply to me. I’ve taken a liking to you.”

“Thank you, Sir,” answered Susan, curtseying as she left the room; “Ah!” thought she, “I should soon lose his favour if he but heard my name.”

“I can never be grateful enough for your goodness, Sir,” said Mr. Wetherall, when he learned the result of this interview; “and I think, considering my obligations, it would be wrong of me to conceal from you, that the same motive that took the poor woman, above stairs, to the bridge, took me there also.”

“Merciful Heavens!” exclaimed Mr. Simpson—“then my opportune midnight walk has been the means of saving three lives!”

Little did he or Mr. Wetherall imagine that Mr. Simpson’s effort to save the life of another, had been the means, under Heaven, of saving his own.

CHAPTER XV.

MARRIED LIFE AT OAKFIELD—HARRY LEESON QUITS IT
TO SEEK FORTUNE ELSEWHERE.

WHEN Mrs. Gaveston arrived at the age of twenty-one, she was not unmindful of the resolution she had avowed at the period of her father's death, when it was discovered that he had left no will, namely, to execute a deed in favour of Harry, as soon as she had the power, which should place him with respect to the property, precisely in the situation he would have held had the will been forthcoming; for she had been fully aware of her father's intentions towards him, and the whole affair had been arranged with her entire concurrence.

Previous to her marriage she had made known her determination to Mr. Gaveston, who appeared perfectly to coincide in her views; and whenever she had occasionally

adverted to it since, as he raised no objections, she interpreted his silence into acquiescence. Now, however, the time was arrived for fulfilling her intentions, and she opened the business to her husband, one morning at breakfast, by observing that Harry would shortly be home for the summer vacation.

“What do you mean to do with that boy, Mrs. Gaveston?” inquired her husband. “He’s now nearly fifteen, and it’s high time he was put to something.”

“That depends on what profession he selects, I suppose,” replied the wife. “If he fixes on medicine, or the church, or the bar, he should go to college first, shouldn’t he?”

“Nonsense!” answered Mr. Gaveston, “what should a chap like that do at college, that hasn’t a rap in the world?”

“He’d stand in the greater need of a good education if that were the case,” returned Fanny. “But I should be very sorry to think that was Harry’s predicament. You know, Walter, I am now of age; and it has always been understood between us that when that time arrived, Harry should be compensated for the loss he sustained by my father’s having left no will.”

"Nonsense! Fanny," replied the husband. "How can you be so absurd? You don't imagine I'm going to give away ten thousand pounds to a fellow that's neither kith nor kin to me!"

"But he's both to me, Walter," said Mrs. Gaveston. "I love Harry as if he were my brother. Besides I never could feel happy were I to neglect the fulfilment of my dear father's intentions."

"There is nothing so absurd, Mrs. Gaveston," returned the husband, "as arguing a point on which one's mind is perfectly made up. Now, I repeat, that I have not the slightest idea of doing what you propose. Therefore we may as well drop the subject."

"You never made any objections before," replied Fanny. "I'm sure, I have named it to you twenty times, and you always appeared to acquiesce."

"Because I expected you'd grow out of your folly, and that opposition would be unnecessary," answered he.

"I shall never outgrow the folly of being just," replied Fanny.

Here Mr. Gaveston took up the newspaper which he had laid down when his wife com-

menced the conversation, and applied himself to its perusal with an air of perseverance denoting that he did not intend to argue the matter further.

“I hope you will not interfere to prevent my doing that which I consider so,” continued Fanny. But Mr. Gaveston remained silent. “An act,” she added, “which is necessary to my peace of mind. I have had sorrows enough, Walter; don’t add another to the catalogue.”

“If you choose to coin sorrows out of every opposition to your will, I can’t help it,” said the husband. “When you are ten years older you’ll see the folly of what you want to do now, and thank me for preventing it.”

“That I assuredly shall not,” replied Fanny. “But I think it extremely improbable that I shall be in the world ten years hence, to entertain any opinion on the subject. As you well know my health has never recovered the shock it received at my poor father’s death, and—”

“I thought it was agreed, Mrs. Gaveston, that I was at last to have some respite from that eternal subject;” said the husband, throwing down the paper in an angry manner; and abruptly pushing his chair from the table, he began to stride up and down the room. “It’s the sauce

to my breakfast, dinner, and supper; and I'm sick of it."

"You wrong me very much," answered his wife. "Painful as silence very often is to myself, since you have forbidden the subject, I never introduce it, voluntarily—but in talking of such a business as this, it's scarcely possible to avoid it. However, consent to what I propose to do for Harry, and I'll give you my word, Walter, I'll never mention it again in your presence."

"But you'll mention it behind my back, and complain that I don't allow you liberty of speech, I suppose," said he.

"I am sorry you have no better opinion of my taste than you have of my prudence," replied Fanny. "Whatever causes of complaint I might have, I hope I shall not forget myself so far as to entertain my friends with them. However, I will neither mention the subject before your face, nor behind your back, if you will comply with my request in this one instance."

"As I said before," replied Mr. Gaveston, "there is no object to be gained by arguing a point on which one's mind is perfectly decided. If you are willing to have the boy put to some decent trade, I'll go so far as to pay the fee of

his apprenticeship ; but as for bringing up a beggar's brat like that to be a gentleman, or giving him ten thousand pounds to make him one, I'll not do it ; and as you have now my definite answer, I beg I may never hear any more on the subject," and banging the door after him he quitted the room.

As the door closed upon him Mrs. Gaveston clasped her hands, and ejaculated, "Oh, my father!" and then she relieved her heart for some minutes, by showers of bitter tears. After this having composed herself as well as she could, she retired to her room, and wrote a letter to her father's solicitor, Mr. Olliphant ; informing him, that it had always been her intention to provide handsomely for her cousin Harry Leeson ; and now she was of age, it was her desire to do so still. That she had reason to apprehend Mr. Gaveston did not acquiesce in her views ; but she could not feel that his dissent released her from her promise, and an obligation voluntarily assumed ; and she therefore begged that he would take the earliest opportunity of letting her know what was in her power, &c. But, greatly to her disappointment, she had received no answer to this letter, when the period of Harry's vacation arrived.

As the academy was not far distant, Mr. Jeremy, who was sent to fetch him, took Harry's pony with him, that the boy might ride home ; and as they jogged on together towards Oakfield, the worthy butler told him what he called "a piece of his mind."

"Now, master Harry," said he, "you're grown up to a fine young gentleman, and it's time you learnt a little of what's what, and who's who, and how you are yourself situated with regard to these people."

"What people?" said Harry.

"A certain person," replied Mr. Jeremy. "There's some people, that, like the devil, one ar'n't over fond of calling by their names, lest one should see them looking over one's shoulder—but it's my master I mean—that ever I should live to call him so !—but I shan't call him so much longer ; and would not now but for Miss Fanny's sake."

"She's not Miss Fanny now," replied Harry. "I wish she was."

"You may say that, master Harry," replied Jeremy, "and nobody with more reason ; and that just brings me to what I wanted to say. As I observed just now, you're grown up a young gentleman by this time, and old enough

to understand something of human natur, and that sort of thing—not that I think the person we're speaking of has much of that sort of natur in him, but such as he has, you must learn as well as you can to abide by it, and make the best of it, for your own sake, and for the sake of Miss Fanny—for as for calling her by any other name it's a thing I can't do."

"But what has he to do with me?" asked Harry, "I'm not obliged to care for him."

"I wish you wasn't," returned Jeremy, "but he'll find the way to make you care, or I'm much mistaken—which is a thing I never was yet in man or woman. You see, Sir, if your uncle had lived the time that God Almighty intended he should, he'd have provided for you handsomely, I've no doubt; but them as curtailed his life, curtailed your fortin, and that being the case, you must cut your coat according to your cloth."

"But the money's all Fanny's, is not it?" said Harry.

"Not a bawbee of it," replied Mr. Jeremy; "and that's the reason I want to give you a bit of a caution. If the money belonged to Miss Fanny, as it should have done, you might have snapt your fingers at a person that shall be

nameless, for it's little you have to thank him for ; but things being as they are, he can make you or mar you, just as the fit takes him ; and the bit of advice I want to give you is this, just to keep in with him, and put up as well as you can with his figaries, and his insolence, and what not, till you've got settled in the world in some way to do for yourself—and then you may pitch him to old Nick for what I care, which according to my private opinion is the place he com'd from."

"Does he behave ill to Fanny?" inquired Harry.

"Does he!" ejaculated Mr. Jeremy. "If you'd been home this last vacation you wouldn't need to ask that. He soon showed his cloven foot, when the parson had joined them together for better and worse. Lord love you! he's worse to live with than a Turk, or a Jew, or a heretic!"

"Is he?" exclaimed Harry, alarmed by the force of Mr. Jeremy's imagery.

"Her eyes that was as bright as diamonds, are dim with tears," said the butler, brushing a drop from his own eye with the cuff of his coat, "and the roses in her cheeks, that her father was so proud of's all washed out on'em."

“Poor dear Fanny!” said Harry.

“He’s no more heart than a flint,” continued Mr. Jeremy, whose indignation made him eloquent; “and a tiger’s whelp has more good-nature in his jawtooth than he has in his whole composition! so Master Harry, mind your p’s and q’s till you can snap your fingers at him, that’s all I want to say.”

Jeremy’s advice was excellent, but unfortunately not easily to be followed by a boy of fifteen, who had more spirit than prudence; and indeed it would have required a very considerable allowance of the latter quality to endure with patience Gaveston’s tyranny and insolence to himself, and his hard and arbitrary behaviour towards Fanny. But as it is quite certain that the most forbearing demeanour Harry could have assumed would have been utterly unavailing towards placating Gaveston, whose hatred to him was ingrained, his failure made no great difference in the ultimate result.

As Mrs. Gaveston still hoped to find the means of providing for him, or at least of setting him well afloat in some profession, she took an opportunity of privately consulting him as to which he would select; and he told her that as his papa had been a soldier, he should like, if she

had no objection, to be one, too; and Fanny acquiesced willingly in his choice. It obviated the necessity of his going to college, which she much feared she might not be able to accomplish; and would remove him very much from Gaveston's path, which, greatly as she grieved herself to part with him, she saw was necessary for all parties.

One day at dinner, shortly after this decision, the conversation happening to turn on the army, Harry said that he hoped he should be a captain as young as his papa had been, for that it was when he was only nineteen, "and as I am only fifteen now," he added, "if I get my commission soon, perhaps I may."

"I hope you will, Harry," said Mrs. Gaveston. "I should like to see you with an epaulet on your shoulder."

"How can you fill that chap's head with such absurd notions, Mrs. Gaveston?" asked her husband. "How's he to get a commission?"

"By purchasing it, I suppose," replied Fanny; "I fear there's not much chance of getting one without."

"About as much chance as there is of getting one with, I fancy," returned Gaveston. "But it's really high time this sort of nonsense was

put an end to, and that the boy was made to understand his real situation, which you take as much pains to blink from him as if you could prevent his learning it at last."

"I know I have no money," said Harry, blushing crimson. "There's no need to tell me that."

"And, pray, who do you expect will give you a commission, then?" said Gaveston.

Harry looked down upon his plate, and the tears swam in his eyes, for he did not like to say he expected Fanny would, lest he should turn the tempest upon her; whilst her face reflected all the poor boy's feelings; and as for Mr. Jeremy, who was standing behind her chair, he grasped the back of it, and clenched his teeth, to keep down the indignation he durst not give vent to.

"He expects I will," returned Fanny; "and with the best reason."

"Then the sooner he is undeceived the better," replied Gaveston, coldly. "What I am willing to do for him, and even that he has no right to expect, I have told you already; and if you did what's right by the boy, you would have endeavoured to open his eyes to the realities of life, instead of filling his head with these ro-

mantic and extravagant notions, which must end in disappointment. If he chooses to be put to some decent trade—a boot and shoemaker, for example—there’s Wilcox that I deal with, I have no doubt would take him for a small sum—indeed, when I hinted the thing to him, he said he would, to oblige me—if you, young Sir, can make up your mind to exchange the gold epaulet you’ve been dreaming about for a leathern apron, and the sword for an awl, I’ll pay the fee of your apprenticeship. If you don’t, you must shift for yourself as you can.”

“Then I will shift for myself, Sir,” said Harry, rising from the table, and with a bursting heart he quitted the room.

“Oh, Walter!” said Mrs. Gaveston, “if you knew how I love that boy!” and she covered her face with her hands, to hide the tears that were streaming down her cheeks; whilst poor Jeremy, unable any longer to control his feelings, caught up a plate and disappeared.

From that moment Harry’s mind was made up. He felt assured that Gaveston would keep his word where the thing promised was to make other people unhappy; and he felt moreover, young as he was, that after the insults he had received he never could condescend to eat the

bread that that man's purse had provided. "No," said he, "I'll keep my hands free, that by and by, when he has broken poor Fanny's heart, as I am sure he will do, I may challenge him, and have a chance of punishing him for all his cruelty and his insults by blowing out his brains."

What Gaveston had said, had certainly the effect of opening the boy's eyes, as he called it, to his real situation. The darling of his mother, and then the darling of Mr. Wentworth and Fanny, poor Harry had never had occasion to learn what poverty and dependence were; but the lesson was instilled into him now with all its bitterness. He saw that his cousin had no power to protect nor to assist him; and that his presence was only aggravating the misery of her situation in every way. He comprehended what she suffered when she saw him oppressed and insulted; he found that instead of being a comfort to her, he was only an everlasting source of irritation to Gaveston, and of dissension betwixt her and her husband.

It was not without many and bitter tears that poor Harry came to the resolution of leaving Oakfield, and throwing himself upon the world—dear Oakfield, where he had been so happy, and

so beloved ; and that he had felt to be as much his home, as if it had been the house of his father. He thought, too, of that noble and brave father, whom he well remembered ; and of his sweet mother, and his kind good uncle—even Dobbs, and Andrew, and Susan—the memory of all that had ever loved him, rushed upon his heart and swelled it almost to bursting.

But it was time to think of the future—that future which is the legitimate inheritance of youth, the field of their enterprise, the arena of their glory, of which it is so cruel to rob them by substituting stern realities for vivid hopes, and mournful truths for bright delusions.

There was but one plan he could think of, and that was to go to London. He had been there once with his uncle, and had seen the morning parade of the guards at St. James's ; and it occurred to him that if he went there, he might possibly contrive to make the king acquainted with his situation, and that his papa had been a brave officer, who had fought many battles, and had died in his majesty's service. Then thought Harry, " he couldn't do less than give me a commission." *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*—having accomplished this step, the rest followed naturally ; his promotion

would be rapid, his feats of bravery remarkable—they would inevitably reach his majesty's ears, and when he was summoned down to tea he had just been commanded by the king to rise Sir Harry Leeson.

Engrossed by these visions, Harry felt himself at that moment quite independent of Gaveston and his insolence. He reckoned confidently on the day coming when he would be his superior, and be able to render back scorn for scorn, and insult for insult. Instead therefore of presenting himself in the drawing-room with the subdued and mortified air that Fanny had expected, he entered it with a bright countenance and an erect bearing. She was relieved, attributing it to the natural elasticity of youthful spirits that *would* rise again, and fling off sorrow; and she was particularly glad, because in the interval between dinner and tea, two visitors had arrived whom she intended to take an opportunity of privately consulting about Harry and his fortunes. These were Mr. Olliphant, the lawyer she had written to on the subject, and Mr. Simpson her father's old clerk, now a joint partner in the concern; she was anxious that they should form a favourable opinion of the boy, and it so happened that

he never appeared to greater advantage. The laurel wreath he had so lately won was still upon his brow, his satisfaction at his majesty's gracious reception was still dancing in his eyes; and the glory of his martial deeds, and the pride of his well-earned honours pervaded his whole person, tinging his smooth cheek with a bright carmine, and lending firmness and dignity to his carriage.

"How can any one dislike that boy?" was the question that occurred to three of the party as he entered the drawing-room; as for the fourth, Mr. Gaveston, who had expected to meet him with a very different aspect, something like a glimmering of the truth suggested itself to him as the cause of the change.

"He has got some project in his head that's to make his fortune," thought he. "He has found some fool's ladder by which he expects to mount to wealth and fame in a trice; and he'll be cutting his stick and away, some fine morning, to seek them."

Harry had no intention of keeping him long in suspense for the dénouement. On many accounts he felt that if his project was ever to be executed at all, it could not be commenced too soon. He had read in the

paper only that very morning, that the king, who had been staying at Weymouth, had returned to London, where he was to remain a fortnight, previous to going somewhere else. Thus there was no time to lose. Besides, the weather was beautiful, the nights clear, and the moon at the full. Then his pride spurred him on to the enterprise, and urged him away; and his fears were not much less active. He could not tell the moment that Gaveston would carry him off against his will, and consign him to some odious master, from whom it might be no easy matter to escape; and the very idea of finding himself in his enemy's power, away from Fanny or any body that had an interest in him, was terrific. He saw clearly that, for some reason or other, he was the object of his intense hatred, and a secret instinct told him that Gaveston's hatred was not to be despised. Since he had been older and more capable of reflection and observation, some vague suspicions had arisen in his mind about the fall in the pond, and other accidents that he had been exposed to when in his company. The notions had first found their way into his head through some words dropped by Andrew and Jeremy; and now that the

antipathy was so evident and so active, and that there was no one to stand between him and it, he shrunk instinctively from the idea of finding himself at his mercy.

The evening passed in general conversation, in which Harry, when the strangers addressed him, freely took his part; and many were the approving glances that passed between them at the answers and remarks he made. As the visitors had not arrived till after dinner, there was a supper, which Harry thought by no means inopportune. He could not tell when he might meet with another good meal; and as he had fared ill at the last repast, he determined to fortify himself for his journey by making himself amends now.

His pride and his hopes kept up his spirits through the whole evening, till the moment came that he was to take leave of Fanny. Then, the feeling that it was his last good night, his last kiss to her that he loved so much, and who so warmly returned his affection, almost overthrew his resolution. He left her too so unhappy; subject to all the humours and tyranny of her odious husband. "But my staying cannot mend that," he said to himself—"I only make it worse; and if I

can succeed in my project, and once write to her that I am comfortably provided for, I'm sure she'll be much happier than in seeing me the victim of ill treatment she can't prevent."

Soon after the supper was removed, Fanny rose to retire; and he rose too. Gaveston took no notice of him, but the visitors shook hands with him kindly; and then he followed Fanny out of the room. They ascended the stairs together, and when they reached his room door, he threw his arms round her neck and said, "God bless you, dear Fanny!" She thought his flushed cheek and unusual energy arose merely from the events of the day, and she returned his embrace with equal ardour. She longed to tell him that she hoped the visit of the two gentlemen below would result in some satisfactory arrangement for him, and if he had appeared depressed, she would have risked doing so to raise his spirits; but as it was, afraid of awakening hopes she might not be able to fulfil, she thought it better to wait till she had had some communication with her father's friends in the morning.

When Harry had shut himself in his room,

the tears he had suppressed in Fanny's presence burst forth, and for some minutes the pang of parting with her seemed greater than he was able to encounter. Then once more he invoked the memory of all those who had loved him—his brave papa, his dear beautiful mamma, his kind indulgent uncle, his good and faithful servants. The grief of a young heart is so bitter whilst it lasts, that it's a blessed thing it seldom lasts long. When the paroxysm, whose violence soon exhausted itself, was abated, he arose from his knees—for in that attitude, with his face leaning on the side of his bed, he had wept his last farewell to Oakfield, and recommended himself, a friendless orphan as he was, to the care of his Father in heaven—took up his little bundle and softly descended the stairs. He knew that it would be much easier for him to get away unheard before the door was locked for the night, which in the summer was not done till Mr. Gaveston retired to his room; and he, with the two visitors, was yet at the supper table. So Harry gently opened the door, and stepped out upon the gravel walk that surrounded the house. Here he paused to take a last look at his once happy home, at the windows of the room that had been his uncle's, and at the light

that showed Fanny's shadow as she moved about in her apartment. "Farewell, dear Fanny!" he whispered, and was about to move away, when it occurred to him that he should have left a few lines to account for his disappearance, and relieve in some degree the grief and alarm he was sure his departure would occasion her. He did not dare return into the house lest he should meet Gaveston, and his journey be impeded; so with his pencil he wrote a few words on a scrap of paper he found in his pocket; and folding it so as to attract observation, he placed it on the ledge of the drawing-room window, and secured it with a stone from blowing away. Then without further pause or hesitation he walked briskly down the avenue; and climbing the park gate, which was already locked, he leaped into the high road.

When Mrs. Gaveston descended from her chamber in the morning to take her usual early walk, she found the two visitors already at the door, with their hats on. The moment was convenient for the consultation she desired, for she knew her husband was gone to take a survey of some land he was proposing to purchase, and would not return till breakfast-time. She, therefore, joined them; and opened the con-

ference by inquiring of Mr. Olliphant if he had received her letter.

“It is that letter that has occasioned our visit,” replied the lawyer. “We thought it was much better to see you than to write; and we should have been here before, but I was out of town when your letter arrived; and my clerk considered the business of too private a nature for him to interfere in.”

“Well,” said Fanny, “you have seen Harry—what do you think of him?”

“I never saw a finer lad,” returned the gentleman—“and it would be a thousand pities that his prospects were blighted for want of a little money,” added Mr. Simpson.

“Wouldn’t it?” said Fanny, “and that was why I wrote to you, Mr. Olliphant. Unfortunately, Mr. Gaveston does not see him with our eyes; but in a case like this, where I know I should have my dear father’s approbation, I shall venture to act for myself. What is there in my power that I can give to Harry?”

“Nothing,” replied the lawyer—“not a stiver.”

“Oh,” exclaimed Fanny, in the greatest alarm, “you don’t mean to say I can do nothing for him?”

“I do mean it, indeed,” said Mr. Olliphant. “You must remember that before your marriage, I pointed out to you the consequence of marrying without settlements, or any arrangement of your property.”

“I do recollect that when you were here immediately after my father’s death,” returned she, “that you said something about it—but I was in such a state of mind that I never thought of it again.”

“But when I understood you were about to be married, Mrs. Gaveston, I wrote to you on the subject,” said Mr. Olliphant.

“Then I never received your letter,” said she.

Mr. Simpson and the lawyer exchanged glances. “I said every thing I could on the subject,” continued Olliphant; “urged by my friendship for your father, and my regard for you. Besides I had heard you say you intended to provide for this boy, and I thought it right to tell you, that if you did not do it before your marriage, you could not do it after.”

“I assure you your letter never reached me,” repeated Fanny; “though, possibly, if it had I might still have trusted to being able to do it afterwards, with Mr. Gaveston’s consent; for I never expected he would oppose it. But you

distress me very much—what is to become of poor Harry?”

“Though you can do nothing, my dear lady,” said Mr. Olliphant, “here is somebody that’s willing to do a great deal, if it will contribute to your happiness,” and as he spoke he laid his hand on Mr. Simpson’s shoulder.

“Yes,” said Mr. Simpson, blowing his nose, and clearing his throat, for he felt something there that almost choked his voice, when he looked at the wan cheeks, and listened to the desponding tones of the once gay and blooming Fanny Wentworth, the child of the man he had loved so much. “Yes, my dear,” said he, “let no anxiety about your cousin Harry disturb your peace. Olliphant and I have foreseen this day, and have provided against it. I am aware that it was your father’s intention to give Harry Leeson half the business and ten thousand pounds. The ten thousand pounds he shall have when I die; and the half of the business is his already. I obtained it not for myself—my salary has always far exceeded my expenditure—but for him. Every thing I have in the world I owe to your father, and every thing I have shall go to his children.”

This was consolation indeed for Fanny; the

warm pressure of her hand, and the tears that swam in her eyes, touched the honest man more eloquently than words. "I'll run directly," said she, "and bring Harry that he may learn the good news, and thank you himself. I wonder he has not joined us before this; but, perhaps, he thinks we're talking of business. Harry, dear," said she, gently opening the door and peeping in—"Harry! what, are you not up yet?" for the curtains of his bed were still drawn—but as she received no answer, she stepped into the room. The bed had evidently not been slept in—she flew down stairs—"Who has seen Harry Leeson this morning?" No one. The truth flashed on her mind. "He's gone! He's gone!" she cried, rushing towards the portico.

"And here is his farewell," said Mr. Olliphant. "I was looking at the clematis by the drawing-room window, when this bit of paper caught my eye, and I took it up without reflection. It has evidently been placed there for you."

"Oh, how unfortunate!" exclaimed Fanny. "When he might have been so happy!"

"Never fear," said Mr. Olliphant. "We'll find him again. We'll publish a reward, and

put an advertisement in the papers inviting him to return ; and in the mean time, you had better send out some of your people on horseback to search the country for him."

"He's gone to Lunnun, as sure as my name's John Jeremy," said the butler—"all boys think they can make their fortin there."

The measures proposed were adopted, but without success. Harry Leeson was not to be found.

CHAPTER XVI.

JULIA BEGINS TO RELATE THE HISTORY OF HER PARENTS.

“I WILL tell you nothing but the truth,” said Julia, in answer to Mrs. Wetherall, who in compliance with Mr. Simpson’s directions, had requested her to communicate as much as she might think proper of her history, in order that he might the better know how to serve her, “but to enable you to comprehend my story, I must first give you some account of my parents.—I almost fear to begin,” she continued, after a short silence, and wiping away the tears that were gathering in her eyes—“you will repent of your charity, and of having sheltered such an one as I am under your roof.”

“Indeed, I shall not,” returned Mrs. Wetherall; “you have nothing to fear on that head,

either from me or my husband. And if you had things to tell me twenty times worse than I am sure you have, I should still have reason to bless the chance that brought you here;" for Mr. Wetherall, partly to relieve his own mind, and partly to engage his wife's co-operation in the plans of retrenchment that he projected immediately commencing, had, in the course of the evening after Mr. Simpson's visit, confessed to her his guilt, and acquainted her with his miraculous escape from detection, and with Mr. Simpson's generous offers of assistance. "I mean, because it has been the occasion of our knowing Mr. Simpson," she added, observing that Julia looked surprised, "who my husband says is one of the best of men, and has already done us a great service. So proceed, and tell me whatever you please without apprehension."

"My father," continued Julia, "was the only son of a tradesman, who aspired to bring him up to the Church, and with this view gave him the rudiments of an excellent education; but before this could be completed, or the young man ordained, misfortune, sickness, and death, overtook the parent, and the son was left alone in the world to shift for himself.

"It happened that my grandfather had an

acquaintance in the way of business at Nantes ; and this person, who came over occasionally to make purchases of English merchandise for his trade, had been commissioned by a brother-in-law of his, who kept an academy, to look out for some young man who would be willing to undertake the situation of English teacher in his establishment ; which was chiefly supported by the mercantile class, who having considerable intercourse with this country and America, made it a point that their sons should be taught the language.

“ On learning the death of his friend and the overthrow of my father’s prospects, this gentleman proposed the situation to him, and advised him to accept it ; which, after consulting the few friends he had on the subject, he finally did, and accompanying the stranger abroad, was installed at once in his office.

“ Here he remained for two years, with little to complain of, except that his salary was too low to allow him to lay by any thing for future contingencies ; but at the end of that period, the master of the establishment died, and poor Valentine, (that was my father’s christian name,) was thrown once more destitute, on the pity of the world. He had, however, by this time, so far

improved his acquaintance with the language, that he thought himself fully competent to undertake the office of French teacher in an English school; and he proposed to return to his own country with that view; but whilst his departure was delayed by the want of sufficient funds for the journey, a certain notary called Le Moine, a relation of one of his pupils, offered him employment. This gentleman, whose business lying amongst the merchants, frequently had deeds, agreements, and processes, brought before him where a knowledge of English was requisite, wanted a clerk who understood both languages; and engaged my father at a comfortable salary in that capacity. Here he was well treated, and might have lived very happily, but that one circumstance interfered with his tranquillity.

“Monsieur Le Moine had an only daughter, of whom he was extremely fond and proud, for whom he destined the little fortune he was acquiring by his professional labours, and whom he aspired to see well married. My father, however, had not been many months under Monsieur Le Moine’s roof, before he perceived that this young lady regarded him with a too favourable eye. Numerous were the excuses she made to visit the office to inquire for her father,

when she knew he was not there, to get a pen mended, or to ask for a sheet of paper ; and when Valentine was alone, she would linger on one pretence or another, drawing him into conversations and discussions, which she invariably contrived to turn on the subjects of love and marriage. However flattered the young man was by his conquest, as soon as he perceived her prepossession, he took every pains to avoid giving it encouragement, aware that it could only be to him a source of fresh misfortunes. He was quite certain that so far from consenting to his union with his daughter, the very first suspicion of her attachment would be the signal for his immediate dismissal from Monsieur Le Moine's service. He was by no means in a situation to take a portionless bride, had he even been so much in love as to contemplate marrying the young lady without her father's approbation ; added to which, the obligations he lay under to Monsieur Le Moine made him recoil from any such idea. It must also be admitted, that these good principles and prudential views were considerably fortified by an attachment he had formed for the youngest daughter of the lately deceased schoolmaster—an attachment which, though mutual, was

scarcely likely to terminate more happily than the others, both parties being penniless, and the young lady's surviving parent utterly averse to the connexion. The lovers, however, contrived occasionally to meet and walk together in the suburbs and remote parts of the town; and sometimes a little note or a confidential messenger would give Valentine a hint, that the mamma and sister were to be absent from home at a certain time, and that Ma'm'selle Aurore would be alone.

“The continued insensibility my father testified to the regard of the notary's daughter, together with some other circumstances, at length induced her to suspect that his heart was defended by a previous attachment; and being a girl of high spirit, and strong passions, her wounded pride and disappointed affection urged her to various stratagems to penetrate the secret; but as Valentine and his mistress were, from the necessity of their position, extremely cautious, her endeavours were for a long time fruitless. At length, however, accident seemed disposed to favour her curiosity. Monsieur Le Moine happening to be called to Paris on business, Julie was at liberty to indulge her inclination by spending more of her time than usual

in Valentine's company; and, one day, when on some pretext or another she was lounging in the office, a little *commissionnaire* entered, and gave the young clerk a note, on opening which she observed him to blush and look confused.

“ ‘Fort bien,’ said he to the messenger, whom he seemed anxious to get rid of—‘c’est assez—you may go;’ and, conscious of his own embarrassment, and that Julie’s eye was upon him, he threw the note with an air of affected indifference amongst other papers on the desk at which he was writing, intending the moment she left the room to destroy it. But she had seen enough in his manner to awaken her suspicions, and she resolved not to quit her ground till she had satisfied them: so drawing a chair to a part of the room where she had full view of Valentine and the papers, she took down a volume of the *Causes Célèbres*, that with other law books stood upon the shelves, and seating herself began to read, or at least to pretend to do so; her whole attention, in effect, being fixed on the young clerk and the note.

“In this way they had sat some time, he wishing her away, and she plotting how to get a sight of the billet, when a footman opened the door to say that Monsieur le Comte

d'Emerange was below in his carriage and begged to speak to Monsieur Le Moine or his clerk.

“There was no alternative—Valentine could do no otherwise than go on the instant; and he had neither courage nor presence of mind sufficient to destroy his note first, or to take it with him.

“No sooner had he closed the door, than like a hawk on her prey Julie darted on the paper, and with an eager eye devoured the following words :

“‘Come to me when your office closes—I shall be alone to-night, and to-morrow night; Aurore——.’

“When Valentine returned, he found Julie sitting exactly as he had left her—and as he took his seat at the desk, he glanced his eye over the papers, and saw the note lying just where he had thrown it. ‘I was mistaken,’ he said to himself, ‘she has no suspicion;’ and he took up his pen and continued his work, whilst she, shortly afterwards, with an air of perfect *insouciance*, left the room.

“It so happened, however, that on that particular evening Valentine was unable to avail himself of his mistress’s invitation, being under the necessity of preparing some papers of

importance for a cause that was to come on the next day. He therefore sent a note to her to that effect; at the same time, promising to be with her on the following evening.

“In the mean time Julie was eager with impatience for the moment that was to satisfy her suspicions, and would perhaps, moreover, afford her the means of revenging the mortification she had endured on her happier rival; for many indications led her to believe that the intercourse, of whatever nature it might be, was clandestine, and she did not despair of finding some way to break it off.

“When the usual hour for closing the office approached, she dressed herself in a black gown, shawl, and bonnet; and seating herself in an apartment, that with the door ajar, gave her an opportunity of seeing whoever went in or out of the house, she awaited Valentine’s movements. But the usual hour arrived, and passed, and Valentine still wrote on. The clock struck again and again, till at length she counted twelve. ‘He can’t mean to go,’ thought she, ‘or has he any suspicion I am watching him?’ and she arose softly and extinguished her light, that when Valentine opened the door he might have no reason to imagine

her up so much after her customary hour for retiring. It was some time past one, and Julie was beginning to think that she might as well go to bed, in reality, as it must be too late for any rendezvous that night; when she heard the door bell ring violently, and saw Valentine, a moment afterwards, on the summons being repeated, pass through the passage to answer it. Who the stranger was she could not see, nor could she distinctly hear what was said—but the voice was a man's, and she fancied she distinguished the words, 'Come, come quickly!' At all events, they were but few, whatever they might be—the interview was momentary—Valentine returned hastily into the office, snatched up his hat and cloak, and accompanied the stranger from the house.

“‘She has sent for him!’ exclaimed Julie, and furious with jealousy, she rushed out after them. The feeble light of the street lamps only just enabled her to discern two figures moving rapidly away, and she ran lightly on, till she was sufficiently near to be in no danger of losing sight of them, trusting to her black dress and soft step to protect her from observation. One walked rather in advance of the other, and as they were both about the same height,

and both wore dark cloaks, she could not distinguish which was Valentine and which the stranger—but she fancied Valentine was the last.

“On they went—so fast that it was not without considerable difficulty Julie succeeded in maintaining her distance—through street after street they hurried, till they reached the outskirts of the town, and there they stopped at a small villa, the door of which being ajar, they entered and disappeared.

“‘Here then she lives,’ thought Julie, as she drew near to survey the premises—‘the rest I shall easily discover—whether she be maid or wife; and she shall pay a heavier price for her pleasure than she dreams of! But now I must return, for Valentine will doubtless stay till morning, and I can’t remain here all night;’ and the excitement being somewhat abated, she began to contemplate with terror her lonely situation, the hour, and the distance she had to retrace.

“Just, however, as she was turning away, she was startled by the sound of a foot, and on looking round, she perceived one of the figures that had entered, come out again, close the door, and move rapidly back towards the town;

but whether it was Valentine, or the other, she could not discern.

“ ‘ At all events, I’ll keep near him,’ thought she. ‘ It will be a protection, whichever it is—besides, if it is Valentine, I may be returning with half my errand if I don’t trace him further.’ Whoever it was, he walked back even faster than he had come, and she was frequently obliged to run to keep him in view. He returned by the same way till he reached the heart of the town—he then turned down a narrow street—stopped at the door of a *cabaret*, where there was still a light glimmering through the windows, knocked with his knuckles against the door, which being presently opened, he entered, and she saw him no more. Whilst he was waiting to be admitted the town clocks struck three, and the commencement of a heavy shower of rain warned Julie to hasten away. ‘ That is not Valentine,’ said she to herself—‘ he has remained at the villa with his lady—this was but the messenger that was sent to fetch him,’ and she returned to her home, where Madeleine the maid-servant, whose services she secured by a few franks opportunely administered, let her in. She went to bed, possessed with rage and jealousy; and passed the sleepless hours

till morning, meditating plans of vengeance to be wreaked on her happy rival.

With the first dawn of light she arose. She felt an irresistible desire to return to the villa—to survey it by daylight—find out by whom it was inhabited, and perhaps detect Valentine in the very act of leaving it clandestinely. She dressed herself hastily, and having warned Madeleine not to be alarmed at her absence, she hurried along through the streets she had carefully marked the night before, and soon drew near the spot, where she did not doubt the man she loved was happy in the arms of her rival.

“The front of the house looked on the high road, the back into a garden; and on each side of the main door, there was a small door in the wall which led into it. One of these was locked, the other, which opened into a little alcove, was not; and she lifted the latch to take a peep at the garden, and to observe if there were any outlet on that side; but there was none. The garden was not large, but it was carefully cultivated, and surrounded by a wall of middling height. ‘He must then come out by the front,’ thought she; and she took up her position in the recess formed by the garden door that was locked, determined to await Valentine’s

appearance. She had not waited long when she heard the door of the house open, but instead of the person she expected to see, there came out, hastily, two women, apparently servants, who being neither young nor handsome, had not the air of rivals to be feared. Whoever they were, however, they set off with all the speed they could command towards the town, and were soon out of sight.

“They had not been gone long, when Julie’s attentive ears distinguished a sound that appeared like the opening of a window at the back of the house; and presently afterwards, the sound of feet on the other side of the door she was leaning against—the latch was lifted and an effort made to open it, which proving ineffectual the feet retreated. She expected to see the person, whoever it was, (and she had little doubt but it was Valentine,) emerge from the other door; but in this she was disappointed. The feet continued to retreat till the sound ceased altogether.

“If it were, as she suspected, Valentine taking his early departure, which way could he escape? She felt almost certain from the short survey she had made that there was no back door. ‘He has got out of the window, and will climb

over the wall :’ and as the idea rushed into her mind, she darted to the other door and opened it. There, sure enough, she saw what she was looking for. Valentine was at the top of the wall ; and before she could make a step towards him, he had leaped down on the other side. ‘ Perfidious traitor ! Barbarous villain !’ every epithet of abuse she could think of, was lavished on him at this confirmation of her suspicions ; forgetting, as ladies are apt to do on these occasions, that he had never made any vows to her. However, her objurgations were squandered on the vacant air. Valentine was beyond her reach, and she had only to debate whether she should return home the way she came, or remain where she was, till she had made some discovery with respect to the inmates of the house. After some deliberation, her desire to meet Valentine, to confront him, to hear what excuse he would make for staying out all night, determined her to the former measure, and she retraced her steps as fast as she could. When she reached home, he had not yet arrived ; but secure that she should see him ere long, she desired Madeleine to bring her a cup of coffee, and sat down at the window to watch his approach, and meditate her plans of vengeance. But hour after

hour passed, and no Valentine appeared; and to account for his absence, I must now relate his part in the adventures of the night.

“Anxious to finish the work he had in hand, he had sat up far beyond his usual hour, and was still diligently plying his pen through the concluding lines of the document he was preparing, when he was roused by the loud and hasty summons of the bell, which has already been alluded to. At first, imagining from the lateness of the hour, that it was either a mistake, or a piece of mischief of some wanderer of the night, he did not move; but a second peal, louder than the first, succeeding, he hastened to the door to inquire the cause of so unusual a disturbance.

“‘Is this the house of Monsieur Le Moine?’ eagerly asked a man who stood there, muffled in a blue mantle and a slouched hat.

“‘It is,’ replied Valentine.

“‘Then come quickly,’ cried the man, seizing his arm as he spoke—‘the patient is dying of a wound—there is no time to lose—bring with you what is needful; and in the name of God, make haste!’

“‘I’ll only fetch my hat and cloak,’ said Valentine, who concluded that the service re-

quired was to draw up some testamentary document of importance, and that as Monsieur Le Moine was absent he must supply his place as well as he could. Equipping himself, therefore, in haste, and thrusting a sheet of parchment in his pocket, without stopping to ask more questions, he set off after the stranger, who at a rapid pace conducted him to the house to which Julie had followed them, pushed open the door, and without even waiting to shut it, ascended the stairs by the light of a small lantern which he drew from under his cloak—unlocked a chamber door, made a sign to Valentine to enter, which he had no sooner done, than he instantly closed it upon him, saying, ‘You’ll see what’s necessary;’ and turning the key, was heard descending the stairs as fast as he had mounted them.

“Alarmed by so strange an adventure, and fearing he had been lured into a snare by a villain for some desperate purpose, he used every effort to open the door; but in vain. He then rushed to the window, threw it open, and called as loudly as he could for aid, but no sound answered his appeal.

“Whilst he was still looking out of the window, endeavouring to discover by the imperfect

light how he was situated and whether there was any chance of escape that way, by letting himself down to the ground, he fancied he heard a slight movement in the room behind him, and turning suddenly round to investigate the cause, he, to his horror, beheld, by the light of a night lamp that stood on the table, a ghastly figure of a man in a bloody shirt and night cap, peeping out between the curtains of the bed, who the moment Valentine's eye met his, let go the curtain and disappeared.

“Transfixed with fear and horror, the young man at first stood motionless, staring on the curtains, from between which he expected again to see the fearful apparition emerge ; but all remaining quiet, he presently ventured to cast his eyes round the room to ascertain if there were any one else in it besides himself and the figure he had seen ; but perceiving no one, he next summoned courage to advance towards the table, take up the lamp, and approach the bed.

“Valentine was young, and his situation was so extraordinary, that he may be excused for hesitating some time before he ventured to withdraw the curtain ; when, however, at length, he did so, there lay the person he had

seen, to all appearance, dead ; at least, he would not have doubted his being so, had he not given signs of life so lately. His eyes were closed, his mouth open, his face of a ghastly hue, and both the sheets and his own person smeared with blood.

“ ‘In the name of God, Sir,’ exclaimed Valentine, ‘what is the meaning of this, and for what purpose am I brought hither?’ but the man not only made no answer, but he showed no symptoms of hearing that, or any other question Valentine put to him ; and after contemplating the body for some time, he came to the conclusion, that the exertion the person, whoever he might be, had made, in rising to look through the curtains, had been a last effort of nature, and that he was now really gone.

“ But now again recurred the question, for what purpose had he been brought there to be shut up in a room with this dying stranger ? Where were the friends, where the attendants, that should have surrounded the bed ? The bed, too, of ease and affluence ; for there was nothing that indicated poverty or destitution. On the contrary, the house appeared a good one, and was situated in a respectable quarter ; and the fur-

niture of the apartment he was in, was not only handsome, but abundant. Had the occupant of the bed been murdered? But, no; it did not seem probable that, in that case, a notary of all persons should have been sent for, unless by the friends of the victim; and none such appeared; so that he rather concluded the stains about the linen proceeded from the patient's having been lately bled.

“Again he examined the room, the window, and the door; but without finding any means of escape. He remembered he had a clasp-knife in his pocket, and thought that by its assistance he might possibly pick the lock; but it broke in the attempt, so having tried all he could without success, he saw nothing left but patience, and resolved to compose his mind as well as he could, and sit down quietly to await the events of the morning.

“In spite of his unpleasant situation, he had not sat long, before he fell into a doze, from which he was aroused by what appeared to him some movement of the person in the bed. Hastily he started up, and seizing the lamp, drew aside the curtain—but all was still as before. Again, he spoke—but no sign of life was given; so concluding it had been fancy, he once more

composed himself in an easy chair, where fatigue soon overcoming him he fell into a sound sleep, from which he did not awaken till he was aroused some hours afterwards by a knocking at the room door.

CHAPTER XVII.

JULIA CONTINUES THE HISTORY OF HER PARENTS AS
FOLLOWS.

“‘Come in;’ cried Valentine suddenly awakening, and at first unconscious where he was; upon which injunction the handle was turned and efforts made to open the door.

“‘The door’s locked, Sir, and the key’s inside,’ replied a female voice.

“‘Locked!’ cried Valentine, rousing himself, looking about, and beginning to recall the events of the night—‘My God! I remember now—so it is. For Heaven’s sake get the door opened, and let me out!’ He then heard the woman move away, and presently return with another; and by their conversation he made out that they were searching for the key, wondering what had become of it, and how

the door should have been locked. After an interval they both assured him that the key must be inside, as they had sought for it in vain.

“‘My good woman,’ exclaimed Valentine, ‘I tell you I am locked in. I was brought here in the middle of the night, for what purpose I can’t guess, and shut into this room. I heard the man that lured me hither, turn the key; and all I beg of you is, to send for some one to break the door open, and let me out.’

“After this, he heard the women whispering and tittering together; and then they went away, and all was silent.

“Having waited some time in expectation of their return, he looked about for a bell, he found one which he reached by mounting on a table, for the cord was cut short; but he rang it in vain. He then made a noise at the door, and tried to kick it open, but no sound indicated that there was any one in the house but himself. Desperate at the delay, and uncertain whether the women would return or not, he next rushed to the window, and threw it open, resolving to jump out at all risks, rather than longer submit to this mysterious imprisonment. Now that it was light enough to distinguish surrounding objects, the feat did not appear

so difficult as he had imagined. The window looked into a garden, and immediately beneath was a flower bed of soft earth, which would serve to break his fall; and, accordingly, he succeeded in reaching the ground uninjured. His next object was to get out of the garden, and he tried the only door he saw, but it was locked. Every moment his eagerness to escape increased—he could not tell what trouble and delay might await him if found where he was, so without seeking further, he climbed over the wall. On the other side were fields which led by a back way into the town, and with all the speed he could command, he hurried across them, resolving to go straight to a Juge de paix, and tell his story; aware of the importance, under such mysterious circumstances, of being first heard, and seeking an *éclaircissement* himself.

“The way by the fields was shorter than by the road, and he preferred it, as there was less chance of his being met by any one before he had accomplished his object; but there were several dykes and enclosures in his path, and unfortunately in leaping a wall, having failed to observe a ditch on the other side, he fell and sprained his ankle.

“The pain was so intense, that to move was impossible, and there he sat, cursing his hard fate, and as anxious to be discovered by some passenger, as he had been a moment before to avoid observation.

“A heavy half hour he had passed in this painful situation, when he was cheered by hearing the voices of persons approaching by the way he had come, and he made an effort to get upon his feet to ask their assistance ; but before he could accomplish his purpose, a man suddenly leaped over the wall, who the moment he set his eyes upon him, called out, ‘ Here he is, the rascal, crouching in a ditch,’ and immediately seized him by the collar.

“ ‘ Bring the fellow along !’ cried two others, looking over ; and without mercy they roughly pulled him out of the ditch.

“ In vain he attempted to explain his situation, and the accident he had met with ; not a word would they listen to ; but reckless of his expostulations and the pain they were inflicting, they dragged him over the wall and back across the fields to the house he had so lately escaped from ; where flinging him into a dark closet, two of them departed, leaving the third to keep guard at the door, with strict injunctions, rather to take his life than let him away.

“After making several fruitless efforts to induce the man outside to throw some light on the mystery that seemed to be thickening around him, he at length resigned himself to his fate, and stretching himself on the floor, in as easy a position as the limited dimensions of his prison would admit, he resolved to await the result with what patience he could.

“He had passed about two hours in this situation, when he heard the voices of several persons entering the house; and one of them having inquired of his gaoler ‘if all was right,’ and being answered in the affirmative, they proceeded up stairs. In about a quarter of an hour afterwards the closet door was thrown open, and he was desired to come out; but by this time, his leg being so swollen that he was utterly unable to move, they placed him in a chair, and so carried him up stairs to the room in which he had passed the night.

“The occupant of the bed was still there; but though looking as ghastly as ever, he was not dead. He was sitting up supported by pillows, and on one side stood a gentleman, whom Valentine recognised as an eminent surgeon of the city; and on the other a priest. At a small table, near the window, sat a grave,

elderly man in the costume of a *juge de paix*; and beside him, one younger, apparently his clerk, before whom were materials for writing. Two women, and the men who had pursued and brought him back from the fields, were also present.

“The chair in which Valentine had been conveyed up stairs was set down at the foot of the bed, amidst a general silence that bespoke the awe and wonder of the assistants. Every eye was turned towards him, and amongst them the glazed and lustreless orb of the apparently dying man. As he gazed on the features of the amazed and agitated youth, a faint and transitory flush passed over the blood-forsaken cheek, and for a moment the dead eye shone with an unnatural light; slowly and with difficulty he raised his feeble arm, and pointing his fore finger to Valentine he exclaimed, ‘That is the man!’

“‘Bring him forward!’ said the *Juge de paix*; and they lifted the chair and placed it nearer to the table. ‘Now, Sir,’ continued he to the sick man, ‘are you prepared to swear that that man is your assassin?’

“‘I am,’ replied the other.

“‘Good heavens! Sir,’—eagerly interrupted Valentine.

“ ‘Silence!’ ejaculated the Juge de paix, ‘and wait till you are interrogated. Write down, Bontems,’ addressing the clerk, ‘that the accuser swears to the identity of the criminal;’ and then turning to Valentine, he inquired his name and address.

“ ‘My name is Valentine Clerk, and I am employed in the office of Monsieur Le Moine, who resides in the Rue de Mousseline,’ replied the prisoner.

“ ‘That is true,’ said the surgeon, ‘I recognise the young man’s face.’

“ ‘The Juge de paix then turning to Valentine, urged him, according to the then custom of French criminal jurisprudence, to make a confession, since the circumstantial evidence against him was so clear, that there could be no doubt of his guilt.

“ ‘If by a confession you mean a relation of the events of the past night,’ replied Valentine, ‘and of the circumstances that have placed me in a situation I am quite at a loss to comprehend, I will willingly give you all the information I am able; and I trust, strange as it may appear, that you will listen without prejudice to my story. And you, Sir,’ he added, turning to the sick man, ‘I beseech you to pause before

you swear away the life of an innocent person. 'You are perhaps on the threshold of the grave yourself—do not in your eagerness for vengeance, or for justice, drag a victim with you thither, who as he stands beside you before the throne of the Almighty, will prove your last words to be a lie.'

"After this appeal to the consciences of his accuser and his judge, the young man recapitulated every circumstance that had occurred, from the summons of the stranger up to the moment of his being discovered in the ditch; but he had the mortification of perceiving that he was listened to by all parties with a perfect incredulity, which the examination of the witnesses that followed had no tendency to dispel.

"The two women servants declared that no one slept in the house but themselves and their master—that he had gone to bed well on the preceding evening—that the house door was shut, but not locked, and could not have been opened from without, but by picking the lock,—the lock was picked—they had heard nothing unusual during the night; and the first that came down stairs in the morning had stopped at her master's room to awaken him, as was customary—that on finding the door locked,

she had called her fellow servant and searched vainly for the key—that they had first supposed it was their master that was speaking to them—but that on finding the house door ajar, they were satisfied some one had got in during the night; and they had therefore both ran off to the town instantly for assistance, neither having courage to stay behind.

“The police officers then related, how, on receiving the summons, they had hastened to the spot and broken open the bedroom door—that there were evident marks of an attempt to force the lock, and part of the blade of a clasp-knife was found on the floor.

“Here the clerk interrupted the evidence to suggest that the prisoner should have been searched at the commencement of the investigation. This omission being repaired, they found on Valentine’s person, a purse containing a few franks, a silk pocket handkerchief, a note book containing memoranda of the business he had to do, and a clasp-knife, the broken blade of which exactly fitted the fragment the officers had picked up.

“Though Valentine had himself avowed his attempt to make his escape by picking the lock, yet, on the adjustment of the fragments, every

body in the room looked at one another triumphantly, and seemed to consider this concidence as the indisputable condemnation of the prisoner.

“The officers then continued to say, that they had found no one in the room but the gentleman in the bed, who had desired them instantly to pursue the assassin who had escaped by the window, which was open, and to fetch a surgeon ; and concluded their evidence, by relating how they had found the prisoner hiding himself in a ditch.’

“‘Hiding myself!’ exclaimed Valentine indignantly—‘look at this swollen limb, and you’ll have no difficulty in conceiving why I was found in a ditch.’

“‘Sans doute,’ rejoined Bontems, the clerk, ‘c’etait un malheur ; but for that you might have escaped altogether.’

“‘C’etait la Providence,’ said the priest. ‘The guilty man caught in the Almighty’s snare !’ and he crossed himself devoutly at the idea of this signal instance of Divine intervention.

“‘Now then, Monsieur Bruneau,’ said the Justice turning to the wounded man, ‘we shall be happy to hear your account of the affair. Imprimis, did you ever see the prisoner before?’

“‘Never, till I saw him in my room last night,’ replied Bruneau.

“‘Did you see him enter it?’ asked the Justice.

“‘No,’ returned Bruneau, ‘I was asleep. It was the blow which inflicted this wound, (and he opened the bosom of his shirt as he spoke, and displayed the bloody bandages that crossed his breast,) which first awakened me; but I believe I fainted instantly. When I came to my senses, I found myself bathed in blood, and my first thought was to try and ring the bell. But when with difficulty I had raised myself in the bed for that purpose, and drawn aside the curtain, I saw the window open and a man apparently endeavouring to make his escape by it. I fancy it was the cool night air from the open window that had recalled me from my swoon. I believe he heard me move, for he turned suddenly round, and it was then for the first time my eye fell upon the face of the prisoner. The fright and the exertion together overcame me, and I fainted again. When I recovered the second time, hearing the breathing of the assassin near me, and fearful that if he found me alive, he might be tempted to complete his work, I lay as silent

and motionless as I could, till I heard and saw him escape by the window. Then I made another attempt to ring the bell, but found the cord had been cut away, and that it was out of my reach.'

" 'Which indicates premeditation and malice aforethought on the part of the prisoner,' said the clerk.

" 'Can you form any idea of his motive for the crime?' asked the Juge.

" 'None, unless it be robbery,' returned Bruneau, 'as I never heard of his existence before.'

" 'But not only was there nothing suspicious found upon Valentine, but on examination, no indications of robbery, nor of an intention to rob could be discovered.

" 'Can you recollect any enemy who might have hired him to commit the act?' inquired the Juge.

" 'None,' returned Bruneau.

" 'Or any one who has an interest in your death?'

" 'A strange spasm seemed for a moment to convulse the features of the wounded man at this question; but he answered as before, 'None.'

“Nothing more could be elicited, and here ended the investigation for the present.. Valentine’s appeals for justice and asseverations of innocence passed quite unheeded; and, indeed, he was so overpowered himself by the body of circumstantial evidence that had been brought against him, that he could scarcely expect his accusers should listen to him; nor was he surprised to hear the Juge de paix directing his clerk to draw up his committal, and forthwith see him conducted to the maison forte.

“Whilst the committal was preparing, the surgeon humanely administered some relief to his hurt leg, the torture of which, but for the greater torture of his mind, would have been almost insupportable. But the greater evil somewhat subdued the less. His thoughts were so bewildered and distracted by the strangeness of his situation, that they could grapple with nothing—not even his acute bodily pain could fix them; and he was placed in a chair, and carried through the streets to prison, in a state of unconsciousness almost amounting to an annihilation of the faculties.

“‘C’est singulier!’ said the Juge de paix, as he arose from his seat, after Valentine was carried away—‘On ne peut pas en douter—cepen-

dant—!’ and he raised his shoulders to his ears.

“ ‘ Il faut avouer que les indices sont fortes —mais— !’, said the surgeon, imitating the gesture of the justice.

“ ‘ Si cet homme là n’est pas coupable, on ne le fut jamais,’ said the clerk striking the table with his knuckles.

“ ‘ Messieurs, on y voit le doigt de Dieu,’ said the priest, crossing himself devoutly.

“ ‘ Quel dommage !’ said the women walking away, arm in arm ; ‘ c’était, vraiment, un joli garçon !’

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONTINUATION OF THE STORY OF JULIE'S PARENTS.

"It was not till towards mid-day that, by the arrival of Bontems and an officer to search Valentine's chamber for proofs of his criminality, Julie learned he was thrown into prison, for having on the preceding night attempted to assassinate a gentleman of the name of Bruneau.

"'He has a daughter that Monsieur Bruneau?' inquired she eagerly.

"'No,' replied Bontems, 'I believe not.'

"'A niece then? or perhaps a wife? Some female connexion living with him?'

"'Certainly not living with him,' replied Bontems. 'He is an elderly man, and has no one in the house but two maid-servants.'

“‘Mr. Valentine is a very respectable young man,’ said Julie, whose jealous ire was quelled by this last assertion of the clerk’s. ‘It is impossible he can be guilty. What motive could he have?’

“‘That remains to be discovered,’ returned Bontems. ‘My opinion is that he has been an agent for somebody else.’

“‘Bah!’ cried Julie indignantly. ‘Valentine act the part of a hired assassin! It would be easier to believe he did it on his own account than that. But what does he say himself?’

“‘Ah! that will come out on the trial,’ answered the cautious Bontems.

“‘I must know before that,’ thought she; and equipping herself in her bonnet and shawl, she started for the prison.

“‘I don’t know whether I ought to admit you, ma belle dame,’ said the gaoler; ‘but as no orders are yet given to the contrary, *entrez!*’ and he conducted her to Valentine’s cell. There, with his elbows resting on his knees and his head on his hands, she found the unhappy young man.

“‘Julie!’ cried he, starting, as he raised his head and saw who it was; “comment c’est vous, ici?’

“‘Sans doute,’ said she, calmly seating her-

self by his side on the ground, 'n'est ce pas bien l'occasion? Do you not need assistance?'

"'What assistance can you give me, Julie?' said he kindly, affected by her devotion.

"'Reste à voir,' replied she, 'time will show that. En attendant, tell me your story.—You are innocent?'

"'As you are yourself,' returned he. 'But the evidence against me is so circumstantial, that I see no possibility of justification.'

"After detailing to her all the occurrences of the night, 'you see,' he continued, 'all my chance of safety rests on the discovery of the stranger who fetched me. But what hope is there of that? I can give no clue; I should not know him if I met him in this room, for I never saw his face. It is not likely he'll come forward of his own accord, for he must doubtless either be the assassin himself, or be connected with him. No, there is no hope!' cried he, giving way to his despair; 'I must die the death of a murderer, and leave a blasted name behind me.'

"'Il faut partir toute suite, madame,' said the gaoler interrupting them; 'orders are arrived that no one is to be admitted to the prisoner.'

“ ‘Adieu,’ said Julie, as she took her leave. ‘Je vais travailler pour vous.’

“All the circumstances Valentine had related corresponded so exactly with what she had herself witnessed, that she never doubted for a moment the truth of his story; but she saw that her evidence would tend nothing to his exculpation; although she were to brave the exposure of her motives, by coming forward to give it. ‘Il faut déterrer cet homme là,’ said she to herself, as she mused on the means of extricating Valentine—‘et alors peut être—then perhaps—if I could be the means of saving his life—myself—by my own courage and address—then perhaps—eh bien! En avant! et puis nous verrons.’

“ ‘Madeleine,’ said she, shutting herself into her chamber with her confidante. ‘I have a project in hand in which you must assist me.’

“ ‘Eh bien, mademoiselle,’ said Madeleine, ‘what is it?’

“ ‘I want a suit of boy’s clothes that would fit me. How can I get them?’

“ ‘Ah ça, c’est drôle!’ said Madeleine; ‘mais voyons. Mr. Valentine’s would be too large—quoiqu’il est petit, Monsieur Valentine.’

“‘Much too large,’ replied Julie; ‘besides, I should prefer a more ordinary suit.’

“‘Tope!’ cried Madeleine, ‘je l’ai trouvé. Voulez vous être laquais?’

“‘A footman! The very thing!’ replied Julie. ‘Where can I get a livery?’

“‘Chez nous, at my aunt’s,’ returned Madeleine. ‘There’s a little *vaurien* there—he was page to Madame la Comtesse de Rodement—but he was turned off for his *espiègeries*, and he is lodging at our house. He has two suits; and no doubt will be glad enough to lend you one for a trifle.’

“‘Go, then, directly,’ said Julie, ‘and fetch it; for there is no time to be lost;’ and away went Madeleine, the interval of whose absence Julie employed in cutting off her hair.

“‘Dieu!’ cried Madeleine, when she returned, staring at her, ‘quel dommage! Vos beaux cheveux!’

“‘Never mind;’ said Julie, ‘what does it signify? It will grow again. You must cut it closer behind for me, still, or it may spoil all.’

“‘Quelle folie d’amour!’ said Madeleine, as she unwillingly clipped away the hair that Julie had not been able to reach. The page’s suit fitted quite well enough for Julie’s purpose, and

when fully equipped she looked like a smart lad of fifteen or sixteen.

“‘Now,’ said Julie, ‘if I don’t return to-night, or even to-morrow, you have no occasion to be alarmed. I am not going into any danger, I assure you; and if any one inquires for me, say, I am gone to stay a few days with my aunt.’

“‘Bien,’ replied Madeleine, ‘I will. Mais, Dieu!’ she exclaimed, as the suspicion struck her, ‘you’re not going to shut yourself up with Mr. Valentine in the maison forte?’

“‘Not I,’ said Julie, ‘what good would that do?’

“‘Car, Mademoiselle,’ said Madeleine, ‘vous savez qu’un jeune homme est toujours un jeune homme, maison forte ou ailleurs; et que quoique vous soyez mise en garçon, vous êtes demoiselle, tout de même.’

“In spite of her eagerness to commence her enterprise, Julie had to wait upwards of an hour before she dared venture into the street; for till the evening had closed in, she did not think it prudent to risk the chance of being seen to leave the house by her neighbours and acquaintance, lest any suspicion should be awakened; besides, that being a novice in her

part, she preferred making her débüt by candle-light. As soon, however, as the dusk of the evening gave her confidence, manfully she sallied forth, and took her way towards the cabaret to which she had followed the stranger the night before.

“ ‘Peut on entrer?’ said she stepping in to a small room or kitchen on the right of the passage, the door of which was ajar, and from which voices were heard to proceed—‘peut on entrer?’ and she took off her hat with a boyish grace that gave good earnest of her abilities for the part she had undertaken.

“ ‘Entrez donc, mon beau monsieur,’ said a withered, haggish looking old woman, with an array of wrinkles that none but an old French-woman could show, who sat knitting on one side of the large, open chimney, where a brisk wood fire was burning on the hearth; ‘entrez donc.’ ‘It rains like the devil,’ said Julie, shaking the rain from her hat, considering *the devil* as part of her ‘stage directions.’

“ ‘Make a corner for the youth,’ said the old woman to those who sat round the fire—‘don’t you see he is dripping?’

“ The seats were pushed a little aside, and a chair drawn forward for Julie, who had now an

opportunity of seeing the faces of the company.

“There was no woman present but the one that had spoken to her, who was evidently the hostess; the men were six in number, apparently of very low grade, with one exception.

“The first glance convinced Julie that not one of them could be the man she sought, unless it were he who formed the exception. The others had all the air and dress of artizans, mechanics, or labourers, but it would have been difficult to assign to this man his exact position in society. His dress was that of a gentleman, but it occurred to Julie that he was not its first wearer. He sat exactly opposite to the old woman on the other side of the hearth; he appeared quite at home, and it was he who had handed Julie a chair. The hostess called him by the name of Rodolphe; the others addressed him as Monsieur Rodolphe. As she had not seen the face of the stranger she had traced to the cabaret on the preceding night, Julie had nothing to guide her but height, the figure even having been too much enveloped by the cloak to leave her any notion of it; but with respect to height, she thought, when he rose to give her a seat, that there was a considerable resemblance.

“ ‘ Quel tems ! What weather ! ’ said one of the company, as Julie seated herself.

“ ‘ The vineyards are drowning, ’ said another who appeared to be an agriculturist.

“ ‘ We shan’t get wine for our money if this weather continue, ’ observed an artizan.

“ ‘ Messieurs, ’ said the hostess, ‘ the price is risen already, d’un sous la bouteille. ’

“ ‘ Sacre ! ’ exclaimed the last speaker.

“ ‘ Won’t you take something ? ’ said the hostess to Julie, ‘ to keep out the cold ? Nous avons bonne bière de Mars, ou même de l’eau de vie, si vous le desiriez. ’

“ ‘ I should prefer wine, ’ replied Julie, who comprehended that to say *no* would spoil her welcome.

“ The old woman arose and produced the wine, assuring her that for the price there was none better in Nantes.

“ ‘ Madame et Messieurs, ’ said Julie, ‘ will you pledge me ? ’ and after pouring herself out a small quantity she sent round the bottle, which returned to her emptied of its contents. The evidently favourable impression produced by this liberal proceeding, induced her to call for a second.

“ ‘ Ah ça ! ’ exclaimed one, ‘ there is nothing like wine, after all ; cela échauffe les entrailles. ’

“ ‘ When will the moon change?’ inquired another.

“ ‘ She is in her last quarter, I think,’ said the artizan.

“ ‘ Pardon,’ said the labourer, ‘ we had a new moon last night.’

“ ‘ A bad beginning,’ observed a third, ‘ for I fancy it rained the whole night.’

“ ‘ By no means,’ said Rodolphe, ‘ you are mistaken, the weather was fine the first part of the night. *The rain began to fall just as the clock struck three.*’

“ ‘ Julie’s heart bounded—‘ c’est lui!’ she said to herself.

“ ‘ C’est la livrée de Rodemont que vous portez là, mon beau monsieur?’ said the old woman.

“ ‘ Yes,’ said Julie, ‘ it’s the Rodemont livery.’

“ ‘ You’re in a good service,’ added the old woman.

“ ‘ I was,’ replied Julie, shrugging her shoulders expressively.

“ ‘ Comment! On vous a chassé?’ inquired the hostess.

“ ‘ Worse luck,’ said Julie, ‘ but I hope to get back again.’

“ ‘ Vous avez commis quelque faute ? ’ said the hostess.

“ ‘ Espiègeries, ’ returned Julie.

“ ‘ Bah ! ’ said the old woman, ‘ young heads ! young heads ! what can be expected ? ’

“ ‘ I wonder, ’ thought Julie, ‘ if this Rodolphe lives here, or is only a visitor like the rest— for I must, somehow or another, contrive to keep him in view, till I can be sure he is the man I seek. ’

“ The consequences of making a mistake she saw would be fatal, as it might give the real criminal, whoever he were, time and warning to escape.

“ The conversation, after turning on a variety of subjects, was beginning somewhat to flag, when one of the company said, ‘ What is this story about a murder ? does any body know ? I heard some shopman had stabbed his master and was carried to prison. ’

“ ‘ Not his master, ’ said the artizan, ‘ a certain Monsieur Bruneau, a *propriétaire*. ’

“ ‘ Bruneau ! ’ exclaimed the old woman and Rodolphe at the same moment, in accents of astonishment.

“ ‘ Ce n’est pas lui, ’ said Julie to herself. ‘ That surprise is genuine. ’

“ ‘ I think that was the name I heard,’ said the artizan ; ‘ I was passing the maison forte as the criminal was carried in, and I inquired of the people that were standing by, what he had done.’

“ ‘ And what was it ?’ said Rodolphe and the old woman together.

“ ‘ Broken into the house of this Monsieur Bruneau, as I understood,’ replied the artizan, ‘ for the purpose of robbing him, and meeting with some resistance he attempted to murder the old gentleman, who, however, succeeded in securing the villain, and kept him fast till the arrival of the police.’

“ The eyes of Rodolphe and the old woman met, and astonishment was depicted on the countenances of both.

“ ‘ And this was last night ?’ inquired Rodolphe.

“ ‘ Précisément,’ said the artizan, ‘ they were taking him to prison as I passed to my work this morning.’

“ ‘ What sort of person was the criminal ?’ inquired Rodolphe.

“ ‘ A little man—young—perhaps five-and-twenty,’ returned the artizan.

“ The old woman and Rodolphe were evidently

anxious for more information, but nobody present could give any. The conversation, from this, turned upon murders and robberies, and the crimes that had been lately committed, in which the hostess and Rodolphe took very little part, the minds of both, according to Julie's observation, being occupied with what they had heard. She observed several expressive glances pass between them, and after a short time had elapsed, Rodolphe arose, and taking down his hat that was hanging on a peg against the wall, he said he was sorry to be obliged to leave the company, and went out.

“That he was gone for the purpose of investigating the report he had heard, was as evident to her as if he had told her so; and she felt quite satisfied that he not only knew something about Mr. Bruneau, but that he was, on some account or other, particularly interested in the intelligence he had just received. Still, that he was either the criminal, or concerned with him, she doubted. The emotion betrayed both by him and the old woman, was that of surprise, curiosity, and interest; not fear or confusion. But might not that confidence arise from his absolute certainty of not being known, and from his

assurance that by shutting Valentine up in the room with the wounded man, he had effectually shifted all chance of suspicion from himself? But, then, why should he be so astonished at the success of his stratagem; and would he not naturally have contrived some means, in the course of the day, of ascertaining the fate of his victim? Of one thing she felt assured, that she was on the right scent, and that whether the cabaret was his home or not, that he would return to communicate the result of his inquiries to the old woman; therefore, thought she, 'I must not quit my ground.' But the difficulty was, on what pretence to stay. The rain had furnished a very good excuse for entering; but unless she proposed remaining there all night, it was now time to think of moving—the rest of the company were dropping off one by one, she would ere long be left alone with the hostess. Would she be allowed to stay, too? That was another question, or were there means for her accommodation? Whilst she was pondering on these difficulties the two last of the party rose to depart.

“‘I think,’ said one of them, walking to the window, ‘the rain is over for the present, and we may take advantage of the opportunity.’

“ ‘Adieu, Messieurs,’ said the old woman, ‘au revoir!’ and she spoke with an alacrity of tone that indicated she was not sorry to be relieved of their presence.

“Julie arose also, and taking up her hat, stood smoothing round the nap, which was ruffled by the rain, with the back of her hand. The men paused a moment, apparently thinking she meant to accompany them, but she seemed intent upon repairing the disarrangement of her hat, so saying once more, ‘Adieu, Madame! Adieu, Monsieur!’ they took their leave.

“The old woman raised her eyes from her knitting, and looked at her over her spectacles, as much as to say, ‘Eh bien! why don’t you go too?’ But Julie stood still by the fire, turning her hat about in her hand, with an air of perplexity and depression.

“ ‘Vous ne retournez pas coucher chez Madame la Comtesse?’ at length said the hostess.

“ ‘Alas! no,’ replied Julie.

“ ‘But you have friends?’

“ ‘I have some,’ returned Julie,—‘mais’—

“ ‘A mother?’ inquired the old woman.

“ ‘Alas! no,’ answered Julie, despondingly.

“ ‘Comment?’ ‘is it that you are afraid of your friends’ displeasure when they learn you have been turned away?’

“ ‘ C'est ça, ’ replied Julie.

“ ‘ Pauvre enfant ! ’ said the old woman.

“ ‘ In short, ’ said Julie, ‘ to say the truth, I should be glad they did not learn it at all, till I have ascertained whether I have any chance of being reinstated ; because, you know, if within a few days I should recover my situation, my friends need never know any thing about the matter. ’

“ ‘ C'est vrai, ’ said the old woman.

“ ‘ If I knew any where to go— ’ continued Julie, hesitatingly.

“ ‘ Comment ? pour loger ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, ’ replied Julie, ‘ for a few days. ’

“ ‘ Vous avez de l'argent ? ’

“ ‘ Oh, yes, ’ returned Julie, ‘ enough to pay. ’

“ ‘ Vous ne voulez pas loger ici ? ’

“ ‘ Mais, oui, ’ said Julie, ‘ si cela vous convient. ’

“ ‘ Parfaitement, ’ returned the hostess. ‘ Will you have a room to yourself ? ’ continued she, ‘ that will be dix sous ; ou voulez vous coucher avec Rodolphe, mon fils, se ne sera que cinq sous, ça ? ’

“ ‘ I should prefer a room to myself, ’ returned Julie, with an involuntary shudder at the latter proposal—‘ I have been so long used

to lie alone at the Countess's, that I fear a companion would disturb me.'

" 'Comme vous voulez,' said the old woman, 'cela m'est égal, since our spare room is unoccupied. Hier au soir nous avions du monde, and I could not have accommodated you.'

" 'Who was that?' thought Julie, 'was it the person I seek, and where is he now?' She would have been glad to ask some questions about the lodger the old woman spoke of, but she did not know how to manage it.

" 'They are mostly travellers, strangers, that you accommodate, I suppose?' she said.

" 'Sometimes,' said the old woman, 'but oftener servants out of place, like yourself. Mais voulez vous souper?'

" Julie had little inclination to eat, especially any thing she was likely to get there; but her object was to make herself welcome, so she accepted the offer with all the alacrity she could assume.

" 'He is your son, then, Monsieur Rodolphe?' said Julie to the hostess, who with more activity than she would have imagined her capable of, was preparing the repast.

" 'Yes, he's my son,' replied the old woman, 'seul enfant, d'un mariage infortuné.'

" 'Cependant, il a l'air très comme il fatu ce Mr. Rodolphe,' observed Julie.

“ ‘Il n'est pas mal,’ returned the hostess, as she quitted the room to fetch some eggs.

“Julie felt a great desire to learn what *might* be the means or occupation that enabled Monsieur Rodolphe to live, and to maintain a *style* of dress that appeared so inconsistent with the situation of his mother; but she was afraid of giving offence by betraying her curiosity; or of awakening suspicion of her motives, if they really happened to have any thing to conceal. However, the old woman seemed disposed enough to give her the information she wanted.

“ ‘Yes, he's well enough, Rodolphe,’ said she, as she broke her eggs into the stewpan— ‘he was always fond of dress, and ambitious to be a gentleman; and we never could make him take to any trade that soiled his fingers—worse luck! So he has got a little employment in the town—but it's not the way to make money. Better work while he is young and able, than wear fine clothes, and lead an easy life, trusting to other people to keep him when he is old. I have little faith in promises, for my part.’

“ ‘Whatever God's word may be,’ returned Julie, ‘the word of man is not bread.’

“ ‘C'est vrai,’ replied the old woman nodding

her head approvingly; 'and now,' she continued, as she placed an omelette, with some bread and cheese and a bottle of wine, on the table before her guest, 'I'll go and prepare your bed whilst you eat your supper,' and accordingly, after selecting a pair of sheets from a cupboard near the fire she disappeared, and Julie presently heard her foot bustling about above.

"When the young heroine was left alone, she began to review her situation; and it was not without some surprise at her own temerity that she reflected on the arrangement she had made to sleep under the obscure roof of this old woman, of whose character she knew nothing, and in the near neighbourhood of a man, whom she was by no means certain might not be the assassin she was in search of. Altogether, whether he were or not, her opinion of Monsieur Rodolphe was not very favourable; he had that non-descript sort of air that made it difficult to assign him to any class, and inspired the suspicion that he did not adhere very strictly to the duties of any.

"Of the old woman, however, she thought better. In spite of her haggish exterior, there was a certain degree of frankness and good faith in her manner; and many an honest parent,

she reflected, has an idle and good-for-nothing son. It was true, no human being interested in her fate knew where she was; and she might have disappeared from the face of the earth, if her hosts had a mind to evil, without leaving a single trace of her destiny behind her, unless a clue were discovered by her chance association with the humble companions with whom she had passed the evening.

“‘However,’ said she to herself, ‘nothing venture nothing have! Is it not by the energy and courage I display in his cause, that I hope to win Valentine’s heart? and, après tout, probably the worst I have to fear is bad accommodation and an extortionate bill.’

“She had just arrived at this comfortable decision when the door opened and a man in a cloak entered, looking so exactly like the one she was in search of, that she involuntarily started with surprise.

“‘N’ayez pas peur,” said he throwing off his cloak, “it’s only me;” and she perceived that it was Rodolphe, who having made that addition to his dress after he had left the room, was thus changed in his appearance.

“‘Pardon!’ said she, endeavouring to assume as much tranquillity as she could, “I did not recognize you, at first.”

“‘It’s the cloak,’ said he carelessly. ‘Where’s my mother?’”

“‘Up stairs, preparing a bed for me,’ replied Julie.

“‘You sleep here, then?’ said he, in a tone that rather indicated annoyance than satisfaction.

“‘Oui,’ returned Julie, ‘si cela ne vous gêne pas.’”

“‘Du tout,’ replied he, ‘cela m’est égal.’”

“‘He speaks as if he didn’t think me worth killing,’ thought Julie; ‘there’s some comfort in that.’”

“‘Will you take a draught of wine after your walk?’ said she.

“‘Merci,’ replied he, ‘presently,’ and quitting the room, she heard him ascending the stairs, and immediately afterwards his voice reached her in earnest conversation with his mother.

“A great deal she would have given to overhear the dialogue, of which she felt quite certain she knew the subject; but although every intonation of their voices penetrated the rafters that formed the ceiling of the room she was in, not a single word could she make out. At length the door above opened, and she heard the old woman say, ‘It’s very alarming, at

any rate ; and if Monsieur Rodolphe does not send—'

" 'Chut !' said her son, 'we can talk it over by and by.'"

"They then descended the stairs, and resumed their places by the fire with Julie ; who again invited them to take a share of her bottle of wine. She felt a great desire to ask Rodolphe if he had heard any thing about the murder, and was besides particularly anxious to learn whether Mr. Bruneau was dead, or likely to recover ; but her dread of exciting suspicion or resentment, by introducing a subject in which she was assured they were somehow or other more than commonly interested, made her voice falter and her heart beat so much whenever she approached it, that she was constrained to renounce her intention ; so she sat slowly sipping her wine, and picking the crumbs of bread off the table cloth, conscious that her hosts desired her absence, but feeling every instant an increasing dislike, bordering upon horror, to the idea of retiring to bed under a roof, and amongst strangers, over whom there hung a mystery she could not penetrate. But the conversation flagged—the old woman nodded in her chair, and Rodolphe yawned audibly. 'Ah, mon Dieu !' exclaimed the former,

starting out of a doze into which she had fallen, 'what o'clock is it?'

"'It is very late,' replied Rodolphe. 'Would it be agreeable to Monsieur to retire?'

"'Certainly,' returned Julie, 'I had really forgotten myself.'

"Upon this, the old woman arose, and lighting a bit of rushlight, said she would have the pleasure of showing Monsieur to his apartment. She accordingly proceeded up the narrow creaking stairs, followed by her unwilling lodger, whose courage might truly be said to be 'oozing out at her fingers' ends.' On the landing place at the top were three doors, the centre one of which she opened, and introduced Julie to a better apartment than might have been expected. The furniture was humble and coarse, but clean and decent, and, but for the fear that beset her, there was no reason why she might not be reconciled enough to the prospect of passing the night there.

"'You'll sleep well there, mon enfant,' said the hostess. 'It's a good bed—every body sleeps well in it.'

"Julie looked sharply at her, for terror made her suspicious, and she thought the words sounded oddly.

“‘Eh bien!’ said the old woman, who seemed to be struck by her countenance—‘vous n’avez pas peur?’

“‘Afraid! Oh no!’ replied Julie, ‘what should I be afraid of?’

“‘If you are afraid of sleeping alone, you can sleep with my son,’ continued the hostess.

“‘By no means,’ replied Julie. ‘I am quite satisfied. Do you sleep near me?’

“‘I have a little closet close to you—here on the right,’ said she, pointing to one of the doors, ‘and Rodolphe my son, sleeps on the other side of you. Oh, you’ll be quite safe—fear nothing.’

“‘I shall sleep like a dormouse,’ returned Julie, wishing to appear at ease.

“‘To be sure you will,’ replied the hostess, with a chuckling laugh, that seemed to Julie’s excited nerves to carry some strange and sinister meaning with it; and wishing her good night, she descended the stairs. As soon as she was gone, Julie’s first impulse was to look under the bed, and examine the walls of the room, lest there should be any closet or secret door, but there was nothing to alarm her; and the only thing she discovered, which she had not observed on her first entrance, was a small portmanteau which stood on the floor in one corner.

“As nothing was unimportant to her in her present situation, and she could not tell what slight tokens might put her on the right track, and forward the object for which she was encountering so much annoyance, she took her rushlight to examine it. It proved to be a small black leathern portmanteau, just sufficient to carry a change of linen, and the few articles for the toilet a gentleman might require in an expedition of a few days; it was locked, and on the top were the initials *R. B.* ‘*R. B.*’ thought she—‘that may be Rodolphe something—for she did not know the second name of the persons under whose roof she was—’it is most likely his, as he is so fine a gentleman. Eh bien, I suppose I must go to bed—I wish they would have let me sit below all night—I did not feel half so wretched there in the chimney corner, with the bright faggots blazing; but there’s something terrific in a bed when one’s frightened; it looks like a grave. However, I won’t undress; I’ll just lie down in my clothes, so that if there’s any alarm, I could be ready to show myself in a moment.’

“There was a rude wooden bolt to the door which she drew, though without much reliance on its efficiency—it was enough for honest people, but it would have made a feeble

defence against force. Just as she was about to lie down another thought struck her—‘ I shall presently be in the dark, and as I am sure I shall not sleep, that will add greatly to my terrors.’ It was but a few inches of rush-light the old woman had given her, and that was fast burning down to the socket. So she drew back the bolt again and opened the door, resolved to go down and beg for more light, from those whom she still heard talking below. As she had taken off her shoes preparatory to stretching herself on the bed, her step was noiseless, and seemed to cause no interruption in the conversation between mother and son; and she was just placing her foot on the first stair, when the words *Monsieur Rodolphe* again caught her ear, but this time it was in the voice of her son.

“ ‘Encore Monsieur Rodolphe,’ thought she—‘then this is not Monsieur Rodolphe, or there are two,’—and she crept down a few stairs more, as softly as she could.

“ ‘I admit I can’t comprehend it,’ she heard the old woman say; ‘the things incomprehensible, but I’m not the less convinced that my apprehensions are well founded. He falls upon us here as if he came down the chimney; nobody knows how or why, with a

cock-and-bull story, that means nothing—it's true I had my own notions—I thought it was somebody—some intrigue or another,—and then he's off again like the cork from a bottle of champagne.'

“‘But what should he have to do with this young Englishman?’ returned the son. ‘I'm satisfied he knew no such man.’

“‘How can you tell that?’ rejoined the mother?—‘you think you're in all his secrets—mais, je me'n doute bien.’

“‘We shall see,’ replied Rodolphe, ‘for doubtless the youth, being taken, will confess every thing when brought to trial. He won't die with closed lips.’

“‘Not he,’ returned the old woman, ‘why should he? He'll lose his recompense and his life—he'll have a good right to cry out.’

“‘It appears to me,’ said the son, ‘that be the truth what it may, it is of the last importance that we should inform Monsieur Rodolphe of the capture of the young Englishman.’

“‘By no means,’ replied the old woman, emphatically, ‘are you going to involve *yourself* in the business? Haven't you got the eyes of the police upon you already? Besides, where is he? Most likely not at home; and into whose hands might the letter fall? No,

no ; au contraire, know nothing, ask nothing, tell nothing. No one knows he was here but himself and us. None else need ever know it. The youth must die—he has but his deserts. Monsieur Rodolphe, sans doute, will take care of himself, and keep out of the way—if not, ma foi ! I have had trouble enough about him, and through his means ; and shall still, I dare say. Apropos ! I wish he had taken his portmanteau away with him !

“At this moment Julie’s rushlight which, as her room door was open, afforded her some light, flickered and went out ; and the darkness she was in was only relieved by the faint glimmer that shone through the half-open door below. Without loss of time, therefore, she crept back, and after making a noise with the bolt sufficient to attract the attention of the speakers, she called out from the top of the stairs that her light was out, and begged for another.

“‘Comment !’ cried the old woman, who ascended to her with a candle—‘Comment ! You are not undressed yet ?’

“‘No,’ replied Julie, ‘I sat down to think of my troubles, and to consider what I should do to get back to my situation again.—I believe I had fallen half asleep, when I was aroused by

the light going out. But now I shall go to bed directly.'

"'Go to bed, to be sure,' returned the old woman. 'Sleep, child, by night, and think of your troubles by day.'

"And Julie did go to bed, and to sleep too. She had heard enough to satisfy her of her own safety, and to convince her that she was on the right track, and had a very fair prospect of saving the life and the honour of the man she loved,—'and surely,' thought she, as she closed her eyes—'he will love me, when he hears all I have done for him—he'll forget Aurore—that is, he'll write to her and say, 'Mademoiselle, or Madame, (selon), I regret extremely that circumstances of a very particular nature—particular nature—will preclude—my having the happiness—to—to unite myself—to you—in—in—' and here her drowsiness overcame her, and she fell fast asleep."

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