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TONY BUTLER

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CHAPTER XL.

THE MAJOR'S TRIALS.

MAJOR MILES M'CASKEY is not a foreground figure in this our story, nor have we any reason to suppose that he possesses any attractions for our readers. When such men—and there are such to be found on life's highway—are met with, the world usually gives them what sailors call a “wide berth, and ample room to swing in,” sincerely trusting that they will soon trip their anchor and sail off again. Seeing all this, I have no pretension, nor indeed any wish, to impose his company any more than is strictly indispensable, nor dwell on his sojourn at the Molo of Montanara. Indeed, his life at that place was so monotonous and weary

to himself, it would be a needless cruelty to chronicle it.

The Major, as we have once passingly seen, kept a sort of brief journal of his daily doings; and a few short extracts from this will tell us all that we need know of him. On a page of which the upper portion was torn away, we find the following:—
“Arrived at M—— on the 6th at sunset. Ruined old rookery. Open at land side, and sea defences all carried away; never could have been strong against artillery. Found Mrs M‘C. in the style of waiting-woman to a Countess Butler, formerly Nini Brancaleone. A warm interview; difficult to persuade her that I was not in pursuit of herself—a feminine delusion I tried to dissipate. She”—henceforth it is thus he always designates Mrs M‘Caskey—“she avers that she knows nothing of the Count d’Amalfi, nor has ever seen him. Went into a long story about Sir Omerod Butler, of whom I know more myself. She pretends that Nini is married to him—legally married; don’t believe a word of it. Have my own suspicions that the title of Amalfi has been conferred on B. himself, for he lives estranged from England and Englishmen. Will learn all, however, before I leave.

“Roast pigeons, with tomato, a strange fish, and

omelette, with Capri to wash it down; a meagre supper, but they say it shall be better to-morrow.

“7th, Wednesday.—Slept soundly and had a swim; took a sea view of the place, but could see no one about. Capital breakfast—‘Frutti di mare,’ boiled in Rhine wine; fellow who waited said a favourite dish of his Excellency’s, meaning Sir O. B. Best chocolate I ever tasted out of Paris. Found the *menue* for dinner on the table all right; the wine is *au choix*, and I begin with La Rose and La Veuve Cliquot. A note from her referring to something said last night; she is ill and cannot see me, but encloses an order on Parodi of Genoa, in favour of the Nobile Signor il Maggiore M’Caskey, for three thousand seven hundred and forty-eight francs, and a small tortoise-shell box, containing eighty-six double ducats in gold, so that it would seem I have fallen into a ‘vrai Californie’ here. Reflected, and replied with a refusal; a M’Caskey cannot stoop to this. Reproved her for ignoring the character to whom she addressed such a proposal, and reiterated my remark of last night, that she never rose to the level at which she could rightly take in the native chivalry of my nature.

“Inquired if my presence had been announced to Sir O., and learned it had. Orders given to treat

me with distinguished consideration, but nothing said of an audience.

“Pigeons again for supper, with apology; quails had been sent for to Messina, and expected to-morrow. Shot at a champagne-flask in the sea, and smoked. Sir O.’s tobacco exquisite, and the supply so ample, I am making a *petite provision* for the future.

“Full moon. Shot at the camelias out of my window. Knocked off seventeen, when I heard a sharp cry—a stray shot, I suppose. Shut the case-ment and went to bed.

“Thursday.—Gardener’s boy—flesh-wound in the calf of the leg; hope Sir O. may hear of it and send for me.

“A glorious capon for dinner, stuffed with oysters—veritable oysters. Drank Mrs M’C.’s health in the impression that this was a polite attention on her part. No message from Sir O.

“Friday.—A general fast; a lentil soup and a fish: good but meagre; took it out in wine and tobacco. Had the gardener’s boy up, and introduced him to sherry-cobbler. The effect miraculous; danced Tarantella till the bandage came off and he fainted.

“Saturday.—Rain and wind; maccaroni much

smoked; cook lays it on the chimney, that won't draw with a Levant wind. Read over my instructions again, and understand them as little as before;—'You will hold yourself at the orders of the Count d'Amalfi till further instructions from this department.' Vague enough all this; and for anything I see, or am likely to see, of this Count, I may pass the autumn here. Tried to attract Sir O.'s attention by knocking off the oranges at top of his wall, and received intimation to fire in some other direction.

"Sunday.—Don Luigi something has come to say mass. Asked him to dinner, but find him engaged to the Countess. A dry old cove, who evidently knows everything but will tell nothing; has promised to lend me a guitar and a book or two, in return for which I have sent down three bottles of our host's champagne to his reverence.

"Monday.—Lobsters.

"Tuesday.—Somebody ill apparently; much ringing of bells and disorder. My dinner an hour late. Another appeal from Mrs M'C., repeating her former proposal with greater energy; this feminine insistance provokes me. I might tell her that of the three women who have borne my name none but herself would have so far presumed, but I

forbear. Pity has ever been the weakness of my nature; I feel its workings even as I write this. It may not carry me to the length of forgiveness, but I can compassionate; I will send her this note :—

“ ‘MADAM,—Your prayers have succeeded; I yield. It would not be generous in me to say what the sacrifice has cost me. When a M‘Caskey bends, it is an oak of the forest snaps in two. I make but one condition; I will have no gratitude. Keep the tears that you would shed at my feet for the hours of your solitary sorrow. You will see, therefore, that we are to meet no more.

“ ‘One of the ducats is clipped on the edge, and another discoloured as by an acid; I am above requiring that they be exchanged. Nothing in this last act of our intercourse shall prevent you remembering me as “Semper M‘Caskey.”

“ ‘Your cheque should have specified Parodi & Co., not Parodi alone. To a man less known the omission might give inconvenience; this, too, however, I pardon. Farewell.’”

It was evident that the Major felt he had completed this task with befitting dignity, for he stood up before a large glass, and placing one hand within

his waistcoat, he gazed at himself in a sort of rapturous veneration. "Yes," said he, thoughtfully, "George Seymour, and D'Orsay, and myself, we were men! When shall the world look upon our like again? Each in his own style, too, perfectly distinct, perfectly dissimilar—neither of them, however, had this—neither had this," cried he, as he darted a look of cat-like fierceness from his fiery grey eyes. "The Princess Metternich fainted when I gave her that glance. She had the temerity to say, 'Qui est ce Monsieur M'Caskey?' Why not ask who is Soult? who is Wellington? who is everybody? Such is the ignorance of a woman! Madame la Princess," added he, in a graver tone, "if it be your fortune to turn your footsteps to Montpellier, walk into the churchyard there, and see the tomb of Jules de Besançon, late Major of the 8th Cuirassiers, and whose inscription is in these few words—'Tué par M'Caskey.' I put up the monument myself, for he was a brave soldier, and deserved his immortality."

Though self-admiration was an attractive pastime, it palled on him at last, and he sat down and piled up the gold double ducats in two tall columns, and speculated on the various pleasures they might procure, and then he read over the draft on Parodi,

and pictured to his mind some more enjoyments, all of which were justly his due, "for," as he said to himself aloud, "I have dealt generously by that woman."

At last he arose, and went out on the terrace. It was a bright starlit night, one of those truly Italian nights when the planets streak the calm sea with long lines of light, and the very air seems weary with its burden of perfume. Of the voluptuous enervation that comes of such an hour he neither knew nor asked to know. Stillness and calm to him savoured only of death; he wanted movement, activity, excitement, life, in fact—life as he had always known and always liked it. Once or twice the suspicion had crossed his mind that he had been sent on this distant expedition to get rid of him when something of moment was being done elsewhere. His inordinate vanity could readily supply the reasons for such a course. He was one of those men that in times of trouble become at once famous. "They call us dangerous," said he, "just as Cromwell was dangerous, Luther was dangerous, Napoleon was dangerous. But if we are dangerous, it is because we are driven to it. Admit the superiority that you cannot oppose, yield to the inherent greatness that you can only struggle against, and you

will find that we are not dangerous—we are salutary.”

“Is it possible,” cried he aloud, “that this has been a plot—that while I am here living this life of inglorious idleness the great stake is on the table—the game is begun, and the King’s crown being played for?” M’Caskey knew that whether royalty conquered or was vanquished—however the struggle ended—there was to be a grand scene of pillage. The nobles or the merchants—it mattered very little which to him—were to pay for the coming convulsion. Often and often, as he walked the streets of Naples, had he stood before a magnificent palace, or a great counting-house, and speculated on the time when it should be his prerogative to smash in that stout door, and proclaim all within it his own. “*Spolia di M’Caskey*” was the inscription that he felt would defy the cupidity of the boldest. “I will stand on the balcony,” said he, “and declare, with a wave of my hand, These are mine: pass on to other pillage.”

The horrible suspicion that he might be actually a prisoner all this time gained on him more and more, and he ransacked his mind to think of some great name in history whose fate resembled his own. “Could I only assure myself of this,” said he, pas-

sionately, "it is not these old walls would long confine me; I'd scale the highest of them in half an hour; or I'd take to the sea, and swim round that point yonder—it's not two miles off; and I remember there's a village quite close to it." Though thus the prospect of escape presented itself so palpably before him, he was deterred from it by the thought that if no intention of forcible detention had ever existed, the fact of his having feared it would be an indelible stain upon his courage. "What an indignity," thought he, "for a M'Caskey to have yielded to a causeless dread!"

As he thus thought, he saw, or thought he saw, a dark object at some short distance off on the sea. He strained his eyes, and though long in doubt, at last assured himself it was a boat that had drifted from her moorings, for the rope that had fastened her still hung over the stern, and trailed in the sea. By the slightly moving flow of the tide towards shore she came gradually nearer, till at last he was able to reach her with the crook of his riding-whip, and draw her up to the steps. Her light paddle-like oars were on board, and M'Caskey stepped in, determined to make a patient and careful study of the place on its sea-front, and see, if he could, whether it were more of chateau or jail.

With noiseless motion he stole smoothly along, till he passed a little ruined bastion on a rocky point, and saw himself at the entrance of a small bay, at the extremity of which a blaze of light poured forth, and illuminated the sea for some distance. As he got nearer he saw that the light came from three large windows that opened on a terrace, thickly studded with orange trees, under the cover of which he could steal on unseen, and take an observation of all within; for that the room was inhabited was plain enough, one figure continuing to cross and recross the windows as M'Caskey drew nigh.

Stilly and softly, without a ripple behind him, he glided on till the light skiff stole under the overhanging boughs of a large acacia, over a branch of which he passed his rope to steady the boat, and then standing up he looked into the room, now so close as almost to startle him.

CHAPTER XLI.

EAVÉSDROPPING.

IF M'Caskey was actually startled by the vicinity in which he suddenly found himself to the persons within the room, he was even more struck by the tone of the voice which now met his ear. It was Norman Maitland who spoke, and he recognised him at once. Pacing the large room in its length, he passed before the windows quite close to where M'Caskey stood—so close, indeed, that he could mark the agitation on his features, and note the convulsive twitchings that shook his cheek.

The other occupant of the room was a lady; but M'Caskey could only see the heavy folds of her dark velvet dress as she sat apart, and so distant that he could not hear her voice.

“So, then, it comes to this!” said Maitland, stopping in his walk and facing where she sat: “I have made this wearisome journey for nothing!

Would it not have been as easy to say he would not see me? It was no pleasure to me to travel some hundred miles and be told at the end of it I had come for nothing."

She murmured something inaudible to M'Caskey, but to which Maitland quickly answered, "I know all that; but why not let *me* hear this from his own lips, and let *him* hear what I can reply to it? He will tell *me* of the vast sums I have squandered and the heavy debts I have contracted; and I would tell *him* that in following his rash counsels I have dissipated years that would have won me distinction in any land of Europe."

Again she spoke; but before she uttered many words he broke suddenly in with, "No, no, no! ten thousand times. No! I knew the monarchy was rotten—rotten to the very core; but I said, Better to die in the street *à cheval* than behind the arras on one's knees. Have it out with the scoundrels, and let the best man win—that was the advice *I* gave. Ask Caraffa, ask Filangieri, ask Acton, if I did not always say, 'If the King is not ready to do as much for his crown as the humblest peasant would for his cabin, let him abdicate at once.'"

She murmured something, and he interrupted her with, "Because I never did—never would—and

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never will trust to priestcraft. All the intrigues of the Jesuits, all the craft of the whole College of Cardinals, will not bring back confidence in the monarchy. But why do I talk of these things to you? Go back and ask him to see me. Say that I have many things to tell him; say"—and here the mockery of his voice became conspicuous—"that I would wish much to have his advice on certain points.—And why not?" cried he aloud to something she said; "has my new nobility no charm for him? Well, then, I am ready to strike a bargain with him. I owe Caffarelli two hundred and eighty thousand francs, which I mean to pay, if I take to the highway to do it. Hush! don't interrupt me. I am not asking he should pay this for me—all I want is, that he will enable me to sell that villa which he gave me some years ago beyond Caserta. Yes, the Torricella; I know all that—it was a royal present. It never had the more value in my eyes for that; and perhaps the day is not very distant when the right to it may be disputed. Let him make out my title, such as it is, so that I can sell it. There are Jews who will surely take it at one-half its worth. Get him to consent to this, and I am ready to pledge my word that he has seen the last of me."

“He gave it to you as a wedding present, Norman,” said she, haughtily; and now her deep-toned voice rung out clear and strong; “and it will be an unpardonable offence to ask him this.”

“Have I not told you that I shall not need forgiveness — that with this act all ends between us?”

“I will be no party to this,” said she, haughtily; and she arose and walked out upon the terrace. As she passed, the lamp-light flared strongly on her features, and M’Caskey saw a face he had once known well; but what a change was there! The beautiful Nini Brancaleone—the dark-haired Norma—the belle that Byron used to toast with an enthusiasm of admiration—was a tall woman advanced in years, and with two masses of snow-white hair on either side of a pale face. The dark eyes, indeed, flashed brightly still, and the eyebrows were dark as of yore; but the beautifully-formed mouth was hard and thin-lipped, and the fair brow marked with many a strong line of pain.

“You forget, perhaps,” said she, after a short pause—“you forget that it is from this villa I take my title. I am Brancaleone della Torricella, and I forfeit the name when it leaves our hands.”

“And do you hold to this, mother?” asked he, in

a voice of sorrow, through which something of scorn was detectable.

“Do I hold to it? Of course I hold to it! You know well the value it has in his eyes. Without it he never would have consented”—she stopped suddenly, and seemed to catch herself in time to prevent the utterance of some rash avowal. “As it is,” added she, “he told me so late as yesterday that he has no rest nor peace, thinking over his brother’s son, and the great wrong he has done him.”

“Let him think of the greater wrong he has done me!—of my youth that he has wasted, and my manhood lost and shipwrecked. But for him and his weak ambition, I had belonged to a party who would have prized my ability and rewarded my courage. I would not find myself at thirty brigaded with a set of low-hearted priests and seminarists, who have no other weapons than treachery, nor any strategy but lies. If I have squandered his fortune, he has beggared me in reputation. He does not seem to remember these things. As to him whom he would prefer to me and make his heir, I have seen him.”

“You have seen him, Norman! When?—where?—how?” cried she, in wild impatience.

“Yes, I even had a plan to let the uncle meet his promising nephew. I speculated on bringing together two people more made for mutual detestation than any other two in Europe.”

“It would have been a rash venture,” said she, fiercely.

“If you mean for *me*, that was the very reason I thought of it. What other game than the rash one is open to a man like *me*?”

“Who ever had the safer road to fortune if he could have walked with the commonest prudence?” said she, bitterly.

“How can you say that? Talk of prudence to the man who has no fortune, no family, not even a name — no!” cried he, fiercely; “for by the first Maitland I met I might be challenged to say from what stock I came. He could have saved me from all this. Nothing was ever easier. You yourself asked—ay, begged this. You told me you begged it on your knees; and I own, if I never forgave him for refusing, I have never forgiven you for the entreaty.”

“And I would do it again to-day!” cried she, passionately. “Let him but acknowledge you, Norman, and he may turn me out upon the world houseless and a beggar, and I will bless him for it!”

“What a curse is on the bastard!” broke he out in a savage vehemence, “if it robs him of every rightful sentiment, and poisons even a mother’s love. Do not talk to me this way, or you will drive me mad!”

“Oh, Norman! my dear, dear Norman!” cried she, passionately; “it is not yet too late.”

“Too late for what?”

“Not too late to gain back his favour. When he saw the letter in the King’s hand, calling you Count of Amalfi, he said, ‘This looks ill for the monarchy. I have a Scotch earldom myself in my family, granted by another king the day after he had lost his own crown.’ Try, then, if you cannot rally to the cause those men who are so much under your influence, that, as you have often told me, they only wanted to be assured of your devotion to pledge their own. If *he* could believe the cause triumphant, there is nothing he would not do to uphold it.”

“Yes,” said he, thoughtfully, “there never lived the man who more worshipped success! The indulgences that he heaped upon myself were merely offerings to a career of insolent triumph.”

“You never loved him, Norman,” said she, sadly.

“Love had no share in the compact between us. He wanted to maintain a cause which, if successful,

must exclude from power in England the men who had insulted him, and turned him out of office. I wanted some one who could afford to pay my debts, and leave me free to contract more. But why talk to you about these intrigues?—once more, will he see me?”

She shook her head slowly in dissent. “Could you not write to him, Norman?” said she at last.

“I will not write to a man under the same roof as myself. I have some news for him,” added he, “if he cares to buy it by an audience; for I suppose he would make it an audience,” and the last word he gave with deep scorn.

“Let me bring him the tidings.”

“No, he shall hear them from myself, or not hear them at all. I want this villa!” cried he, passionately—“I want the title to sell it, and pay off a debt that is crushing me. Go, then, and say I have something of importance enough to have brought me down some hundred miles to tell him something that deeply concerns the cause he cares for, and to which his counsel would be invaluable.”

“And this is true?”

“Did I ever tell you a falsehood, mother?” asked he, in a voice of deep and sorrowful meaning.

“I will go,” said she, after a few moments of

thought, and left the room. Maitland took a bottle of some essenced water from the table and bathed his forehead. He had been more agitated than he cared to confess; and now that he was alone, and, as he believed, unobserved, his features betrayed a deep depression. As he sat with his head leaning on both hands, the door opened. "Come," said she, gently—"come!" He arose and followed her. No sooner was all quiet around than M'Caskey rowed swiftly back to his quarters, and, packing up hastily his few effects, made with all speed for the little bay, where was the village he had passed on his arrival, and through which led the road to Reggio. That something was "up" at Naples he was now certain, and he resolved to be soon on the field: whoever the victors, they would want *him*.

On the third evening he entered the capital, and made straight for Caffarelli's house. He met the Count in the doorway. "The man I wanted," said he, as he saw the Major. "Go into my study and wait for me."

"What has happened?" asked M'Caskey, in a whisper.

"Everything. The King is dead."

CHAPTER XLII.

MARK LYLE'S LETTER.

THE following letter was received at Lyle Abbey shortly after the events recorded in our last chapter had happened. It was from Mark Lyle to his sister, Mrs Trafford:—

“HOTEL VICTORIA, NAPLES.

“MY DEAR ALICE,—While I was cursing my bad-luck at being too late for the P. and O. steamer at Marseilles, your letter arrived deciding me to come on here. Nothing was ever more fortunate: first of all, I shall be able to catch the Austrian Lloyds at Ancona, and reach Alexandria in good time for the mail; and, secondly, I have perfectly succeeded—at least I hope so—in the commission you gave me. For five mortal days I did nothing but examine villas. I got a list of full fifty, but in the course of a little time the number filtered down

to ten possible, and came at last to three that one could pronounce fairly habitable. To have health in this climate—that is to say, to escape malaria—you must abjure vegetation; and the only way to avoid tertian is to book yourself for a sunstroke. These at least were my experiences up to Tuesday last, for all the salubrious spots along the sea-shore had been long since seized on either by the King or the Church, and every lovely point of view was certain to be crowned by a royal villa or a monastery. I was coming back then on Tuesday, very disconsolate indeed from a long day's fruitless search, when I saw a perfect gem of a place standing on the extreme point of a promontory near Caserta. It was of course 'royal'—at least, it belonged to a Count d'Amalfi, which title was borne by some younger branch of the Bourbons; yet as it was untenanted, and several people were working in the gardens, I ventured in to have a look at it. I will not attempt description, but just say that both within and without it realises all I ever dreamed or imagined of an Italian villa. Marble and frescoes and fountains, terraces descending to the sea, and gardens a wilderness of orange and magnolia, and grand old rooms, the very air of which breathed splendour and magnificence; but

à quoi bon? dear Alice. It was a 'palazzotto reale,' and one could only gaze enviously at delights they could not hope to compass.

"Seeing my intense admiration of the place, the man who showed me around it said, as I was coming away, that it was rumoured that the Count would not be indisposed to sell the property. I know enough of Italians to be aware that when a stranger supposed to be rich,—all English are in this category,—is struck with anything—picture, house, or statue—the owner will always part with it at ten-fold its value. Half out of curiosity, half to give myself the pretext for another morning's ramble over the delicious place, I asked where I could learn any details as to the value, and received an address as follows—'Count Carlo Caffarelli, Villino del Boschetto, Chiaja, Naples.' Caffarelli I at once remembered as the name of Maitland's friend, and in this found another reason for calling on him, since I had totally failed in all my attempts to discover M. either in London, Paris, or even here.

"The same evening I went there, and found Count Caffarelli in one of those fairy-tale little palaces which this country abounds in. He had some friends at dinner, but, on reading my name, recognised me, and came out with a most charming

politeness to press me to join his party. It was no use refusing; the Italian persuasiveness has that element of the irresistible about it that one cannot oppose; and I soon found myself smoking my cigar in a company of half-a-dozen people, who treated me as an intimate friend.

“I may amuse you some day by some of the traits of their *bonhommie*. I must now confine myself to our more immediate interests. Caffarelli, when he found that I wanted some information about the villa, drew his arm within my own, and, taking me away from the rest, told me in strictest confidence that the villa was Maitland’s—Maitland being the Conte d’Amalfi—the title having been conferred by the late King, one of the very last acts of his life.

“‘And Maitland,’ said I, scarcely recovering from my astonishment; ‘where is he now?’

“‘Within a few yards of you,’ said he, turning and pointing to the closed jalousies of a room that opened on a small separately-enclosed garden; ‘he is there.’

“There was something like secrecy, mystery at least, in his manner as he said this, that prevented my speaking for a moment, and he went on:—‘Yes, Maitland is in that room, stretched on his bed, poor fellow; he has been severely wounded in a duel

which, had I been here, should never have been fought. All this, remember, is in confidence; for it is needless to tell you Maitland is one of those men who hate being made gossip of; and I really believe that his wound never gave him one-half the pain that he felt at the bare possibility of his adventure being made town-talk. So well have we managed hitherto, that of the men you see here to-night—all of them intimate with him—one only knows that his illness is not a malaria fever.'

“ ‘But can you answer for the same prudence and reserve on the part of the other principal?’

“ ‘We have secured it, for the time at least, by removing him from Naples; and as the laws here are very severe against duelling, his own safety will suggest silence.’

“ ‘Do you think Maitland would see me?’

“ ‘I suppose he will be delighted to see you; but I will ascertain that without letting him know that I have already told you he was here. Remember, too, if he should receive you, drop nothing about the duel or the wound. Allude to his illness as fever, and leave to himself entirely the option of telling you the true story or not.’

“ ‘After a few more words of caution—less needed, if he only had known how thoroughly I understood

his temper and disposition—he left me. He was back again in less than five minutes, and, taking me by the arm, led me to Maitland's door. 'There,' said he; 'go in; he expects you.'

"It was only after a few seconds that I could see my way through the half-darkened room, but, guided by a weak voice saying, 'Come on—here,' I approached a bed, on the outside of which, in a loose dressing-gown, the poor fellow lay.

"'You find it hard to recognise me, Lyle,' said he, with an attempt to smile at the amazement which I could not by any effort repress; for he was wasted to a shadow, his brown cheeks were sunken and sallow, and his dark flashing eyes almost colourless.

"'And yet,' added he, 'the doctor has just been complimenting me on my improved looks. It seems I was more horrible yesterday.' I don't remember what I said, but he thanked me and pressed my hand—a great deal from him, for he is not certainly demonstrative; and then he pressed me to tell about you all—how you were, and what doing. He inquired so frequently, and recurred so often to Bella, that I almost suspected something between them—though, after all, I ought to have known that this was a conquest above Bella's reach—the man who might any day choose from the highest in Europe.

“ ‘Now a little about yourself, Maitland,’ said I. ‘How long have you been ill?’

“ ‘This is the seventeenth day,’ said he, sighing. ‘Caffarelli of course told you fever—but here it is,’ and he turned on his side and showed me a great mass of appliances and bandages. ‘I have been wounded. I went out with a fellow whom none of my friends would consent to my meeting, and I was obliged to take my valet Fenton for my second, and he, not much versed in these matters, accepted the Neapolitan sword instead of the French one. I had not touched one these eight years. At all events, my antagonist was an expert swordsman—I suspect, in this style of fencing, more than my equal; he certainly was cooler, and took a thrust I gave him through the fore-arm without ever owning he was wounded till he saw me fall.’

“ ‘Plucky fellow,’ muttered I.

“ ‘Yes, pluck he has unquestionably; nor did he behave badly when all was over, for though it was as much as his neck was worth to do it, he offered to support me in the carriage all the way back to Naples.’

“ ‘That was a noble offer,’ said I.

“ ‘And there never was a less noble antagonist!’ cried Maitland, with a bitter laugh. ‘Indeed, if it

ever should get abroad that I crossed swords with him, it would go near to deny me the power of demanding a similar satisfaction from one of my own rank to-morrow. Do not ask me who he is, Lyle; do not question me about the quarrel itself. It is the thinking, the brooding over these things as I lie here, that makes this bed a torture to me. The surgeon and his probes are not pleasant visitors, but I welcome them when they divert my thoughts from these musings.'

"I did my best to rally him, and get him to talk of the future, when he should be up and about again. I almost thought I had done him some little good, when Caffarelli came in to warn me that the doctors were imperative against his receiving any visitors, and I had been there then full two hours!

"'I have told Lyle,' said he, as we were leaving the room, 'that you must let him come and see me to-morrow; there are other things I want to talk over with him.'

"It was high time I should have left him, for his fever was now coming on, and Caffarelli told me that he raved throughout the whole night, and talked incessantly of places which, even in a foreign pronounciation, I knew to be in our own neighbourhood in Ireland. The next day I was not admitted

to see him. The day after that I was only suffered to pass a few minutes beside his bed, on condition, too, that he should not be allowed to speak; and to-day, as it is my last in Naples, I have been with him for above an hour. I am certain, my dear Alice, that there is something at least in my suspicion about Bella, from what took place to-day. Hearing that I was obliged to leave to-night to catch the steamer at Ancona, he said, 'Lyle, I shall want a few minutes with you, alone though, before you leave.' He said this because either the doctor or Caffarelli, or both, have been with us since our first meeting. 'Don't look gloomy, old fellow,' he added; 'I'm not going to speak about my will. It is rather of life I mean to talk, and what to do with life to make it worth living for. Meanwhile, Caffarelli has been telling me of your hunt after a villa. There is mine—the Torricella—take it. Carlo says you were greatly struck with it; and as it is really pretty, and inhabitable too, a thing rare enough with villas, I insist upon your offering it to your family. There's a sort of summer-house or "Belvedere" on the extreme point of the rock, with half-a-dozen little rooms; I shall keep that for myself; but tell Lady Lyle I shall not be a troublesome visitor. It will be the rarest of all events to see me

there, for I shall not be long in Italy.' I was eager to ask why, or whither he was turning his steps, but he was never one to stand much questioning, and in his present state it would have been dangerous to cross him. By way of saying something—anything at the moment—I asked how were things going on here politically. He laughed his usual little quiet laugh, and called out to Caffarelli, who stood in the window. 'Come here, Carlo, and tell Lyle how we are getting on here. He wants to know if the ammunition has been yet served out for the bombardment; or are you waiting for the barricades?' He jumped up in his bed as he spoke, and then fell back again. The doctor ran hastily over, and cried out, 'That's exactly what I said would come of it. There's hæmorrhage again.' And so we were turned out of the room, and the other doctors were speedily summoned, and it was only an hour ago I heard that he was going on favourably; but that in future a strict interdict should be put upon all visits, and none admitted to him but his physicians. Seeing this, there was no use deferring my departure, which would, besides, place my commission in jeopardy. I have already outstayed my leave by two mails.

"Caffarelli is to write to you about the villa, and

take all your directions about getting it in order for your arrival. He says that there is only too much furniture; and as there are something like eighty odd rooms—it is called Palazzotto, a grand word for 'palace!—the chances are that even you will have space enough for what you call 'to turn round in.' I am in no dread of your being disappointed in it, and I repeat once more, it is the most exquisitely beautiful spot I ever saw. I would rather own it than its larger brother, the great kingly palace on the opposite side of the bay.

“ I left my card at the Legation for your friend Mr Damer, but he has not returned my visit. I own I had no peculiar anxiety to know him. Maitland could only say that he 'was not an ill-natured fellow, and perhaps a shade smarter than his colleagues.'

“ Caffarelli promises to keep you informed about poor Maitland, of whom, notwithstanding all the doctors say, I do not augur too favourably. On every account, whether you really avail yourselves of it or not, do not refuse his offer of the villa; it would give him the deepest pain and mortification, knowing how I had fixed upon it before I heard of his being the owner. I am very sorry to leave him, and sorrier that I have not heard what he was

so eager to tell me. I shall be very impatient till I hear from you, and know whether you concur in my conjecture or not.

“ The King sent twice to-day to inquire after M., and has already announced his intention to come in person, so soon as the doctors deem such a visit safe. To see the names that were left to-day with the porter you would say it was one of the first men in Europe was causing all this public anxiety.

“ I trust, my dear Alice, you will be satisfied with this long-winded epistle—the last, probably, you will get from me till I reach Calcutta. I had intended to have given you all the gossip of this pleasant place, which, even on the verge, as some think, of a revolution, has time and to spare for its social delinquencies; but Maitland has so engrossed my thoughts that he has filled my letter; and yet I have not told you one tithe of what I have heard about him from his friend Caffarelli. Indeed, in his estimation, M. has no equal living; he is not alone the cleverest, boldest, and most accomplished of men, but the truest and the best-hearted. I sat late into the night last night listening to traits of his generosity—the poor people he had helped, the deserving creatures he had succoured, and the earnest way he had pressed claims on the Ministry for

wretched families who had been friendless without him. I was dying to ask other questions about him, but I did not venture, and yet the man puzzles me more than ever. Once, indeed, Caffarelli seemed on the verge of telling me something. I had asked what Maitland meant by saying that he should probably soon quit Italy? 'Ah,' replied Caffarelli, laughing, 'then he has told you of that mad scheme of his; but of all things in the world, why go into the service of a Bey of Tunis?' 'A Bey of Tunis!' cried I, in such evident astonishment as showed I had heard of the project for the first time. 'Of course it was but a jest,' said Caffarelli, catching himself up quickly. 'The present Bey and Maitland lived together in Paris in their early days; and I have seen scores of letters entreating Maitland to come to Tunis, and offering him the command of a division, the place of a Minister—anything, in fact, that might be supposed to tempt him. You may imagine yourself how likely it is that a man with all Europe at his feet would consent to finish his life in an African banishment.'

"If I could only have one week more here, I feel certain that Caffarelli would tell me everything that I want to learn, but I must up and away. My servant is already hurrying down my baggage, and I

have not more time than to send my loves to you all.—Yours always,

“ MARK LYLE.

“ P. S.—Caff. is just the fellow to be made very useful, and likes it, so don't scruple to write to him as fully as you please. He has already told me of a first-rate chief-servant, a Maestro di Casa, for you ; and, in fact, only commission him, and he'll improvise you a full household ready for your arrival. Addio!”

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE MAJOR AT BADEN.

“ You will please to write your name there, sir,” said a clerk from behind a wooden railing to a fierce-looking little man in a frogged coat and a gold-banded cap, in the busy bank-room of Parodi at Genoa.

“ And my qualities?” asked the other, haughtily.

“ As you please, sir.”

The stranger took the pen, and wrote “ Milo M’Caskey, Count of the Two Sicilies, Knight of various orders, and Knight-postulate of St John of Jerusalem,” &c. &c.

“ Your Excellency has not added your address,” said the clerk, obsequiously.

“ The Tuileries when in Paris, Zarkoe-Zeloe when in Russia. Usually incog. in England, I reside in a cottage near Osborne. When at this side of the Alps, wherever be the royal residence of the

Sovereign in the city I chance to be in." He turned to retire, and then, suddenly wheeling round, said, "Forward any letters that may come for me to my relative, who is now at the Trombetta, Turin."

"Your Excellency has forgotten to mention his name."

"So I have," said he, with a careless laugh. "It is somewhat new to me to be in a town where I am unknown. Address my letters to the care of His Highness the Duke of Lauenburg-Gluckstein;" and with a little gesture of his hand to imply that he did not exact any royal honours at his departure, he strutted out of the bank and down the street.

Few met or passed without turning to remark him, such was the contrast between his stature and his gait; for while considerably below the middle size, there was an insolent pretension in his swagger, a defiant impertinence in the stare of his fiery eyes, that seemed to seek a quarrel with each that looked at him. His was indeed that sense of overflowing prosperity, that, if it occasionally inclines the right-minded to a feeling of gratitude and thankfulness, is just as certain to impel the men of a different stamp to feats of aggressiveness and insolence. Such was indeed his mood, and he would

have hailed as the best boon of Fate the occasion for a quarrel and a duel.

The contempt he felt for the busy world that moved by, too deep in its own cares to interpret the defiance he threw around him, so elevated him, that he swaggered along as if the flagway were all his own.

Was he not triumphant? What had not gone well with him? Gold in his pocket, success in a personal combat with a man so highly placed that it was a distinction to him for life to have encountered: the very peremptory order he received to quit Naples at once, was a recognition of his importance that actually overwhelmed him with delight; and he saw in the vista before him, the time when men would stop at the windows of printshops to gaze on the features of "Le fameux M'Caskey."

There was something glorious in his self-conceit, for there was nothing he would not dare, to achieve that estimation which he had already conceived of his own abilities. At the time I now speak of, there was a momentary lull in the storm of Italian politics caused by Count Cavour's crafty negotiations with the Neapolitan Government — negotiations solely devised to induce that false sense of security which was to end in downfall and ruin. Whether

M'Caskey had any forebodings of what was to come or not, he knew well that it was not the moment for men like himself to be needed. "When the day of action comes, will come the question, 'Where is M'Caskey?' Meanwhile I will be off to Baden. I feel as though I ought to break the bank."

To Baden he went. How many are there who can recall that bustling, pretentious, over-dressed little fellow, who astonished the pistol-gallery by his shooting, and drove the poor *maitre d'armes* to the verge of despair by his skill with the rapier, and then swaggered into the play-room to take the first chair he pleased, only too happy if he could provoke any to resent it. How he frowned down the men and ogled the women; smiling blandly at the beauties that passed, as though in recognition of charms their owners might well feel proud of, for they had captivated a M'Caskey! How sumptuous, too, his dinner; how rare and curious his wines; how obsequious were they who waited on him; what peril impended over the man that asked to be served before him!

Strong men—men in all the vigour of their youth and strength—men of honour and men of tried courage, passed and repassed, looked at, but never

dreamed of provoking him. Absurd as he was in dress, ridiculous in his overweening pretension, not one ventured on the open sneer at what each in his secret heart despised for its vulgar insolence. And what a testimony to pluck was there in all this! for to what other quality in such a man's nature had the world consented to have paid homage?

Not one of those who made way for him would have stooped to know him. There was not a man of those who controlled his gravity to respect a degree of absurdity actually laughable, who would have accepted his acquaintance at any price; and yet, for all that, he moved amongst them there, exacting every deference that was accorded to the highest, and undeniably inferior to none about him.

What becomes of the cant that classes the courage of men with the instincts of the lowest brutes in presence of a fact like this? or must we not frankly own, that in the respect paid to personal daring we read the avowal that, however constituted men may be, courage is a quality that all must reverence?

Not meeting with the resistance he had half hoped for, denied none of the claims he preferred, M'Caskey became bland and courteous. He vouchsafed a nod to the croupier at the play-table, and

manifested, by a graceful gesture as he took his seat, that the company need not rise as he deigned to join them.

In little more than a week after his arrival he had become famous; he was splendid, too, in his largesses to waiters and lackeys; and it is a problem that might be somewhat of a puzzle to resolve, how far the sentiments of the very lowest class can permeate the rank above them, and make themselves felt in the very highest; for this very estimation, thus originating, grew at last to be at least partially entertained by others of a very superior station. It was then that men discussed with each other who was this strange Count—of what nation? Five modern languages had he been heard to talk in, without a flaw even of accent. What country he served? Whence and what his resources? It was when newspaper correspondents began vaguely to hint at an interesting stranger, whose skill in every weapon was only equalled by his success at play, &c., that he disappeared as suddenly as he had come, but not without leaving ample matter for wonder in the telegraphic despatch he sent off a few hours before starting, and which, in some form more or less garbled, was currently talked of in society. It was addressed to M. Mocquard, Tuile-

ries, Paris, and in these words: "Tell the E. I shall meet him at Compiègne on Saturday."

Could anything be more delightfully intimate? While the crafty idlers of Baden were puzzling their heads as to who he might be who could thus write to an imperial secretary, the writer was travelling at all speed through Switzerland, but so totally disguised in appearance that not even the eye of a detective could have discovered in the dark-haired, black-bearded, and sedate-looking Colonel Chamberlayne the fiery-faced and irascible Count M'Caskey.

A very brief telegram in a cipher well known to him was the cause of his sudden departure. It ran thus: "Wanted at Chambery in all haste." And at Chambery, at the Golden Lamb, did he arrive with a speed which few save himself knew how to compass. Scarcely had he entered the arched doorway of the inn, than a traveller, preceded by his luggage, met him. They bowed, as people do who encounter in a passage, but without acquaintance; and yet in that brief courtesy the stranger had time to slip a letter into M'Caskey's hand, who passed in with all the ease and unconcern imaginable. Having ordered dinner, he went to his room to dress, and then, locking his door, he read:—

“The Cabinet courier of the English Government will pass Chambéry on the night of Saturday the 18th, or on the morning of Sunday the 19th. He will be the bearer of three despatch-bags, two large and one small one, bearing the letters F. O. and the number 18 on it. You are to possess yourself of this, if possible—the larger bags are not required. If you succeed, make for Naples by whatever route you deem best and speediest, bearing in mind that the loss may possibly be known at Turin within a brief space.

“If the contents be as suspected, and all goes well, you are a made man. C. C.”

M'Caskey read this over three several times, dwelling each time on the same places, and then he arose and walked leisurely up and down the room. He then took out his guide-book and saw that a train started for St Jean de Maurienne at six, arriving at eight,—a short train, not in correspondence with any other; and as the railroad ended there, the remainder of the journey, including the passage of Mont Cenis, must be performed by carriage. Of course, it was in this short interval the feat must be accomplished, if at all.

The waiter announced “his Excellency's” dinner

while he thus cogitated, and he descended and dined heartily; he even ordered a bottle of very rare chambertin, which stood at eighteen francs in the *carte*. He sipped his wine at his ease; he had full an hour before the train started, and he had time for reflection as well as enjoyment. "You are to possess yourself of this," muttered he, reading from a turned-down part of the note—"had you been writing to any other man in Europe, Signor Conte Caffarelli, you would have been profuse enough of your directions: you would have said, 'You are to shoot this fellow—you are to waylay him—you are to have him attacked and come to his rescue,' and a score more of suchlike contrivances; but—to me—to ME—there was none of this. It was just as Bonaparte said to Desaix at Marengo—'Ride through the centre'—he never added how. A made man! I should think so! The man has been made some years since, sir. Another bottle, waiter, and mind that it be not shaken. Who was it—I can't remember—stopped a Russian courier with despatches for Constantinople? Ay, to be sure, it was Long Wellesley; he told me the story himself. It was a clumsy trick, too; he upset his sledge in the snow, and made off with the bags, and got great credit for the feat at home."

“The train will start in a quarter of an hour, sir,” said the waiter.

“Not if I am not ready, my good fellow,” said the Major—“though now I see nothing to detain me, and I will go.”

Alone in his first-class, he had leisure to think over his plans. Much depended on who might be the courier. He knew most of them well, and speculated on the peculiar traits of this or that. “If it be Bromley, he will have his own calèche; Airlie will be for the cheap thing, and take the diligence; and Poynder will be on the look-out for some one to join him, and pay half the post-horses and all the postilions. There are half-a-dozen more of these fellows on this ‘dodge,’ but I defy the craftiest of them to know me now;” and he took out a little pocket-glass, and gazed complacently at his features. “Colonel Moore Chamberlayne, A.D.C., on his way to Corfu, with despatches for the Lord High Commissioner. A very soldier-like fellow too,” added he, arranging his whiskers, “but, I shrewdly suspect, a bit of a Tartar. Yes, that’s the ticket,” added he, with a smile at his image in the glass, “despatches of great importance for Storks at Corfu.”

Arrived at St Jean, he learned that the mail train

from France did not arrive till 11.20, ample time for all his arrangements. He also learned that the last English messenger had left his calèche at Susa, and, except one light carriage with room for only two, there was nothing on that side of the mountain but the diligence. This conveyance he at once secured, ordering the postilion to be in the saddle and ready to start, if necessary, when the mail train came in. "It is just possible," said he, "that the friend I am expecting may not arrive, in which case I shall await the next train; but if he comes, you must drive your best, my man, for I shall want to catch the first train for Susa in the morning." Saying this, he retired to his room, where he had many things to do,—so many, indeed, that he had but just completed them when the shriek of the engine announced that the train was coming—the minute after, the long line dashed into the station and came to a stand.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE MESSENGER'S FIRST JOURNEY.

As the train glided smoothly into the station, M'Caskey passed down the platform peering into each carriage as if in search of an expected friend. "Not come," muttered he, in a voice of displeasure loud enough to be heard by the solitary first-class passenger, who soon after emerged with some enormous bags of white linen massively sealed, and bearing addresses in parchment.

"I beg pardon," said M'Caskey, approaching and touching his hat in salute. "Are you with despatches?"

"Yes," said the other, in some astonishment at the question.

"Have you a bag for *me*?" and then suddenly correcting himself with a little smile at the error of his supposing he must be universally known, added, "I mean for the Hon. Colonel Chamberlayne."

"I have nothing that is not addressed to a legation," said the other, trying to pass on.

"Strange! they said I should receive some further instructions by the first messenger. Sorry to have detained you—good evening."

The young man—for he was young—was already too deep in an attempt to inquire in French after a carriage, to hear the last words, and continued to ask various inattentive bystanders certain questions about a calèche that ought to have been left by somebody in somebody's care for the use of somebody else.

"Is it true, can you tell me?" said he, running after M'Caskey. "They say that there is no conveyance here over the mountain except the diligence."

"I believe it is quite true," said the "Colonel," gravely.

"And they say too that the diligence never, at this season, arrives in time to catch the early train at—I forget the place."

"At Susa?"

"Yes, that's it."

"They are perfectly correct in all that; and knowing it so well, and as my despatches are urgent, I sent on my own light carriage here from Geneva."

“And have you despatches too?” asked the other, whom we may as well announce to the reader as Tony Butler. “Have you despatches too?” cried he, in great delight at meeting something like a colleague.

“Yes; I take out orders for the Lord High Commissioner to Corfu. I am the head of the Staff there.”

Tony bowed in recognition of the announced rank, and said quietly, “My name is Butler. I am rather new to this sort of thing, and never crossed the Alps in my life.”

“I’ll give you a lift, then, for I have a spare place. My servant has gone round with my heavy baggage by Trieste, and I have a seat to spare.”

“This is most kind of you, but I scarcely dare put you to such inconvenience.”

“Don’t talk of that. We are all in the same boat. It’s my luck to have this to offer, to-day—it will be yours to-morrow. What’s your destination?”

“First Turin, then Naples; but I believe I shall have no delay at Turin, and the Naples bags are the most urgent ones.”

“Is there anything going on down there, then?” asked M’Caskey, carelessly.

“I suspect there must be, for three of our fellows

have been sent there—I am the fourth within a fortnight.”

“A country that never interested me. Take a cigar. Are you ready, or do you want to eat something?”

“No, I am quite ready, and only anxious not to be late for this first train. The fact is, it’s all a new sort of life to me, and as I am a wretchedly bad Frenchman, I don’t get on too well.”

“The great secret is, be peremptory, never listen to excuses, tolerate no explanations. That’s my plan. I pay liberally, but I insist on having what I want.”

They were now seated, and dashing along at all the speed and with all the noise of four wiry posters, and M’Caskey went on to describe how with that system of united despotism and munificence he had travelled over the whole globe with success. As for the anecdotes he told, they embraced every land and sea; and there was scarcely an event of momentous importance of the last quarter of a century of which he had not some curious private details. He was the first man to discover the plans of Russia on the Pruth. It was he found out Louis Philippe’s intrigue about the Spanish marriages. “If you feel interest in this sort of thing,” said he, carelessly,

“just tell the fellows at home to show you the blue-book with Chamberlayne’s correspondence. It is private and confidential; but, as a friend of mine, you can see it.” And what generosity of character he had! he had let Seymour carry off all the credit of that detection of Russia. “To be sure,” added he, “one can’t forget old times, and Seymour was my fag at Eton.” It was he, too, counselled Lord Elgin to send off the troops from China to Calcutta to assist in repressing the Mutiny. “Elgin hesitated; he couldn’t make up his mind; he thought this at one moment and that the next; and he sent for me at last and said, ‘George, I want a bit of advice from you.’ ‘I know what you mean,’ said I, stopping him; ‘send every man of them—don’t hold back a drummer.’ I will say,” he added, “he had the honesty to own from whom he got that counsel, and he was greatly provoked when he found I could not be included in the vote of thanks of the House. ‘Confound their etiquette,’ said he; ‘it is due to George, and he ought to have it.’ You don’t know why I’m in such haste to Corfu now?”

“I have not the faintest notion.”

“I will tell you; first, because a man can always trust a gentleman; secondly, it will be matter of table-talk by the time you get back. The Tories

are in need of the Radicals, and to buy their support intend to offer the throne of Greece, which will be vacant whenever we like, to Richard Cobden."

"How strange! and would he accept it?"

"Some say no; *I* say yes; and Louis Napoléon, who knows men thoroughly, agrees with me. '*Mon cher Cham*'—he always called me Cham—'talk as people will, it is a very pleasant thing to sit on a throne, and it goes far towards one's enjoyment of life to have so many people employed all day long to make it agreeable.'" If Tony thought at times that his friend was a little vainglorious, he ascribed it to the fact that any man so intimate with the great people of the world, talking of them as his ordinary everyday acquaintances, might reasonably appear such to one as much removed from all such intercourse as he himself was. That the man who could say, "Nesselrode, don't tell me," or "Rechberg, my good fellow, you are in error there!" should be now sitting beside him, sharing his sandwich with him, and giving him to drink from his sherry-flask; was not that glory enough to turn a stronger head than poor Tony's? Ah, my good reader, I know well that *you* would not have been caught by such blandishments. You have "seen men and cities."

You have been at courts, dined beside royalties, and been smiled on by serene highnesses: but Tony has not had your training; he has had none of these experiences; he has heard of great names just as he has heard of great victories. The illustrious people of the earth are no more within the reach of his estimation than are the jewels of a Mogul's turban; but it is all the more fascinating to him to sit beside one who "knows it all."

Little wonder, then, if time sped rapidly, and that he never knew weariness. Let him start what theme he might, speak of what land, what event, what person he pleased, the Colonel was ready for him. It was marvellous indeed—so very marvellous, that to a suspicious mind it might have occasioned distrust—with how many great men he had been at school, what shoals of distinguished fellows he had served with. With a subtle flattery, too, he let drop the remark, that he was not usually given to be so frank and communicative. "The fact is," said he, "young men are, for the most part, bad listeners to the experiences of men of my age; they fancy that they know life as well if not better than ourselves, and that our views are those of 'bygones.' *You*, however, showed none of this spirit; you were willing to hear and to learn from

one of whom it would be false modesty were I not to say, Few know more of men and their doings."

Now Tony liked this appreciation of him, and he said to himself, "He *is* a clever fellow—not a doubt of it: he never saw me till this evening, and yet he knows me thoroughly well." Seeing how the Colonel had met with everybody, he resolved he would get from him his opinion of some of his own friends, and, to lead the way, asked if he was acquainted with the members of the English Legation at Turin.

"I know Bathurst; we *were* intimate," said he; "but we once were in love with the same woman—the mother of an empress she is now—and as I rather 'cut him out' a coldness ensued, and somehow we never resumed our old footing. As for Croker, the Secretary, it was I got him that place."

"And Damer—Skeff Damer—do you know him?"

"I should think I do. I was his godfather."

"He's the greatest friend I have in the world!" cried Tony, in ecstasy at this happy accident.

"I made him drop Chamberlayne. It was his second name, and I was vain enough to be annoyed that it was not his first. Is he here now?"

“Yes, he is attached to the Legation, and sometimes here, and sometimes at Naples.”

“Then we’ll make him give us a dinner to-day, for I shall refuse Bathurst: he is sure to ask me; but you will tell Damer that we are both engaged to *him*.”

Tony only needed to learn the tie that bound his newly-made acquaintance with his dearest friend to launch freely out about himself and his new fortunes; he told all about the hard usage his father had met with—the services he had rendered his country in India and elsewhere, and the ungenerous requital he had met for them all. “That is why you see me here a messenger, instead of being a soldier, like all my family for seven generations back. I won’t say I like it—that wouldn’t be true; but I do it because it happens to be one of the few things I *can* do.”

“That’s a mistake, sir,” said the Colonel, fiercely; “a mistake thousands fall into every day. A man can make of life whatever he likes, if only—mark me well—if only his will be strong enough.”

“If wishing would do it——”

“Hold! I’m not talking of wishing; schoolboys wish, pale-cheeked freshmen at college, goggle-eyed ensigns in marching regiments, wish. Men,

real men, do not wish; they will—that's all the difference. Strong men make a promise to themselves early in life, and they feel it a point of honour to keep it. As Rose said one day in the club at Calcutta, speaking of me, 'He has got the Bath, just because he said he would get it.' ”

“The theory is a very pleasant one.”

“You can make the practice just as pleasant, if you like it. Whenever you take your next leave—they give you leave, don't they?”

“Yes, three months; we might have more, I believe, if we asked for it.”

“Well, come and spend your next leave with me at Corfu. You shall have some good shooting over in Albania, plenty of mess society, pleasant yachting, and you'll like our old Lord High—he's stiff and cold at first, but, introduced by *me*, you'll be at once amongst the 'most favoured nations.' ”

“I can't thank you enough for so kind a proposal,” began Tony; but the other stopped him with, “Don't thank me, but help me to take care of this bag. It contains the whole fate of the Levant in its inside. Those sacks of yours—I suppose you know what they have for contents?”

“No; I have no idea what's in them.”

“Old blue-books and newspapers, nothing else;

they're all make-believes—a farce to keep up the notion that great activity prevails at the Foreign Office, and to fill up that paragraph in the newspapers, 'Despatches were yesterday sent off to the Lord High Commissioner of the Bahamas,' or Her Majesty's minister at Otaheite. Here we are at the rail now—that's Susa. Be alive, for I see the smoke, and the steam must be up."

They were just in time; the train was actually in motion when they got in, and, as the Colonel, who kept up a rapid conversation with the station-master, informed Tony, nothing would have induced them to delay but having seen himself. "They knew me," said he; "they remembered my coming down here last autumn with the Prince de Carignan and Cavour." And once more had Tony to thank his stars for having fallen into such companionship.

As they glided along towards Turin, the Colonel told Tony that if he found the Weazle gunboat at Genoa, as he expected, waiting for him, he would set him, Tony, and his despatches, down safely at Naples, as he passed on to Malta. "If it's the Growler," said he, "I'll not promise you, because Hurton the commander is not in good-humour with me. I refused to recommend him the other day to the First Lord for promotion—say nothing about

this to the fellows at the Legation; indeed, don't mention anything about me, except to Damer—for the dinner, you know."

"I suppose I ought to go straight to the Legation at once," said Tony, as they entered Turin; "my orders are to deliver the bags before anything else."

"Certainly; let us drive there straight—there's nothing like doing things regularly; I'm a martinet about all duty;" and so they drove to the Legation, where Tony, throwing one large sack to the porter, shouldered the other himself, and passed in.

"Holloa!" cried the Colonel; "I'll give you ten minutes, and if you're not down by that time, I'll go off and order breakfast at the inn."

"All right," said Tony; "this fellow says that Damer is at Naples."

"I knew that," muttered the Colonel to himself; and then added aloud, "Be alive and come down as quick as you can"—he looked at his watch as he spoke; it wanted five minutes to eight—"at five minutes past eight the train should start for Genoa."

He seized the small despatch-bag in his hand, and, telling the cabman to drive to the Hotel Feder and wait for him there, he made straight for the railroad. He was just in the nick; and while

Tony was impatiently pacing an ante-room of the Legation, the other was already some miles on the way to Genoa.

At last, a very sleepy-looking attaché, in a dressing-gown and slippers, made his appearance. "Nothing but these," said he, yawning and pointing to the great sacks.

"No ; nothing else for Turin."

"Then why the —— did you knock me up— when it's only a shower-bath and Greydon's boot-trees?"

"How the —— did I know what was in them?" said Tony, as angrily.

"You must be precious green, then. When were you made?"

"When was I made?"

"Yes ; when were you named a messenger?"

"Some time in spring."

"I thought you must be an infant, or you'd know that it's only the small bags are of any consequence."

"Have you anything more to say? I want to get a bath and my breakfast."

"I've a lot more to say, and I shall have to tell Sir Joseph you're here ; and I shall have to sign your time-bill, and to see if we haven't got some-

thing for Naples. You're for Naples, an't you? And I want to send Damer some cigars and a pot of caviare that's been here these two months, and that he must have smelled from Naples."

"Then be hasty, for heaven's sake, for I'm starving."

"You're starving! how strange, and it only eight o'clock! Why, we don't breakfast here till one, and I rarely eat anything."

"So much the worse for you," said Tony, gruffly. "My appetite is excellent, if I only had a chance to gratify it."

"What's the news in town—is there anything stirring?"

"Not that *I* know."

"Has Lumley engaged Teresina again?"

"Never heard of her."

"He ought; tell him *I* said so. She's fifty times better than La Gradina. Our *chef* here," added he, in a whisper, "says she has better legs than Pochini."

"I am charmed to hear it. Would you just tell him that mine are getting very tired here?"

"Will Lawson pay that handicap to George Hobart?"

Tony shook his head, to imply total ignorance of all concerned.

“ He needn’t, you know ; at least Saville Harris refused to book up to Whitemare on exactly the same grounds. It was just this way : here was the winning-post—no, here ; that seal there was the grand stand ; when the mare came up, she was second. I don’t think you care for racing, eh ? ”

“ A steeple-chase ; yes, particularly when I’m a rider. But what I care most for just now is, a plunge into cold water and a good breakfast.”

There was something actually touching in the commiserating look the attaché gave Tony as he turned away and left the room. What was the public service to come to if these were the fellows to be named as messengers !

In a very few minutes he was back again in the room. “ Where’s Naples ? ” asked he, curtly.

“ Where’s Naples ? Where it always was, I suppose,” said Tony, doggedly—“ in the Gulf of that name.”

“ I mean the bag—the Naples bag ; it is under flying seal, and Sir Joseph wants to see the despatches.”

“ Oh, that is below in the cab. I’ll go down and fetch it,” and without waiting for more he hastened down-stairs. The cab was gone. “ Naturally

enough," thought Tony, "he got tired waiting; he's off to order breakfast."

He hurried up-stairs again to report that a friend with whom he travelled had just driven away to the hotel with all the baggage.

"And the bags!" cried the other, in a sort of horror.

"Yes, the bags, of course; but I'll go after him. What's the chief hotel called?"

"The Trombetta."

"I don't think that was the name."

"The Czar de Russie?"

"No, nor that."

"Perhaps Feder?"

"Yes, that's it. Just send some one to show me the way, and I'll be back immediately. I suspect my unlucky breakfast must be prorogued to luncheon time."

"Not a bit of it!" cried a fine, fresh-looking, handsome man, who entered the room with a riding-whip in his hand; "come in and take share of mine."

"He has to go over to Feder's for the bags, Sir Joseph," whispered the attaché, submissively.

"Send the porter—send Jasper—send any one you like. Come along," said he, drawing his

arm within Tony's. "You've not been in Italy before, and your first impression ought to be favourable; so I'll introduce you to a Mont Cenis trout."

"And I'll profit by the acquaintance," said Tony. "I have the appetite of a wolf."

CHAPTER XLV.

A SHOCK FOR TONY.

IF Tony Butler took no note of time as he sat at breakfast with Sir Joseph, he was only sharing the fortune of every man who ever found himself in that companionship. From one end of Europe to the other his equal could not be found. It was not alone that he had stores of conversation for the highest capacities and the most cultivated minds, but he possessed that thorough knowledge of life so interesting to men of the world, and with it that insight into character which is so often the key to the mystery of statecraft; and with all these he had a geniality and a winning grace of look, voice, and demeanour that sent one from his presence with the thought that, if the world could but compass a few more like him, one would not change the planet for the brightest in the firmament. Breakfast over, they smoked; then they had a game at billiards;

after that they strolled into the garden, and had some pistol-firing. Here Tony acquitted himself creditably, and rose in his host's esteem; for the Minister liked a man who could do anything—no matter what—very well. Tony, too, gained on him. His own fine joyous nature understood at once the high-hearted spirit of a young fellow who had no affectations about him, thoroughly at his ease without presumption; and yet, through that gentleman element so strong in him, never transgressing the limits of a freedom so handsomely accorded him.

While the hours rolled over thus delightfully, a messenger returned to say that he had been at each of the great hotels, but could find no trace of Colonel Chamberlayne, nor of the missing bags.

“Send Moorcap,” said the minister.

Moorcap was away two hours, and came back with the same story.

“I suspect how it is,” said Tony. “Chamberlayne has been obliged to start suddenly, and has carried off my bags with his own; but when he discovers his mistake, he'll drop them at Naples.”

Sir Joseph smiled—perhaps he did not think the explanation very satisfactory; and perhaps—who knows?—but he thought that the loss of a despatch-bag was not amongst the heaviest of human

calamities. "At all events," he said, "we'll give you an early dinner, Butler, and you can start by the late train for Genoa, and catch the morning steamer to Naples."

Tony asked no better; and I am afraid to have to confess that he engaged at a game of "pool" with all the zest of one who carried no weighty care on his breast.

When the time for leave-taking came, Sir Joseph shook his hand with cordial warmth, telling him to be sure to dine with him as he came through Turin. "Hang up your hat here, Butler; and if I should be from home, tell them that you are come to dinner."

Very simple words these. They cost little to him who spoke them, but what a joy and happiness to poor Tony! Oh, ye gentlemen of high place and station, if you but knew how your slightest words of kindness—your two or three syllables of encouragement—give warmth and glow and vigour to many a poor wayfarer on life's highroad, imparting a sense not alone of hope, but of self-esteem, to a nature too distrustful of itself, mayhap you might be less chary of that which, costing you so little, is wealth unspeakable to him it is bestowed upon. Tony went on his way rejoicing; he left that thresh-

old, as many others had left it, thinking far better of the world and its people, and, without knowing it, very proud of the notice of one whose favour he felt to be fame. Ah, thought he, if Alice had but heard how that great man spoke to me—if Alice only saw how familiarly he treated me,—it might show her, perhaps, that others at least can see in me some qualities not altogether hopeless.

If now and then some thought of that “unlucky bag”—so he called it to himself—would invade, he dismissed it speedily, with the assurance that it had already safely reached its destination, and that the Colonel and Skeffy had doubtless indulged in many a hearty laugh over his embarrassment at its loss. “If they knew but all,” muttered he, “I take it very coolly. I’m not breaking my heart over the disaster.” And so far he was right—not, however, from the philosophical indifference that he imagined, but simply because he never believed in the calamity, nor had realised it to himself.

When he landed at Naples he drove off at once to the lodgings of his friend Damer, which, though at a considerable height from the ground, in a house of the St Lucia Quarter, he found were dignified with the title of British Legation, a written notice on the door informing all readers that “H. B. M.’s

Chargé d’Affaires transacted business from twelve to four every day.” It was two o’clock when Tony arrived, and, notwithstanding the aforesaid announcement, he had to ring three times before the door was opened. At length a sleepy-looking valet appeared to say that “His Excellency”—he styled him so—was in his bath, and could not be seen in less than an hour. Tony sent in his name, and speedily received for answer that he would find a letter addressed to him in the rack over the chimney, and Mr Damer would be dressed and with him by the time he had read it.

Poor Tony’s eyes swam with tears as he saw his mother’s handwriting, and he tore open the sheet with hot impatience. It was very short, as were all her letters, and so we give it entire:—

“MY OWN DARLING TONY,—Your beautiful present reached me yesterday, and what shall I say to my poor reckless boy for such an act of extravagance? Surely, Tony, it was made for a queen, and not for a poor widow that sits the day long mending her stockings at the window. But ain’t I proud of it, and of him that sent it! Heaven knows what it has cost you, my dear boy, for even the carriage here from London, by the Royal Parcel Company,

Limited, came to thirty-two and fourpence. Why they call themselves Limited after that, is clean beyond my comprehension." If Tony smiled here, it was with a hot and flushed cheek, for he had forgotten to prepay the whole carriage, and he was vexed at his thoughtlessness.

"As to my wearing it going to meeting, as you say, it's quite impossible. The thought of its getting wet would be a snare to take my mind off the blessed words of the minister; and I'm not sure, my dear Tony, that any congregation could sit profitably within sight of what—not knowing the love that sent it—would seem like a temptation and a vanity before men. Sables, indeed, real Russian sables, appear a strange covering for these old shoulders.

"It was about two hours after it came that Mrs Trafford called in to see me, and Jeanie would have it that I'd go into the room with my grand new cloak on me; and sure enough I did, Tony, trying all the while not to seem as if it was anything strange or uncommon, but just the sort of wrapper I'd throw round me of a cold morning. But it wouldn't do, my dear Tony. I was half-afraid to sit down on it, and I kept turning out the purple-satin lining so often that Mrs Trafford said at last, 'Will

you forgive my admiration of your cloak, Mrs Butler, but I never saw one so beautiful before;’ and then I told her who it was that sent it; and she got very red and then very pale, and then walked to the window, and said something about a shower that was threatening; though, sooth to say, Tony, the only threat of rain I could see was in her own blue eyes. But she turned about gaily and said, ‘We are going away, Mrs Butler—going abroad;’ and before I could ask why or where, she told me in a hurried sort of way that her sister Isabella had been ordered to pass a winter in some warm climate, and that they were going to try Italy. She said it all in a strange quick voice, as if she didn’t like to talk of it, and wanted it over; but she grew quite herself again when she said that the gardener would take care that my flowers came regularly, and that Sir Arthur and Lady Lyle would be more than gratified if I would send up for anything I liked out of the garden. ‘Don’t forget that the melons were all of Tony’s sowing, Mrs Butler,’ said she, smiling; and I could have kissed her for the way she said it.

“There were many other kind things she said, and in a way, too, that made them more than kind; so that when she went away, I sat thinking if it

was not a temptation to meet a nature like hers—so sweet, so lovely, and yet so worldly; for in all she spoke, Tony, there was never a word dropped of what sinful creatures we are, and what a thorny path it is that leads us to the better life before us.

“ I was full of her visit, and everything she said, when Dr Stewart dropped in to say that they had been down again at the Burnside to try and get him to let Dolly go abroad with them. ‘ I never liked the notion, Mrs Butler,’ said he, ‘ but I was swayed here and swayed there by my thoughts for the lass, what was best for her body’s health, and that other health that is of far more value ; when there came a letter to me (it was anonymous), saying, “ Before you suffer your good and virtuous daughter to go away to a foreign land, just ask the lady that is to protect her if she still keeps up the habit of moonlight walks in a garden with a gentleman for her companion, and if that be the sort of teaching she means to inculcate.” Mrs Trafford came to the door as I was reading the letter, and I said, “ What can you make of such a letter as this?” and as she read it her cheek grew purple, and she said, “ There is an end of our proposal, Dr Stewart. Tell your daughter I shall importune her no more ; but this letter I mean to keep: it is in a hand I know well.”

And she went back to the carriage without another word ; and to-morrow they leave the Abbey, some say, not to come back again.'

" I cried the night through after the Doctor went away, for what a world it is of sin and misery ; not that I will believe wrong of her, sweet and beautiful as she is, but what for was she angry ? and why did she show that this letter could give her such pain ? And now, my dear Tony, since it could be no other than yourself she walked alone with, is it not your duty to write to the Doctor and tell him so ? The pure heart fears not the light, neither are the good of conscience afraid. That she is above your hope is no reason that she is above your love. That I was your father's wife may show that ! Above all, Tony, think that a Gospel minister should not harbour an evil thought of one who does not deserve it, and whose mightiest sin is perchance the pride that scorns a self-defence.

" The poor Doctor is greatly afflicted : he is sorry now that he showed the letter, and Dolly cries over it night and day.

" Is it not a strange thing that Captain Graham's daughters, that never were used to come here, are calling at the Burnside two or three times a-week ?

" Write to me, my dear Tony, and if you think

well of what I said, write to the Doctor also, and believe me your ever-loving mother,

“ELEANOR BUTLER.

“Dolly Stewart has recovered her health again, but not her spirits. She rarely comes to see me, but I half suspect that her reason is her dislike to show me the depression that is weighing over her. So is it, dear Tony, go where you will: there is no heart without its weary load, no spirit without that touch of sorrow that should teach submission. Reflect well over this, dear boy; and never forget that though at times we put off our troubles as a way-farer lays down his pack, we must just strap on the load again when we take to the road, for it is a burden we have to bear to the journey’s end.”

Not all the moral reflections of this note saved it from being crushed passionately in his hand as he finished reading it. That walk, that moonlight walk, with whom could it have been? with whom but Maitland? And it was by her—by her that his whole heart was filled—her image, her voice, her gait, her smile, her faintest whisper, that made up the world in which he lived. Who could love her as *he* did? Others would have their hopes and ambi-

tions, their dreams of worldly success, and such-like; but he—he asked none of these; *her* heart was all he strove for. With her he would meet any fortune. He knew she was above him in every way—as much by every gift and grace as by every accident of station; but what did that signify? The ardour of his love glowed only the stronger for the difficulty—just as his courage would have mounted the higher, the more hazardous the feat that dared it. These were his reasonings—or rather some shadowy shapes of these flitted through his mind.

And was it now all over? was the star that had guided him so long to be eclipsed from him? was he never again to ask himself in a moment of difficulty or doubt, What will Alice say?—what will Alice think? As for the scandalous tongues that dared to asperse her, he scorned them; and he was indignant with the old minister for not making that very letter itself the reason of accepting a proposal he had been until then averse to. He should have said, “*Now* there can be no hesitation—Dolly must go with you *now*.” It was just as his musings got thus far that Skeffy rushed into the room and seized him by both hands.

“Ain’t I glad to see your great sulky face again? Sit down and tell me everything—how you came—

when—how long you're to stay—and what brought you here."

"I came with despatches—that is, I ought to have had them."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that some of the bags I left at Turin; and one small fellow, which I take to have been the cream of the correspondence, Chamberlayne carried on here—at least I hope so. Haven't you got it?"

"What infernal muddle are your brains in? Who is Chamberlayne?"

"Come, come, Skeffy, I'm not in a joking mood;" and he glanced at the letter in his hand as he spoke. "Don't worry me, old fellow, but say that you have got the bag all right."

"But I have not. I never saw it—never heard of it."

"And has the Colonel not been here?"

"Who is the Colonel?"

"Chamberlayne."

"And who is Chamberlayne?"

"That *is* cool, certainly; I think a man might acknowledge his godfather?"

"Whose godfather is he?"

"Yours—your own. Perhaps you'll deny that

you were christened after him, and called Chamberlayne ? ”

Skeffy threw up his embroidered cap in the air at these words, and, flinging himself on a sofa, actually screamed with laughter. “Tony,” cried he at last, “this will immortalise you. Of all the exploits performed by messengers, this one takes the van.”

“Look here, Damer,” said Tony, sternly: “I have told you already I’m in no laughing humour; I’ve had enough here to take the jollity out of me”—and he shook the letter in his hand—“for many a day to come; so that whatever you have to say to me, bear in mind that you say it to one little disposed to good-humour. Is it true that you have not received these despatches ? ”

“Perfectly true.”

“Then how are we to trace him? His name is Colonel Moore Chamberlayne, aide-de-camp to the Lord High Commissioner, Corfu.”

Skeffy bit his lip, and by a great effort succeeded in repressing the rising temptation to another scream of laughter, and, taking down a bulky red-covered volume from a shelf, began to turn over its pages. “There,” said he at last—“there is the whole Staff at Corfu; Hailes, Winchester, Corbett, and Ainslie. No Chamberlayne amongst them.”

Tony stared at the page in hopeless bewilderment. "What do you know of him? Who introduced you to each other? Where did you meet?" asked Skeffy.

"We met at the foot of the Mont Cenis, where, seeing that I had despatches, and no means to get forward, he offered me a seat in his calèche. I accepted gladly, and we got on capitally: he was immense fun; he knew everybody, and had been everywhere; and when he told me that he was your godfather——"

"Stop, stop! for the love of heaven will you stop, or you'll kill me!" cried Skeffy, and, throwing himself on his back on the sofa, he flung his legs into the air, and yelled aloud with laughter.

"Do you know, Master Damer, I'm sorely tempted to pitch you neck and crop out of the window?" said Tony, savagely.

"Do so, do so, by all means, if you like; only let me have my laugh out, or I shall burst a blood-vessel."

Tony made no reply, but walked up and down the room with his brow bent and his arms folded.

"And then?" cried Skeff—"and then? What came next?"

"It is your opinion, then," said Tony, sternly,

“that this fellow was a swindler, and not on the Staff at all?”

“No more than he was my godfather!” cried Damer, wiping his eyes.

“And that the whole was a planned scheme to get hold of the despatches?”

“Of course. Filangieri knows well that we are waiting for important instructions here. There is not a man calls here who is not duly reported to him by his secret police.”

“And why didn’t Sir Joseph think of that when I told him what had happened? All he said was, ‘Be of good cheer, Butler; the world will go round even after the loss of a despatch-bag.’”

“So like him,” said Skeffy; “the levity of that man is the ruin of him. They all say so at the Office.”

“I don’t know what they say at the Office; but I can declare that so perfect a gentleman and so fine a fellow I never met before.”

Skeffy turned to the glass over the chimney, smoothed his mustaches, and pointed their tips most artistically, smiling gracefully at himself, and seeming to say, “You and I, if we were not too modest, could tell of some one fully his equal.”

“And what’s to be done—what’s to come of this?” asked Tony, after a short silence.

“ I’ll have to report you, Master Tony. I’ll have to write home—‘ My Lord,—The messenger Butler arrived here this morning to say that he confided your Lordship’s despatches and private instructions to a most agreeable gentleman, whose acquaintance he made at St Jean de Maurienne; and that the fascinating stranger, having apparently not mastered their contents up to the present——’ ”

“ Go to the—— ”

“ No, Tony, I shall not; but I think it not at all improbable that such will be the destination his Lordship will assign assistant-messenger Butler. The fact is, my boy, your career in our department is ended.”

“ With all my heart! Except for that fine fellow I saw at Turin, I think I never met such a set of narrow-minded snobs.”

“ Tony, Tony,” said the other, “ when Moses, in the ‘ Vicar of Wakefield ’—and I take it he is more familiar to you than the other of that name—was ‘ done ’ by the speculator in green spectacles, he never inveighed against those who had unfortunately confided their interests to his charge. Now, as to our department—— ”

“ Confound the department! I wish I had never heard of it. You say it’s all up with me, and of

course I suppose it is ; and, to tell you the truth, Skeffy, I don't think it signifies a great deal just now, except for that poor mother of mine." Here he turned away and wiped his eyes hurriedly. "I take it that all mothers make the same sort of blunder, and never will believe that they can have a blockhead for a son till the world has set its seal on him."

"Take a weed, and listen to me," said Skeffy, dictatorially, and he threw his cigar-case across the table as he spoke. "You have contrived to make as bad a debut in your career as is well possible to conceive."

"What's the use of telling me that? In your confounded passion for hearing yourself talk, you forget that it is not so pleasant for me to listen."

"Prisoner at the bar," continued Skeffy, "you have been convicted—you stand, indeed, self-convicted—of an act which, as we regard it, is one of gross ignorance, of incredible folly, or of inconceivable stupidity—places you in a position to excite the pity of compassionate men, the scorn of those severer moralists who accept not the extenuating circumstances of youth, unacquaintance with life, and a credulity that approaches childlike——"

"You're a confounded fool, Skeffy, to go on in

this fashion when a fellow is in such a fix as I am, not to speak of other things that are harder to bear. It's a mere toss-up whether he laughs at your nonsense or pitches you over the banisters. I've been within an ace of one and the other three times in the last five minutes; and now all my leaning is towards the last of the two."

"Don't yield to it then, Tony. Don't, I warn you."

"And why?"

"Because you'd never forgive yourself, not alone for having injured a true and faithful friend, but for the far higher and more irreparable loss in having cut short the career of a man destined to be a light to Europe. I say it in no vanity—no boastfulness. No, on my honour! if I could—if the choice were fairly given to me, I'd rather not be a man of mark and eminence. I'd rather be a commonplace, tenth-rate sort of dog like yourself."

The unaffected honesty with which he said this did for Tony what no cajolery nor flattery could have accomplished, and set him off into a roar of laughter that conquered all his spleen and ill-humour.

"Your laugh, like the laugh of the foolish, is ill-timed. You cannot see that you were introduced,

not to be stigmatised, but to point a moral. You fancy yourself a creature—you are a category; you imagine you are an individuality—you are not; you are a fragment rent from a primeval rock.”

“ I believe I ought to be as insensible as a stone to stand you. But stop all this, I say, and listen to me. I’m not much up to writing—but you’ll help me, I know; and what I want said is simply this:—‘ I have been tricked out of one of the bags by a rascal that if ever I lay hands on I’ll bring bodily before the Office at home, and make him confess the whole scheme; and I’ll either break his neck afterwards, or leave him to the law, as the Secretary of State may desire.’ ”

Now poor Tony delivered this with a tone and manner that implied he thought he was dictating a very telling and able despatch. “ I suppose,” added he, “ I am to say that I now resign my post, and I wish the devil had me when I accepted it.”

“ Not civil, certainly, to the man who gave you the appointment, Tony. Besides, when a man resigns, he has to wait for the acceptance of his resignation.”

“ Oh, as for that, there need be no ceremony. They’ll be even better pleased to get rid of me than I to go. They got a bad bargain; and, to do them

justice, they seemed to have guessed as much from the first."

"And then, Tony?"

"I'll go to sea—I'll go before the mast; there must be many a vessel here wants a hand, and in a few weeks' practice I'll master the whole thing; my old yachting experiences have done that for me."

"My poor Tony," said Skeffy, rising and throwing his arms round him, "I'll not listen to it. What! when you have a home here with me, are you to go off and brave hardship and misery and degradation?"

"There's not one of the three—I deny it. Coarse food and hard work are no misery; and I'll be hanged if there's any degradation in earning one's bread with his hands when his head is not equal to it."

"I tell you I'll not suffer it. If you drive me to it, I'll prevent it by force. I am her Majesty's Chargé d'affaires. I'll order the consul to enrol you at his peril—I'll imprison the captain that takes you—I'll detain the ship, and put the crew in irons."

"Before you do half of it, let me have some dinner," said Tony, laughing, "for I came on shore very hungry, and have eaten nothing since."

“ I’ll take you to my favourite restaurant, and you shall have a regular Neapolitan banquet, washed down by some old Capri. There, spell out that newspaper till I dress ; and if any one rings in the meanwhile, say His Excellency has just been sent for to Caserta by the King, and will not be back before to-morrow.” As he reached the door he put his head in again, and said, “ Unless, perchance, it should be my godfather, when, of course, you’ll keep him for dinner.”

CHAPTER XLVI.

“ THE BAG NO. 18.”

ALMOST overlooking the terraced garden where Damer and Tony dined, and where they sat smoking till a late hour of the night, stood a large palace, whose vast proportions and spacious entrance, as well as an emblazoned shield over the door, proclaimed it to belong to the Government. It was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ; and here now, in a room projecting over the street beneath, and supported on arches, sat the Minister himself with our two acquaintances, Maitland and Caffarelli.

Maitland was still an invalid, and rested on a sofa, but he had recovered much of his former looks and manner, though he was dressed with less care than was his wont.

The Minister—a very tall thin man, stooped in the shoulders, and with a quantity of almost white grey hair streaming on his neck and shoulders—walked

continually up and down the room, commenting and questioning, at times, as Maitland read forth from a mass of documents which littered the table, and with which Caffarelli supplied him, breaking the seals and tearing open the envelopes before he gave them to his hand.

Though Maitland read with ease, there was yet that half-hesitation in the choice of a word, as he went on, that showed he was translating; and indeed once or twice the Prince-Minister stopped to ask if he had rightly imparted all the intended force to a particular expression.

A white canvass bag, marked "F. O., No. 18," lay on the table; and it was of that same bag, and its possible fortunes, two others, not fully one hundred yards off, were then talking: so is it, that in life we are often so near to, and so remote from, the inanimate object around which our thoughts and hopes, and sometimes our very destinies, revolve.

"I am afraid," said the Prince, at last, "that we have got nothing here but the formal despatches, of which Ludolf has sent us copies already. Are there no 'Private and Confidentials'?"

"Yes, here is one for Sir Joseph Trevor himself," said Caffarelli, handing a square-shaped letter to

Maitland. Maitland glanced hurriedly over it, and muttered, "London gossip, Craddock's divorce case, the partridge-shooting—ah, here it is! 'I suppose you are right about the expedition, but say nothing of it in the despatches. We shall be called on one of these days for a blue-book, and very blue we should look, if it were seen that amidst our wise counsels to Caraffa we were secretly aware of what G. was preparing.'"

"It must be 'C. was preparing,'" broke in Caraffa; "it means Cavour."

"No; he speaks of Garibaldi," said Maitland.

"Garibaldi!" cried Caraffa, laughing. "And are there still *gobemouches* in England who believe in the Filibuster?"

"I believe in him, for one," said Maitland, fiercely, for the phrase irritated him; "and I say, too, that such a Filibuster on our side would be worth thirty thousand of those great hulking grenadiers you passed in review this morning."

"Don't tell the King so when you wait on him to-morrow, that's all!" said the Minister, with a sneering smile.

"Read on," broke in Caffarelli, who was not at all sure what the discussion might lead to.

"Perhaps, too, you would class Count Cavour

amongst these *gobemouches*," said Maitland, angrily; "for he is also a believer in Garibaldi."

"We can resume this conversation at Caserta tomorrow before his Majesty," said Caraffa, with the same mocking smile; "pray, now, let me hear the remainder of that despatch."

"'It is not easy to say,'" read he aloud from the letter, "'what France intends or wishes. C. says——'"

"Who is C.?" asked Caraffa, hastily.

"C. means Cowley, probably,—'that the Emperor would not willingly see Piedmontese troops at Naples; nor is he prepared to witness a new map of the Peninsula. We, of course, will do nothing either way.'"

"Read that again," broke in Caraffa.

"We, of course, will do nothing either way; but that resolve is not to prevent your tendering counsel with a high hand, all the more since the events which the next few months will develop will all of them seem of our provoking, and part and parcel of a matured and long-meditated policy.'"

"Benissimo!" cried the Minister, rubbing his hands in delight. "If we reform, it is the Whigs have reformed us. If we fall, it is the Whigs have crushed us."

“ ‘Caraffa, we are told,’ ” continued Maitland, “ ‘sees the danger, but is outvoted by the Queen-Dowager’s party in the Cabinet—not to say that from his great intimacy with Pietri many think him more of a Muratist than a Bourbon.’ ”

“ Per Bacco ! when your countryman tries to be acute, there is nothing too hazardous for his imagination : so, then, I am a French spy ! ”

“ ‘What you say of the army,’ ” read on Maitland, “ ‘is confirmed by our other reports. Very few of the line regiments will be faithful to the Monarchy, and even some of the artillery will go over. As to the fleet, Martin tells me they have not three seaworthy ships in the fifty-seven they reckon, nor six captains who would undertake a longer voyage than Palermo. Their only three-decker was afraid to return a salute to the Pasha, lest her old thirty-two pounders should explode ; and this is pretty much the case with the Monarchy—the first shock must shake it, even though it only come of blank cartridge.

“ ‘While events are preparing, renew all your remonstrances ; press upon Caraffa the number of untried prisoners, and the horrid condition of the prisons. Ask, of course in a friendly way, when are these abuses to cease ? Say that great hopes

of amelioration—speak generally—were conceived here on the accession of the new King, and throw in our regrets that the liberty of the press with us will occasionally lead to strictures whose severities we deplore, without being able to arraign their justice; and, lastly, declare our readiness to meet any commercial exchanges that might promise mutual advantage. This will suggest the belief that we are not in any way cognisant of Cavour's projects. In fact, I will know nothing of them, and hold myself prepared, if questioned in the House, to have had no other information than is supplied by the newspapers. Who is Maitland? None of the Maitlands here can tell me." This sentence he read out ere he knew it, and almost crushed the paper, when he had finished, in his passion.

"Go on," said Caraffa, as the other ceased to read aloud, while his eyes ran over the lines. "Go on."

"It is of no moment, or at least its interest is purely personal. His Lordship recommends that I should be bought over, but still left in intimate relations with your Excellency."

"And I see no possible objection to the plan."

"Don't you, sir?" cried Maitland, fiercely; "then *I* do. Some little honour is certainly needed to leaven the rottenness that reeks around us."

“Caro Signor Conte,” said the Prince, in an insinuating voice, but of which insincerity was the strong characteristic, “do not be angry with my Ultramontane morality: I was not reared on the virtuous benches of a British Parliament: but if there is anything more in that letter, let me hear it.”

“There is only a warning not to see the Count of Syracuse, nor any of his party, who are evidently waiting to see which horse is to win. Ah, and here is a word for your address, Carlo! ‘If Caffarelli be the man we saw last season here, I should say, Do not make advances to him; he is a ruined gambler, and trusted by no party. Lady C—— believes in him, but none else!’”

This last paragraph set them all a-laughing, nor did any seem to enjoy it more than Caffarelli himself.

“One thing is clear,” said Caraffa at last, “England wishes us every imaginable calamity, but is not going to charge herself with any part of the cost of our ruin. France has only so much of goodwill towards us as is inspired by her dislike of Piedmont, and she will wait and watch events. Now, if Bosco be only true to his word, and can give us a ‘good account’ of his treatment of Garibaldi, I think all will go well.”

“When was Garibaldi to set out?” asked Caffarelli.

“Brizzi, but he is seldom correct, said the 18th.”

“That Irish fellow of ours, Maitland, is positive it will be by the 13th at latest. By the way, when I asked him how I could reward this last piece of service he rendered us in securing these despatches, his reply was, ‘I want the cordon of St Januarius.’ I of course remonstrated, and explained that there were certain requisites as to birth and family, certain guarantees as to nobility of blood, certain requirements of fortune. He stopped me abruptly, and said, ‘I can satisfy them all; and if there be any delay in according my demand, I shall make it in person to his Majesty.’”

“Well,” cried Caffarelli—“well, and what followed?”

“I yielded,” said the Prince, with one of his peculiar smiles. “We are in such a perilous predicament that we can’t afford the enmity of such a consummate rascal; and then, who knows but he may be the last knight of the order!” In the deep depression of the last words was apparent their true sincerity, but he rallied hastily, and said, “I have sent the fellow to Bosco with despatches, and said that he may be usefully employed as a spy, for he

is hand-and-glove with all the Garibaldians. Surely he must have uncommon good luck if he escapes a bullet from one side or the other."

"He told me yesterday," said Caffarelli, "that he would not leave Naples till his Majesty passed the Irish Legion in review, and addressed them some words of loyal compliment."

"Why didn't he tell you," said the Prince, sarcastically, "that seventy of the scoundrels have taken service with Garibaldi; some hundreds have gone to the hills as brigands; and Castel d'Ovo has got the remainder; and it takes fifteen hundred foot and a brigade of artillery to watch them?"

"Did you hear this, Maitland?" cried Caffarelli; "do you hear what his Excellency says of your pleasant countrymen?"

Maitland looked up from a letter that he was deeply engaged in, and so blank and vacant was his stare that Caffarelli repeated what the Minister had just said. "I don't think you are minding what I say. Have you heard me, Maitland?"

"Yes; no—that is, my thoughts were on something that I was reading here."

"Is it of interest to us?" asked Caraffa.

"None whatever. It was a private letter which got into my hands open, and I had read some lines

before I was well aware. It has no bearing on politics, however;" and, crushing up the note, he placed it in his pocket, and then, as if recalling his mind to the affairs before him, said: "The King himself must go to Sicily. It is no time to palter. The personal daring of Victor Emmanuel is the bone and sinew of the Piedmontese movement. Let us show the North that the South is her equal in everything."

"I should rather that it was from *you* the advice came than from *me*," said Caraffa, with a grin. "I am not in the position to proffer it."

"If I were Prince Caraffa I should do so, assuredly."

"You would not, Maitland," said the other, calmly. "You would not, and for this simple reason, that you would see that, even if accepted, the counsel would be fruitless. If it were to the Queen, indeed——"

"Yes, per Bacco!" broke in Caffarelli, "there is not a gentleman in the kingdom would not spring into the saddle at such a call."

"Then why not unfold this standard?" asked Maitland. "Why not make one effort to render the monarchy popular?"

"Don't you know enough of Naples," said Car-

affa, "to know that the cause of the noble can never be the cause of the people; and that to throw the throne for defence on the men of birth is to lose the 'men of the street'?" He paused, and with an expression of intense hate on his face, and a hissing passionate tone in his voice, continued, "It required all the consummate skill of that great man, Count Cavour, to weld the two classes together, and even he could not elevate the populace; so that nothing was left to him but to degrade the noble."

"I think meanwhile we are losing precious time," said Maitland, as he took up his hat. "Bosco should be reinforced. The squadron, too, should be strengthened to meet the Sardinian fleet; for we have sure intelligence that they mean to cover Garibaldi's landing; Persano avows it."

"All the better if they do," said Caraffa. "The same act which would proclaim their own treachery would deliver into our hands this hare-brained adventurer."

"Your Excellency may have him longer in your hands than you care for," said Maitland, with a saucy smile. The Prince bowed a cold acknowledgment of the speech, and suffered them to retire without a word.

"It is fated, I believe," said Caffarelli, as they

gained the street, "that the Prince and you are never to separate without anger; and you are wrong, Maitland. There is no man stands so high in the King's favour."

"What care I for that, Carlo mio? the whole thing has ceased to interest me. I joined the cause without any love for it; the more nearly I saw its working, the more I despised myself for acting with such associates; and if I hold to it now, it is because it is so certain to fail. Ay, my friend, it is another Bourbon bowled over. The age had got sick of vested interests, and wanted to show what abuses they were; but you and I are bound to stand fast; we cannot rescue the victim, but we must follow the hearse."

"How low and depressed you are to-night! What has come over you?"

"I have had a heavy blow, mio Carlo. One of those papers whose envelopes you broke and handed to me was a private letter. It was from Alice Trafford to her brother; and the sight of my own name in it tempted me to see what she said of me. My curiosity has paid its price." He paused for some minutes, and then continued: "She wrote to refuse the villa I had offered her—to refuse it peremptorily. She added, 'The story of your friend's

duel is more public than you seem to know. It appeared in the "Patrie" three weeks ago, and was partly extracted by "Galignani." The provocation given was an open declaration that Mr Maitland was no Maitland at all, but the illegitimate son of a well-known actress, called Brancalone, the father unknown. This outrage led to a meeting, and the consequences you know of. The whole story has this much of authenticity, that it was given to the world with the name of the other principal, who signs himself Milo M'Caskey, Lieut.-Col. in the service of Naples, Count, and Commander of various orders.' She adds," continued Maitland, in a shaken voice, and an effort, but yet a poor one, to smile—"she adds, 'I own I am sorry for him. All his great qualities and cultivation seemed to suit and dignify station; but now that I know his condition to have been a mere assumption, the man himself and his talents are only a mockery—only a mockery!' Hard words these, Carlo,—very hard words!

"And then she says: 'If I had only known him as a passing acquaintance, and thought of him with the same indifference one bestows on such, perhaps I would not now insist so peremptorily as I do on our ceasing to know him; but I will own to you, Mark, that he did interest me greatly. He had,

or seemed to have,'——this, that, and t'other," said he, with an ill-tempered haste, and went on. "But now, as he stands before me, with a borrowed name and a mock rank'——There is half a page more of the same trash; for this gentle lady is a mistress of fierce words, and not over-merciful, and she ends thus:—'I think, if you are adroit, you can show him, in declining his proffered civility, that we had strong reasons for our refusal, and that it would be unpleasant to renew our former acquaintance.' In fact, Carlo, she means to cut me. This woman, whose hand I had held in mine while I declared my love, and who, while she listened to me, showed no touch of displeasure, affects now to resent the accident of my birth, and treat me as an impostor! I am half sorry that letter has not reached its destination; ay, and, strange as you will think it, I am more than half-tempted to write and tell her that I have read it. The story of the stolen despatch will soon be a newspaper scandal, and it would impart marvellous interest to her reading it when she heard that her own 'private and confidential' was captured in the same net."

"You could not own to such an act, Maitland."

"No. If it should not lead to something further;

but I do yearn to repay her. She is a haughty adversary, and well worth a vengeance."

"What becomes of your fine maxim, 'Never quarrel with a woman,' Maitland?"

"When I uttered it, I had never loved one," muttered he; and they walked on now in silence.

Almost within earshot—so close, indeed, that had they not been conversing in Italian, some of their words must have been overheard by those behind—walked two other friends, Damer and Tony, in close confab.

"I must telegraph F. O.," said Skeffy, "that the bag is missing, and that Messenger Butler has gone home to make his report. Do you hear me?"

A grunt was the reply.

"I'll give you a letter to Howard Pendleton, and he'll tell what is the best thing to be done."

"I suspect I know it already," muttered Tony.

"If you could only persuade my Lord to listen to you, and tell him the story as you told it to me, he'd be more than a Secretary of State if he could stand it."

"I have no great desire to be laughed at, Skeffy."

"Not if it got you out of a serious scrape—a scrape that may cost you your appointment?"

"Not even at that price."

“I can't understand that ; it is quite beyond me. They might put *me* into Joe Miller to-morrow, if they'd only gazette me Secretary of Embassy the day after. But here's the hotel ; a good sleep will set you all right ; and let me see you at breakfast as jolly as you used to be.”

CHAPTER XLVII.

ADRIFT.

THE dawn was scarcely breaking as Tony Butler awoke and set off to visit the ships in the port whose flags proclaimed them English. There were full thirty, of various sizes and rigs; but though many were deficient in hands, no skipper seemed disposed to accept a young fellow who, if he was stalwart and well grown, so palpably pertained to a class to which hard work and coarse usage were strangers.

“You an’t anything of a cook, are you?” asked one of the very few who did not reject his demand at once.

“No,” said he, smiling.

“Them hands of yours might do something in the caboose, but they ain’t much like reefing and clewing topsails. Won’t suit *me*.” And thus discouraged, he went on from one craft to the other,

surprised and mortified to discover that one of the resources he had often pictured to his mind in the hours of despondency was just as remote, just as much above him, as any of the various callings his friends had set before him.

“Not able to be even a sailor! Not fit to serve before the mast! Well, perhaps I can carry a musket; but for *that* I must return to England.”

He fell to think of this new scheme, but without any of that hope that had so often coloured his projects. He owed the service a grudge; his father had not been fairly treated in it. So at least, from his very childhood, had his mother taught him to believe, and in consequence vehemently opposed all his plans to obtain a commission. Hard necessity, however, left no room for mere scruples; something he must do, and that something was narrowed to the one single career of a soldier.

He was practical enough in a certain sense, and he soon resolved on his line of action; he would reserve just so much as would carry him back to England, and remit the remainder of what he had to his mother.

This would amount to nigh eighty pounds—a very considerable sum to one whose life was as inexpensive as hers. The real difficulty was how to

reconcile her to the thought of his fallen condition, and the hardships she would inevitably associate in her mind with his future life. "Ain't I lucky," cried he in his bitterness, and trying to make it seem like a consolation—"ain't I lucky, that, except my poor dear mother, I have not one other in the whole world to care what comes to me—none other to console, none other before whom I need plead or excuse myself! My failure or my disgrace are not to spread a wide-cast sorrow. They will only darken one fireside, and one figure in the corner of it."

His heart was full of Alice all the while, but he was too proud to utter her name even to himself. To have made a resolve, however, seemed to rally his courage again; and when the boatman asked him where he should go next, he was so far away in his thoughts that he had some difficulty to remember what he had been actually engaged in.

"Where to?"

"Well, I can't well tell you," said he, laughing. "Isn't that schooner English—that one getting under way yonder? Shove me aboard of her."

"She's outward bound, sir."

"No matter, if they'll agree to take me," muttered he to himself.

The craft was "hauling short" on the anchor as Tony came alongside and learned that she was about to sail for Leghorn, having failed in obtaining a freight at Naples; and as by an accident one of the crew had been left on shore, the skipper was too willing to take Tony so far, though looking, as he remarked, far more like a swell landsman than an ordinary seaman.

Once outside the bay, and bowling along with a smart breeze and a calm sea, the rushing water making pleasant music at the bow, while the helm left a long white track some feet down beneath the surface, Tony felt, what so many others have felt, the glorious elation of being at sea. How many a care "blue water" can assuage, how many a sorrow is made bearable by the fresh breeze that strains the cordage, and the laughing waves we cleave through so fast!

A few very eventful days, in which Tony's life passed less like reality than a mere dream, brought them to Leghorn; and the skipper, who had taken a sort of rough liking to the "Swell," as he still called him, offered to take him on to Liverpool, if he were willing to enter himself regularly on the ship's books as one of the crew.

"I am quite ready," said Tony, who thought by

the time the brief voyage was completed he should have picked up enough of the practice and the look of a sailor to obtain another employment easily.

Accompanied by the skipper, he soon found himself in the consul's office, crowded with sailors and other maritime folk busily engaged in preferring complaints or making excuses, or as eagerly asking for relief against this or that exaction on the part of the foreign government.

The consul sat smoking his cigar with a friend at a window, little heeding the turmoil around, but leaving the charge of the various difficulties to his clerks, who only referred to him on some special occasions.

"Here's a man, sir," cried one of the clerks, "who wishes to be entered in the ship's books under an assumed name. I have told him it can't be done."

"Why does he ask it? Is he a runaway convict?" asked the consul.

"Not exactly," said Tony, laughing; "but as I have not been brought up before the mast, and I have a few relatives who might not like to hear of me in that station——"

"A scamp, I take it," broke in the consul, "who,

having done his worst on shore, takes to the sea for a refuge?"

"Partly right—partly wrong," was the dry answer.

"Well, my smart fellow, there's no help for it. You must give your name and your birthplace; and if they should prove false ones, take any consequences that might result."

"What sort of consequences might these be?" asked Tony, calmly; and the consul, having either spoken without any distinct knowledge attached to his words, or provoked by the pertinacity of the question, half irritably answered—"I've no time to throw away in discussing casualties—give your name or go your way."

"Yes, yes," murmured the skipper. "Who knows anything about you down here?—just sign the sheet, and let's be moving."

The sort of good-humoured tone and look that went with the words decided Tony, and he took the pen and wrote "Tony Butler, Ireland."

The consul glanced at the writing, and said, "What part of Ireland? name a town or a village."

"I cannot; my father was a soldier, quartered in various places, and I'm not sure in what part of the island I was born."

“Tony Butler means Anthony Butler, I suppose?”

“Tony Butler!” cried the consul’s friend, suddenly starting up, and coming forward; “did *you* say your name was Tony Butler?”

“Yes; that is my name.”

“And are you from the north of Ireland—near the Causeway?”

Tony nodded, while a flush of shame at the recognition covered his face.

“And do you know Dr Stewart, the Presbyterian minister in that neighbourhood?”

“I should think so. The Burnside, where he lives, is not above a mile from us.”

“That’s it—the Burnside—that’s the name of it. I’m as glad as fifty pounds in my pocket to see you, Mr Butler,” cried he, grasping Tony’s hand in both his own. “There’s not a man from this to England I’d as soon have met as yourself. I’m Sam M’Gruder, Robert M’Gruder’s brother. You haven’t forgot *him*, I hope?”

“That I haven’t,” cried Tony, warmly returning the honest pressure of the other’s hand. “What a stupid dog I have been not to remember that you lived here! and I have a letter for you too from your brother!”

“ I want no letter of introduction with *you*, Mr Butler ; come home with me. You’re not going to sea this time ;” and, taking a pen, he drew a broad line of ink across Tony’s name ; and then turning, he whispered a few words in the consul’s ear.

“ I hope,” said the consul, “ Mr Butler is not offended at the freedom with which I commented on him.”

“ Not in the least,” said Tony, laughing. “ I thought at the time, if you knew me you would not have liked to have suggested my having been a run-away convict ; and now that you *do* know me, the shame you feel is more than enough to punish you.”

“ What could have induced you to go before the mast, Mr Butler ?” said M’Gruder, as he led Tony away.

“ Sheer necessity. I wanted to earn my bread.”

“ But you had got something—some place or other ?”

“ I was a messenger, but I lost my despatches, and was ashamed to go home and say so.”

“ Will you stop with me ? Will you be a clerk ?” asked the other ; and a certain timidity in his voice showed that he was not quite assured as he spoke. “ My business is like my brother’s—we’re ‘in Rags.’ ”

“And so should I be in a few days,” laughed out Tony, “if I hadn’t met you. I’ll be your clerk, with a heart and a half—that is, if I be capable; only don’t give me anything where money enters, and as little writing as possible, and no arithmetic, if you can help it.”

“That will be a strange sort of clerkship,” said M’Gruder, with a smile; “but we’ll see what can be done.”

CHAPTER XLVIII.

“IN RAGS.”

IF Tony Butler's success in his new career only depended on his zeal, he would have been a model clerk. Never did any one address himself to a new undertaking with a stronger resolution to comprehend all its details, and conquer all its difficulties. First of all, he desired to show his gratitude to the good fellow who had helped him; and secondly, he was eager to prove, if proven it could be, that he was not utterly incapable of earning his bread, nor one of those hopeless creatures who are doomed from their birth to be a burden to others.

So long as his occupation led him out of doors, conveying orders here and directions there, he got on pretty well. He soon picked up a sort of Italian of his own, intelligible enough to those accustomed to it; and as he was alert, active, and untiring, he looked, at least, a most valuable assistant. When-

ever it came to indoor work and the pen, his heart sank within him; he knew that his hour of trial had come, and he had no strength to meet it. He would mistake the letter-book for the ledger or the day-book; and he would make entries in one which should have been in the other, and then, worst of all, erase them, or append an explanation of his blunder that would fill half a page with inscrutable blottedness.

As to payments, he jotted them down anywhere, and in his anxiety to compose confidential letters with due care, he would usually make three or four rough drafts of the matter, quite sufficient to impart the contents to the rest of the office.

Sam M'Gruder bore nobly up under these trials. He sometimes laughed at the mistakes, did his best to remedy—never rebuked them. At last, as he saw that poor Tony's difficulties, instead of diminishing, only increased with time, inasmuch as his despair of himself led him into deeper embarrassments, M'Gruder determined Tony should be entirely employed in journeys and excursions here and there through the country—an occupation, it is but fair to own, invented to afford him employment, rather than necessitated by any demands of the business. Not that Tony had the vaguest suspicion of this.

Indeed, he wrote to his mother a letter filled with an account of his active and useful labours. Proud was he, at last, to say that he was no longer eating the bread of idleness. "I am up before dawn, mother, and very often have nothing to eat but a mess of Indian-corn steeped in oil, not unlike what Sir Arthur used to fatten the bullocks with, the whole livelong day; and sometimes I have to visit places there are no roads to; nearly all the villages are on the tops of the mountains; but, by good-luck, I am never beat by a long walk, and I do my forty miles a-day without minding it.

"If I could only forget the past, dearest mother, or think it nothing but a dream, I'd never quarrel with the life I am now leading; for I have plenty of open air, mountain walking, abundance of time to myself, and rough fellows to deal with, that amuse me; but when I am tramping along with my cigar in my mouth, I can't help thinking of long ago—of the rides at sunset on the sands, and all the hopes and fancies I used to bring home with me, after them. Well! it is over now—just as much done for as if the time had never been at all; and I suppose, after a while, I'll learn to bear it better, and think, as you often told me, that 'all things are for the best.'

“ I feel my own condition more painfully when I come back here, and have to sit a whole evening listening to Sam M’Gruder, talking about Dolly Stewart and the plans about their marriage. The poor fellow is so full of it all, that even the important intelligence I have for him he won’t hear, but will say, ‘ Another time, Tony, another time—let us chat about Dolly.’ One thing I’ll swear to, she’ll have the honestest fellow for her husband that ever stepped, and tell her I said so. Sam would take it very kindly of you if you could get Dolly to agree to their being married in March. It is the only time he can manage a trip to England,—not but, as he says, whatever time Dolly consents to shall be his time.

“ He shows me her letters sometimes, and though he is half wild with delight at them, I tell you frankly, mother, they wouldn’t satisfy *me* if *I* was her lover. She writes more like a creature that was resigned to a hard lot, than one that was about to marry a man she loved. Sam, however, doesn’t seem to take this view of her, and so much the better.

“ There was one thing in your last letter that puzzled me, and puzzles me still. Why did Dolly ask if I was likely to remain here? The way you put it makes me think that she was deferring the marriage

till such time as I was gone. If I really believed this to be the case, I'd go away to-morrow, though I don't know well where to, or what for. But it is hard to understand, since I always thought that Dolly liked me, as certainly I ever did, and still do, *her*.

“ Try and clear up this for me in your next. I suppose it was by way of what is called sparing me, you said nothing of the Lyles in your last, but I saw in the ‘ Morning Post’ all about the ‘ departure for the Continent, intending to reside some years in Italy.’

“ And that is more than I'd do if I owned Lyle Abbey, and had eighteen blood-horses in my stable, and a clipper cutter in the Bay of Curryglass. I suppose the truth is, people never do know when they're well off.”

The moral reflection, not arrived at so easily or so rapidly as the reader may imagine, concluded Tony's letter, to which in due time came a long answer from his mother. With the home gossip we shall not burden the reader, nor shall we ask of him to go through the short summary—four close pages—of the Doctor's discourses on the text, “ I would ye were hot or cold,” two sensations that certainly the mere sight of the exposition occasioned to Tony. We limit ourselves to the words of the postscript.

“ I cannot understand Dolly at all, and I am afraid to mislead you as to what you ask. My impression is—but mind it is mere impression—she has grown somewhat out of her old friendship for you. Some stories possibly have represented you in a wrong light, and I half think you may be right, and that she would be less averse to the marriage if she knew you were not to be in the house with them. It was, indeed, only this morning the Doctor said, ‘ Young married folk should aye learn each other’s failings without bystanders to observe them ’—a significant hint I thought I would write to you by this post.”

When Tony received his epistle, he was seated in his own room, leisurely engaged in deciphering a paragraph in an Italian newspaper, descriptive of Garibaldi’s departure from a little bay near Genoa to his Sicilian expedition.

Nothing short of a letter from his mother could have withdrawn his attention from a description so full of intense interest to him; and partly, indeed, from this cause, and partly from the hard labour of rendering the foreign language, the details stuck in his mind during all the time he was reading his mother’s words.

“ So that’s the secret, is it?” muttered he. “ Dolly

wishes to be alone with her husband—natural enough ; and I'm not the man to oppose it. I hope she'll be happy, poor girl ; and I hope Garibaldi will beat the Neapolitans. I'm sure Sam is worthy of a good wife ; but I don't know whether these Sicilian fellows deserve a better Government. At all events, my course is clear—here I mustn't stay. Sam does not know that I am the obstacle to his marriage ; but *I* know it, and that is enough. I wonder would Garibaldi take me as a volunteer. There cannot be much choice at such a time. I suppose he enrolls whoever offers ; and they must be mostly fellows of my own sort—useless dogs, that are only fit to give and take hard knocks.”

He hesitated long whether he should tell Sam M'Gruder of his project ; he well knew all the opposition he should meet, and how stoutly his friend would set himself against a plan so fatal to all habits of patient industry. “And yet,” muttered Tony to himself, “I don't like to tell him that I hate ‘Rags,’ and detest the whole business. It would be so ungrateful of me. I could say my mother wanted to see me in Ireland ; but I never told him a lie, and I can't bear that our parting should be sealed with a falsehood.”

As he pondered he took out his pistols and ex-

amined them carefully ; and, poisoning one neatly in his hand, he raised it, as marksmen sometimes will do, to take an imaginary aim. As he did so, M'Gruder entered, and cried out, laughing, "Is he covered—is he dead?"

Tony laid down the weapon, with a flush of shame, and said, "After all, M'Gruder, the pistol is more natural to me than the pen ; and it was just what I was going to confess to you."

"You're not going to take to the highways, though?"

"Something not very unlike it ; I mean to go and have a turn with Garibaldi."

"Why, what do you know about Garibaldi or his cause?"

"Perhaps not a great deal ; but I've been spelling out these newspapers every night, and one thing is clear, whether he has right or wrong on his side, the heavy odds are all against him. He's going in to fight regular troops with a few hundred trampers. Now I call that very plucky."

"So do I ; but courage may go on to rashness, and become folly."

"Well, I feel as if a little rashness' will do me a deal of good. I am too well off here—too easy—too much cared for. Life asks no effort, and I make

none ; and if I go on a little longer, I'll be capable of none."

"I see," said the other, laughing, "Rags do not rouse your ambition, Tony."

"I don't know what would—that is, I don't think I *have* any ambition now;" and there was a touch of sorrow in the last word that gave all the force to what he said.

"At all events, you are tired of this sort of thing," said the other, good-humouredly, "and it's not to be much wondered at. You began life at what my father used to call 'the wrong end.' You started on the sunny side of the road, Tony, and it is precious hard to cross over into the shade afterwards."

"You're right there, M'Gruder. I led the jolliest life that ever man did till I was upwards of twenty; but I don't believe I ever knew how glorious it was till it was over; but I mustn't think of that now. See! this is what I mean to do. You'll find some way to send that safely to my mother. There's forty odd pounds in it, and I'd rather it was not lost. I have kept enough to buy a good rifle—a heavy Swiss one, if I can find it—and a sword-bayonet, and with these I am fully equipped."

"Come, come, Tony, I'll not hear of this; that

you are well weary of the life you lead here is not hard to see, nor any blame to you either, old fellow. One must be brought up to Rags, like everything else, and *you* were not. But my brother writes me about starting an American agency—what do you say to going over to New York?”

“What a good fellow you are!” cried Tony, staring at him till his eyes began to grow clouded with tears; “what a good fellow! you’d risk your ship just to give me a turn at the tiller! But it mustn’t be—it cannot be: I’m bent on this scheme of mine—I have determined on it.”

“Since when? since last night?”

“Well, it’s not very long, certainly, since I made up my mind.”

The other smiled. Tony saw it, and went on: “I know what you mean. You are of old Stewart’s opinion. When he heard me once say I had made up my mind, he said, ‘It doesn’t take long to make up a small parcel;’ but every fellow, more or less, knows what he can and what he cannot do. Now *I* cannot be orderly, exact, and punctual—even the little brains I have I can’t be sure of keeping them on the matter before me: but I defy a horse to throw me; I’ll bring you up a crown-piece out of six fathoms water, if it’s clear; I’ll kill four swallows

out of six with a ball ; and though these are not gifts to earn one's bread by, the man that has them needn't starve."

"If I thought that you had really reflected well over this plan—given it all the thought and consideration it required——"

"I have given it just as much consideration as if I took five weeks to it. A man may take an evening over a pint of ale, but it's only a pint after all—don't you see that?"

M'Gruder was puzzled ; perhaps there was some force in the illustration. Tony looked certainly as if he thought he had said a clever thing.

"Well, Tony," said the other, after a moment of grave thought, "you'll have to go to Genoa to embark, I suppose?"

"Yes ; the committee sits at Genoa, and every one who enrolls must appear before them."

"You could walk there in four days."

"Yes ; but I can steam it in one."

"Ay, true enough ; what I mean to ask of you is this, that you will go the whole way on foot ; a good walker as you are won't think much of that ; and in these four days, as you travel along—all alone—you'll have plenty of time to think over your project. If by the time you reach Genoa you like

it as well as ever, I've no more to say; but if—and mark me, Tony, you must be honest with your own heart—if you really have your doubts and your misgivings; if you feel that for your poor mother's sake——”

“There, there! I've thought of all that,” cried Tony, hurriedly. “I'll make the journey on foot, as you say you wish it, but don't open the thing to any more discussion. If I relent, I'll come back. There's my hand on it!”

“Tony, it gives me a sad heart to part with you,” and he turned away, and stole out of the room.

“Now, I believe it's all done,” said Tony, after he had packed his knapsack, and stored by in his trunk what he intended to leave behind him. There were a few things there, too, that had their own memories! There was the green silk cap, with its gold tassel, Alice had given him on his last steeplechase. Ah, how it brought back the leap—a bold leap it was—into the winning field, and Alice, as she stood up and waved her handkerchief as he passed! There was a glove of hers; she had thrown it down sportively on the sands, and dared him to take it up in full career of his horse; he remembered they had a quarrel because he claimed the glove as a prize, and refused to restore it to her.

There was an evening after that in which she would not speak to him. He had carried a heavy heart home with him that night! What a fund of love the heart must be capable of feeling for a living, sentient thing, when we see how it can cling to some object inanimate and irresponsive. "I'll take that glove with me," muttered Tony to himself; "it owes me some good luck: who knows but it may pay me yet?"

CHAPTER XLIX.

MET AND PARTED.

TONY went on his way early next morning, stealing off ere it was yet light, for he hated leave-takings, and felt that they weighed upon him for many a mile of a journey. There was enough on the road he travelled to have interested and amused him, but his heart was too full of its own cares, and his mind too deep in its own plans, to dispose him to such pleasures, and so he passed through little villages on craggy eminences and quaint old towers on mountain-tops, scarcely observing them. Even Pisa, with its world-known Tower, and the gem-like Baptistery beside it, scarce attracted notice from him, though he muttered as he passed, "Perhaps on some happier day I'll be able to come back here and admire it." And so onward he plodded through the grand old ruined Massa and the silent Sarzana, whose palaces display the quarterings of

old crusading knights, with many an emblem of the Holy War; and by the beautiful Bay of Spezia he went, not stopping to see poor Shelley's home, and the terrace where his midnight steps had almost worn a track. The road now led through the declining ridges of the Apennines, gorgeous in colour—such colour as art would have scarce dared to counterfeit, so emerald the dark green of the waving pines, so silver-like the olive, so gloriously purple the great cliffs of porphyry; and then through many a riven cleft, through feathery foliage and broad-leaved fig-trees, down many a fathom low the sea!—the blue Mediterranean, so blue as to seem another sky of deeper meaning than the one above it.

He noticed little of all these—he felt none of them! It was now the third day of his journey, and though he had scarcely uttered a word, and been deeply intent on his own fate, all that his thinking had done was to lead, as it were, into some boundless prairie, and there desert him.

“I suppose,” muttered he to himself, “I am one of those creatures that must never presume to plan anything, but take each day's life as I find it. And I could do this. Ay, I could do it manfully, too, if I were not carrying along with me memories of long

ago. It is Alice, the thought of Alice, that dashes the present with a contrast to the past, and makes all I now attempt so poor and valueless."

As the road descends from Borghetto there is a sudden bend, from which, through a deep cleft, the little beach and village of Levanto are seen hundreds of feet beneath, but yet in that clear still atmosphere so near, that not only the white foam of the breaking wave could be seen, but its rhythm-like plash heard as it broke upon the beach. For the first time since he set out had the charm of scenery attracted him, and, descending a few feet from the road, he reached a large square rock, from which he could command the whole view for miles on every side.

He took out his bread and cheese and a melon he had bought that morning, and disposed himself to eat his dinner. He had often partaken of a more sumptuous meal, but never had he eaten with so glorious a prospect at his feet.

A little lateen-sailed boat stole out from beneath the olives and gained the sea; and as Tony watched her, he thought if he would only have been a fisherman there, and Alice his wife, how little he could have envied all that the world has of wealth and honours and ambitions. His friend Skeffy could

not do this, but *he* could. *He* was strong of limb and stout of heart; he could bear hardships and cold; and it would be so fine to think that, born gentleman as he was, he never flinched from the hardest toil, or repined at the roughest fare, he and Alice treasuring up their secret, and hoarding it as a miser hoards his gold.

Ay, down there, in that little gorge, with the pine wood behind and the sea before, he could have passed his life, with never a longing thought for the great world and its prizes. As he ran on thus in fancy, he never heard the sound of footsteps on the road above, nor noticed the voices of persons talking.

At last he heard, not the words, but the tone of the speakers, and recognised them to be English. There is that peculiar sound in English utterance that at once distinguishes it from all other speech, and Tony, quite forgetting that his high-peaked Calabrian hat and massive beard made him far more like an Italian brigand than a British gentleman, not wishing to be observed, never turned his head to look at them. At last one said, "The little fishing village below there must be Levanto. John Murray tells us that this is the land of the fan palm and the cactus, so that at length we are in Italy."

“Do you know—shall I confess it,” said the other, “that I am not thinking of the view, beautiful as it is? I am envying that peasant with his delicious melon on the rock there. I am half tempted to ask him to share it with me.”

“Ask him, by all means,” said the first speaker, laughing.

“You are jesting,” replied the other, “but I am in sober earnest. I can resist no longer. Do you, however, wait here, or the carriage may pass on and leave us behind.”

Tony heard nothing of these words; but he heard the light footsteps, and he heard the rustle of a woman’s dress as she forced her way through bramble and underwood, till at last, with that consciousness so mysterious, he felt there was some one standing close behind him. Half vexed to think that his isolation should be invaded, he drew his hat deeper over his eyes, and sat steadfastly gazing on the sea below him.

“Is that Levanto I see beneath that cliff?” asked she, in Italian—less to satisfy her curiosity than to attract his attention.

Tony started. How intensely had his brain been charged with thoughts of long ago that every word that met his ears should seem impregnated with

these memories! A half-sulky "Si" was, however, his only rejoinder.

"What a fine melon you have there, my friend!" said she; and now her voice thrilled through him so strangely, that he sprang to his feet and turned to face her. "Is my brain tricking me?—are my senses wandering?" muttered he to himself. "Alice, Alice!"

"Yes, Tony," cried she. "Who ever heard of so strange a meeting? How came you here? Speak, or I shall be as incredulous as yourself!" But Tony could not utter a word, but stood overwhelmed with wonder, silently gazing on her.

"Speak to me, Tony," said she, in her soft winning voice—"speak to me; tell me by what curious fortune you came here. Let us sit down on this bank; our carriage is toiling up the hill, and will not be here for some time."

"So it is not a dream!" sighed he, as he sat down beside her. "I have so little faith in my brain that I could not trust it."

It was easy to see that his bewilderment still remained; and so, with a woman's tact, she addressed herself to talking of what would gradually lead his thoughts into a collected shape. She told how they were all on their way to the south—Naples or Pal-

ermo, not certain which—somewhere for climate, as Isabella was still delicate. That her father and mother and sister were some miles behind on the road, she having come on more rapidly with a lighter carriage. “Not all alone, though, Master Tony; don’t put on that rebukeful face. The lady you see yonder on the road is what is called my companion—the English word for duenna; and I half think I am scandalising her very much by this conduct of mine, sitting down on the grass with a brigand chief, and, I was going to say, sharing his breakfast, though I have to confess it never occurred to him to offer it. Come, Tony, get up, and let me present you to her, and relieve her mind of the terrible thoughts that must be distressing her.”

“One moment, Alice—one moment,” said he, taking her hand. “What is this story my mother tells me?” He stopped, unable to go on; but she quickly broke in, “Scandal travels quickly indeed; but I scarcely thought your mother was one to aid its journey.”

“She never believed it,” said he, doggedly.

“Why repeat it, then? why give bad money a currency? I think we had better join my friend. I see she is impatient.”

The coldness with which she spoke chilled him

like a wintry blast ; but he rallied soon, and with a vigorous energy said, "My mother no more believed ill of you than I did ; and when I asked you what the slander meant, it was to know where I could find the man to pay for it."

"You must deny yourself the pleasure this time, Tony," said she, laughing. "It was a woman's story—a disappointed woman—and so, not so very blamable as she might be ; not but that it was true in fact."

"True, Alice—true?"

"Yes, sir. The inference from it was the only falsehood ; but really we have had too much of this. Tell me of yourself—why are you here ? where are you now going?"

"You've heard of my exploits as a messenger, I suppose," said Tony, with a bitter laugh.

"I heard, as we all heard with great sorrow, that you left the service," said she, with a hesitation on each word.

"Left it ? Yes ; I left to avoid being kicked out of it. I lost my despatches, and behaved like a fool. Then I tried to turn sailor, but no skipper would take me ; and I *did* turn clerk, and half-ruined the honest fellow that trusted me. And now I am going—in good truth, Alice, I don't exactly know where, but it is somewhere in search of a pur-

suit to fit a fellow who begins to feel he is fit for nothing."

"It is not thus your friends think of you, Tony," said she, kindly.

"That's the worst of it," rejoined he, bitterly: "I have all my life been trying to justify an opinion that never should have been formed of me—ay, and that I well knew I had no right to."

"Well, Tony, come back with us. I don't say with *me*, because I must be triple discreet for some time to come; but come back with papa; he'll be overjoyed to have you with us."

"No, no," muttered Tony in a faint whisper; "I could not, I could not."

"Is that old grudge of long ago so deep that time has not filled it up?"

"I could not, I could not," muttered he, evidently not hearing the words she had just spoken.

"And why not, Tony? Just tell me why not?"

"Shall I tell you, Alice?" said he; and his lip shook and his cheek grew pale as he spoke—"shall I tell you?"

She nodded; for she too was moved, and did not trust herself to speak.

"Shall I tell you?" said he, and he looked into her eyes with a meaning so full of love, and yet of

sorrow, that her cheek became crimson, and she turned away in shame.

“No, Tony,” whispered she, faintly, “better not say—what might pain us both, perhaps.”

“Enough if you know,” said he, faintly.

“There, see my friend has lost all patience ; come up to the road, Tony. She must see that my interview has been with an English gentleman, and not a brigand chief. Give me your arm, and do not look so sulky.”

“You women can look any way you will,” mumbled he, “no matter what you may feel ; that is, if you *do* feel.”

“You are the same old savage, Tony, as ever,” said she, laughing. “I never got my melon, after all, Miss Lister ; the sight of an old friend was, however, better. Let me present him to you—Mr Butler.”

“Mr Tony Butler?” asked she, with a peculiar smile ; and though she spoke it low, he heard her, and said, “Yes ; I am Tony Butler.”

“Sir Arthur will be charmed to know you are here. It was but yesterday he said he’d not mind taking a run through Calabria if we only had you with us.”

“I have said all that and more to him, but he doesn’t mind it,” said Alice.

“Is this fair, Alice?” whispered he.

“In fact,” resumed she, “he has nowhere particular to go to, provided it be not the same road that we are taking.”

“Is this kind, Alice?” whispered he again.

“And though I have told him what pleasure it would give us all if he would turn back with us——”

“You’ll drive me to say it,” muttered he between his teeth.

“If you dare, sir,” said she in a low but clear whisper; and now she stepped into the carriage, and affected to busy herself with her mufflers. Tony assisted Miss Lister to her place, and then walked round to the side where Alice sat.

“You are not angry with me, Alice?” said he, falteringly.

“I certainly am not pleased,” said she, coldly. “There was a time I had not to press a wish—I had but to utter it.”

“And yet, Alice,” said he, leaning over, and whispering so close that she felt his breath on her face—“and yet I never loved you then as I love you now.”

“You have determined that I should not repeat my invitation,” said she, leaning back in the carriage; “I must—I have no help for it—I must say Good-bye!”

“Good-bye,” said he, pressing her hand, from which he had just drawn off the glove, to his lips. She never made any effort to withdraw it, but leaned forward as though to conceal the action from her companion.

“Good-bye, dearest Alice,” said he once more.

“Give me my glove, Tony. I think it has fallen,” said she, carelessly, as she leaned back once more.

“There it is,” muttered he; “but I have another here that I will never part with;” and he drew forth the glove she had thrown on the strand for him to pick up—so long ago!

“You will see papa, Tony?” said she, drawing down her veil; “you can’t fail to meet him before night. Say you saw us. Good-bye.”

And Tony stood alone on the mountain, and watched the cloud of dust that rose behind the carriage, and listened to the heavy tramp of the horses till the sounds died off in the distance.

“Oh, if I could trust the whisper at my heart!” cried he. “If I could—if I could—I’d be happier than I ever dared to hope for.”

CHAPTER L.

THE SOLDIER OF MISFORTUNE.

THE little flicker of hope—faint enough it was—that cheered up Tony's heart, served also to indispose him to meet with Lady Lyle ; for he remembered, fresh as though it had been the day before, the sharp lesson that lady had read him on the "absurd pretensions of certain young gentlemen with respect to those immeasurably above them in station." "I am not in a humour to listen to the second part of the homily, which certainly would not be the less pointed, seeing that I am a wayfarer on foot, and with my knapsack strapped behind me." It gave him no sense of shame that Alice should have seen him thus poor and humble. He never blushed for his pack or his hobnailed shoes. If *she* could not think of him apart from the accidents of his condition, it mattered very little what he wore or how he journeyed. And as he cheered himself

with these thoughts he gained a high peak, from which he could see the pine-clad promontory of Sestri, some thousand feet down below him. He knew the spot from description, and remembered that it was to be one of his resting-places for a night. It was no new thing for Tony to strike out his own line across country—his was a practised eye—to mark the course by which a certain point was to be reached, and to know, by something like instinct, where a ravine—where a river must lie—where the mountain-side would descend too precipitously for human footsteps—where the shelving decline would admit of a path—all these were his; and in their exercise he had that sort of pride a man feels in what he deems a gift.

This same pride and his hope together lightened the way, and he went forward almost happy; so that once or twice he half asked himself if fortune was not about to turn on him with a kindlier look than she had yet bestowed? When about a mile from the highroad, a dull rumbling sound, like far-away thunder, caught his ear: he looked up, and saw the great massive carriage of the wealthy Sir Arthur rolling ponderously along, with its six horses, and followed by a dense “wake” of dust for half a mile behind. “I am glad that we have not

met," muttered he: "I could have wished to see Bella, and speak to her. She was ever my fast friend; but that haughty old woman, in the midst of all the pride of her wealth, would have jarred on me so far that I might have forgotten myself. Why should my poverty provoke *her* to slight me? My poverty is mine, just as much as any malady that might befall me, and whose sufferings I must bear as I may, and cannot ask another to endure for me. It may try *me* to stand up against, but surely it is no burden to her; and why make it seem as a gulf between us?" Ah, Master Tony! subtler heads than yours have failed to untie this knot. It was dusk when he reached Sestri, and found himself in the little vine-clad porch of the "Angelo d'Oro," a modest little inn for foot-travellers on the verge of the sea. He ordered his supper to be served in the open air, under the fresh foliage, and with the pleasant night-wind gently stirring the leaves.

As the landlord arranged the table, he informed Tony that another traveller had come a short time before, but so ignorant of the language was he, that he was only served by means of signs; and he seemed so poor too, that they had scruples about giving him a bed, and were disposed to let him pass the night under the porch.

Tony learned that the traveller had only tasted a glass of wine and a piece of bread, and then, as if overcome by fatigue and exhaustion, dropped off asleep. "I will see him," said he, rising, without partaking of the soup that was just placed before him; "the poor fellow may perhaps be ill." The landlord led the way to the end of the house, where, on a heap of chestnut leaves, the usual bedding of the cattle in these regions, a large strongly-built man, poorly clad and travel-stained, lay sound asleep. Tony took the lantern and held it to his face. How was it he knew the features? He knew them, and yet not the man. He was sure that the great massive brow and that large strong cheek were not seen by him for the first time; and though he was sorry to disturb the poor fellow's slumber, he could not control his impatience to resolve the doubt; and, stooping down, he shook him gently by the shoulder.

"What is it?" cried the man, starting up to a sitting posture; "what is it now?"

"You are a countryman of mine," said Tony, "and I'm trying to think if we have not met before."

The man rose to his feet, and, taking the lantern from Tony's hand, held it up to his face. "Don't

you know me, sir?" cried he; "don't you remember me?"

"I do, and I do not," muttered Tony, still puzzled.

"Don't you mind the day, sir, that you was near been run over in London, and a man pulled you out just as the horses was on top o' you?"

"And are you the man? Are you the poor fellow whose bundle I carried off?"—but he stopped, and, grasping the man's hand, shook it cordially and affectionately. "By what chance do I find you here?"

The man looked about, as if to see that he was not overheard; and Tony, marking the caution of the gesture, said, "None can understand us here. Don't be afraid to say what you like; but first of all come and share my supper with me."

It was not without a modest reluctance that the poor fellow took his seat at the table; and indeed for some time, so overcome was he by the honour accorded him, that he scarcely ate at all. If Tony Butler was no finished conversationalist, able to lead the talk of a dinner-table, yet in the tact that pertains to making intercourse with an inferior easy and familiar he had not many his equal; and before the meal was finished, he slapped him familiarly on the shoulder, and said, "Rory Quin, here's your health, and a long life to you!"

“How did you know my name, sir?” asked the poor fellow, whose face glowed with delight at the flattery of such a recognition.

“At first I did not trust my memory, Rory, for I wrote it down in a note-book I have; and after a while I learned to think of you so often, and to wish I might meet you, that I had no need of the writing. You don’t seem to remember that I am in your debt, my good fellow. I carried off your bundle, and, what was worse, it fell overboard and was lost.”

“It couldn’t have any but bad-luck,” said Rory, thoughtfully; “and maybe it was just the best thing could happen it.”

There was a touch of sorrow in what he said that Tony easily saw; a hidden grief had been moved, and after a little inducement he led him on to tell his story; and which, though, narrated in Rory’s own words, it occupied hours, may, happily for my readers, be condensed into a very few sentences.

Rory had been induced, partly by the glorious cause itself, partly through the glittering promises of personal advancement, to enlist for foreign service. A certain Major M’Caskey—a man that, as Rory said, would wile the birds off the trees—came down to the little village he lived in at the foot of

the Galtee Mountains ; and there was not one, young or old, was not ready to follow him. To hear him talk, as Rory described, was better than a play. There wasn't a part of the world he hadn't seen, there wasn't a great man in it he didn't know ; and " what beat all," as Rory said, " was the way he had the women on his side." Not that he was a fine-looking man, or tall, or handsome—far from it ; he was a little " crith of a crayture," not above five feet four or five, and with red whiskers and a beard, and a pair of eyes, that seemed on fire ; and he had a way of looking about him as he went, as much as to say, " Where's the man that wants to quarrel with me ? for I'm ready and willin'."

" I won't say," added Rory, with a touch of humility, " that one like your honour would have thought so much of him as we did. I won't say that all the fine people he knew, and all the wonderful things he did, would have made your honour admire him, as I, and others like me, did. Maybe, indeed, you'd have found out it was lies from beginning to end."

" I'm not so sure of that," muttered Tony ; " there are plausible fellows of that sort that take in men of the world every day !" And Tony sat back in his chair, and puffed his cigar in silence, doubt-

less recalling one such adept in his own experience.

“Faix, I’m proud to hear your honour say that!” cried Rory. “I’m as glad as a pound-note to know that even a gentleman might have been ‘taken in’ by the Major.”

“I’ll not go that far, perhaps,” remarked Tony, “as regards your Major; but I repeat that there are certain fellows of his kind who actually *have* imposed on gentlemen—yes, on gentlemen who were no fools either. But how was it he tricked you?”

Now were the flood-gates of Rory’s eloquence thrown open, and for above an hour did he revel, as only an Irishman or an Italian can, in a narrative of cruel wrongs and unmerited hardships; sufferings on land and sufferings at sea; short rations, bad language, and no pay. Rory was to have been an officer—a captain at least; and when they landed at Ancona, he was marched away hundreds of miles, with a heavy musket and a heavier pack, as a common soldier, and given nothing but beans and oil for his food, and told he’d be shot if he grumbled. But what he felt most of all was, that he never knew whose service he was in, and what he was going to fight for. Now it was the Holy Father—Rory was ready to die for him and the blessed

Virgin; now it was the King of Naples and Saint Somebody, whose name he couldn't remember, and that Rory felt no enthusiasm for. At one moment he was told the Pope was going to bless the whole battalion, and sprinkle them with his own hand; and then it was the Queen—and purty she was, no doubt—was to lead them on, God knows where! “And that's the way we were living in the mountains for six weeks, and every time they paraded us—about once a-week—there would be thirty or forty less of us; some gone off to be sailors, some taking to the highway as robbers, and a few selling whatever they had and making for home. At last the Major himself came down to inspect us—he was colonel then, and covered with gold, and all over stars and crosses. We were drawn up in a square of a little town they call Loretto, that has houses on three sides of it, and a low sea-wall with a drop of about twenty feet to the sea. I'll not forget the place to my dying day.

“There was four hundred and twenty-seven of us out of two thousand and sixty,—the rest ran away; and when the Major heard the roll called, I thought he'd go out of his mind; and he walked up and down in front of us, gnashing his teeth and blaspheming as never I heard before. ‘Ye scoundrels,’

he said at last, 'you've disgraced me eternally, and I'll go back to the Holy Father and tell him it's curses and not blessings he'd have to give you.'

"This was too much to bear, and I cried out, 'You'd better not!'

"'Who says that?' cries he. 'Where's the cowardly rascal that hasn't the courage to step forward and repeat these words?' and with that I advanced two paces, and putting my gun to my shoulder, took a steady aim at him. I had him covered. If I pulled the trigger, he was a dead man; but I couldn't do it—no, if I got the whole world for it, I couldn't; and do you know why?—here it is, then: It was the way he stood up, bould and straight, with one hand on his breast and the other on the hilt of his sword, and he cried out, 'Fire! you scoundrel, fire!' Bad luck to me if I could; but I walked on, covering him all the while, till I got within ten paces of the wall, and then I threw down my musket, and with a run I cleared it, and jumped into the sea. He fired both his pistols at me, and one ball grazed my head; but I dived and swam and dived till he lost sight of me; and it was half an hour before they got out a boat; and before that I was snug hiding between the rocks, and so close to him that I could hear him

swearing away like mad. When it was dark I crept out, and made my way along the shore to Pesaro, and all the way here. Indeed, I had only to say anywhere I was a deserter, and every one was kind to me. And do you know, sir, now that it's all over, I'm glad I didn't shoot him in cold blood?"

"Of course you are," said Tony, half sternly.

"But if I am," rejoined the other—"if I am glad of it, it's a'most breaking my heart to think I'm going back to Ireland without a chance of facing him in a fair fight."

"You could do that too if you were so very anxious for it," said Tony, gravely.

"Do you tell me so? And how, sir?"

"Easy enough, Rory. I'm on my way now to join a set of brave fellows that are going to fight the very soldiers your Major will be serving with. The cause that he fights for, I need not tell you, can't be a very good one."

"Indeed, it oughtn't," said Rory, cautiously.

"Come along with me, then; if it's only fighting you ask for, there's a fellow to lead us on that never baulked any one's fancy that way. In four days from this we can be in the thick of it. I don't want to persuade you in a hurry, Rory. Take a day—take two—three days, if you like, to think of it."

“I won’t take three minutes. I’ll follow your honour to the world’s end! and if it gives me a chance to come up with the Major, I’ll bless the hour I met you.”

Tony now told him—somewhat more ambiguously, I’m afraid, than consisted with perfect candour—of the cause they were going to fight for. He made the most of those magical words so powerful to the Celtic heart—oppression, cruelty, injustice; he imparted a touch of repeal to the struggle before them; and when once pressed hard by Rory with the home question, “Which side is the Holy Father?” he roughly answered, “I don’t think he has much to say to it one way or other.”

“Faix, I’m ashamed of myself,” said Rory, flushing up; “and I ought to know that what’s good enough for your honour to fight for, is too good for me.”

They drained the last glasses of their flask in pledge of their compact, and, resolving to keep their resting-time for the sultry heat of the day, started by the clear starlight for Genoa.

CHAPTER LI.

A PIECE OF GOOD TIDINGS.

IT was about a week after this event when Sam M'Gruder received a few lines from Tony Butler, saying that he was to sail that morning with a detachment for Garibaldi. They were bound for Marsala, and only hoped that they might not be caught by the Neapolitan cruisers, which were said to swarm along the coast. "I suppose," he writes, "there's plenty of 'fight' amongst us; but we are more picturesque than decent-looking; and an honest countryman of mine, who has attached himself to my fortunes, tells me in confidence that 'they're all heathens, every man of them.' They are certainly a wild, dare-devil set, whom it will be difficult to reduce to any discipline, and, I should fear, impossible to restrain from outrage, if occasion offers. We are so crowded that we have only standing-room on deck, and those below are from

time to time relieved in squads, to come up and breathe a little fresh air. The suffering from heat and thirst was bad yesterday, but will perhaps be less at sea, with a fresh breeze to cool us. At all events no one complains. We are the jolliest blackguards in the world, and going to be killed in a better humour with life than half the fine gentlemen feel as they wake in the morning to a day of pleasure.

“ I shall be glad when we put foot on land again; for I own I'd rather fight the Neapolitans than live on in such close companionship with my gallant comrades. If not 'bowled over,' I'll write to you within a week or two. Don't forget me.—Yours ever,

“TONY BUTLER.”

M'Gruder was carefully plodding his way through this not very legible document, exploring it with a zeal that vouched for his regard for the writer, when he was informed that an English gentleman was in the office inquiring for Mr Butler.

The stranger soon presented himself as a Mr Culter, of the house of Box & Culter, solicitors, London, and related that he had been in search of Mr Anthony Butler from one end of Europe to the

other. "I was first of all, sir," said he, "in the wilds of Calabria, and thence I was sent off to the equally barbarous north of Ireland, where I learned that I must retrace my steps over the Alps to your house; and now I am told that Mr Butler has left this a week ago."

"Your business must have been important to require such activity," said M'Gruder, half inquiringly.

"Very important indeed for Mr Butler, if I could only meet with him. Can you give any hint, sir, how that is to be accomplished?"

"I scarcely think you'll follow him when I tell you where he has gone," said M'Gruder, dryly. "He has gone to join Garibaldi."

"To join Garibaldi!" exclaimed the other. "A man with a landed estate and thirty-six thousand in the Three per Cents gone off to Garibaldi!"

"It is clear we are not talking of the same person. My poor friend had none of that wealth you speak of."

"Probably not, sir, when last you saw him; but his uncle, Sir Omerod Butler, has died, leaving him all he had in the world."

"I never knew he had an uncle. I never heard him speak of a rich relation."

“There was some family quarrel—some estrangement, I don’t know what; but when Sir Omerod sent for me to add a codicil to his will, he expressed a great wish to see his nephew before he died, and sent me off to Ireland to fetch him to him; but a relapse of his malady occurred the day after I left him, and he died within a week.”

The man of law entered into a minute description of the property to which Tony was to succeed. There was a small family estate in Ireland, and a large one in England; there was a considerable funded fortune, and some scattered moneys in foreign securities; the whole only charged with eight hundred a-year on the life of a lady no longer young, whom scandal called not the widow of Sir Omerod Butler. M’Gruder paid little attention to these details; his whole thought was how to apprise Tony of his good-luck—how call him back to a world where he had what would make life most enjoyable. “I take it, sir,” asked he at last, “that you don’t fancy a tour in Sicily?”

“Nothing is less in my thoughts, sir. We shall be most proud to act as Mr Butler’s agents, but I’m not prepared to expose my life for the agency.”

“Then I think I must go myself. It’s clear the poor fellow ought to know of his good fortune.”

“I suspect that the Countess Brancaleone, the annuitant I mentioned, will not send to tell him,” said the lawyer, smiling; “for if Mr Butler should get knocked over in this ugly business, she inherits everything, even to the family plate with the Butler arms.”

“She shan’t, if I can help it,” said M’Gruder, firmly. “I’ll set out to-night.”

Mr Culter passed a warm eulogium on this heroic devotion, enlarged on the beauty of friendship in general, and concluded by saying he would step over to his hotel, where he had ordered dinner; after which he would certainly drink Mr M’Gruder’s health.

“I shall want some details from you,” said M’Gruder—“something written and formal—to assure my friend that my tidings are trustworthy. I know it will be no easy task to persuade him that he is a man of fortune.”

“You shall have all you require, sir—a copy of the will, a formal letter from our house, reciting details of the property, and, what will, perhaps, impart the speediest conviction of all, a letter of credit, in Mr Butler’s favour, for five hundred pounds for immediate use. These are the sort of proofs that no scepticism is strong enough to resist.

The only thing that never jests, whose seriousness is above all levity, is money;" and so M'Gruder at once acknowledged that when he could go fortified with such testimonies, he defied all doubt.

His preparations for departure were soon made. A short letter to his brother explained the cause of his sudden leaving; a longer one to Dolly told how, in his love for her, he could not do enough for her friend; and that, though he liked Tony well for his own sake, he liked him far more as the "adopted brother and old playfellow of his dearest Dolly." Poor fellow! he wrote this from a full heart, and a very honest one too. Whether it imparted all the pleasure he hoped it might to her who read it, is none of our province to tell. It is only ours to record that he started that night for Genoa, obtained from a friend—a subordinate in the Government employment—a letter to Garibaldi himself, and sailed with an agent of the General's in charge of a supply of small-arms and ammunition.

They were within thirty miles of Sicily when they were boarded by the Neapolitan corvette the *Veloce*, and carried off prisoners to Palermo—the one solitary capture the royal navy made in the whole of that eventful struggle.

The proofs that they were Garibaldians were too strong and too many for denial ; and for a day and a half their fate was far from hopeful. Indeed, had the tidings of the first encounters between the King's forces and the buccaneer's been less disastrous than they were, the prisoners would have been shot ; but already a half doubt had arisen as to the fidelity of the royal troops. This and that general, it was rumoured, had resigned ; and of those who remained, it was said, more than one had counselled " concessions." Ominous word at such a moment, but the presage of something darker and more ominous still.

M'Gruder bore up with a stout heart, and nothing grieved him in all his calamity more than the thought that all this time Tony might be exposing his life as worthless and hopeless, while, if he only knew it, he had already succeeded to what men are content to pass their whole existence to grasp and gain.

Nor was he inactive in his imprisonment. He wrote letters to Garibaldi, enclosing others to Tony ; he wrote to all the Consuls he could think of ; to the Minister at Naples, or to his representative ; and he proclaimed his right as a " civis Romanus," and

threatened a Palmerstonian vengeance on all and every that had a hand in curtailing his freedom.

In this very natural and British pursuit we must now leave him, and betake ourselves to other cares and other characters.

CHAPTER LII.

ON THE CHIAJA AT NIGHT.

THE night had just closed in after a hot sultry day of autumn in Naples, as Maitland and Caffarelli sat on the sea-wall of the Chiaja, smoking their cigars in silence, apparently deep in thought, or sometimes startled by the distant shouts and cries of the populace who crammed the Toledo or the Quarter of St Lucia; for all Naples was now in the streets, and wild songs and yells resounded on every side.

In the bay the fleet lay at anchor, but the rapid flash of lanterns, as they rose and fell in the riggings, showed that the signalman was at work, and that messages were being transmitted and replied to throughout the squadron. A like activity seemed to prevail in the forts above the city, and the roll of the drum and the bugle-call occasionally could be heard overtopping all other sounds.

“What would a newly-come traveller say to all

this?" said Caffarelli at last. "Would he think it was a city about to be attacked by an enemy, or would he deem it a town in open revolt, or one given up to pillage after the assault? I have seen to-night what might confirm any of these impressions."

"And all three are present," said Maitland, moodily. "Your traveller could scarcely be more puzzled than we are."

The other sighed wearily, and Maitland went on. "What do you trust, or whom? Is it these noisy legions up there, who only muster to disband; or that gallant fleet that has come to anchor, only the more easily to surrender and change its flag?"

"There may be some traitors, but the great majority, I'll swear, will stand by the King."

"No; not one in fifty—not one in a hundred. You don't seem to apprehend that loyalty is not a sudden instinct. It is a thing a man inherits. Take my word for it, Carlo, these men will not fight to keep a certain set of priests around a bigoted old Queen, or support a King whose highest ambition is to be a Jesuit."

"And if you thought so meanly of the cause, why have you adopted it?"

"Because, ill as I think of the Court, I hate the

rabble more. Remember, Carlo"—and now he spoke in a rapid and marked tone—"remember that, when I joined you, I deemed myself a rich man, and I had my ambitions, like the rest of you. Had I known what I now know—had I foreseen that the day was so near wherein I was to find myself a beggar——"

"No, no, Maitland; don't say this."

"And why not say it? It is true. You know as well as I do that amongst that yelling rabble there is none poorer than myself; and for this reason, I repeat, I might have chosen my associates more wisely. You yourself saw the treatment I met with this morning."

"Ay, but bear in mind, Maitland, what was the provocation you gave. It is no small thing to tell a King, surrounded by his ministers and generals, that he has not one loyal and true man in his train—that, what between treachery and cowardice, he will find himself alone, at the head of a few foreign regiments, who will only fight to cut their way through towards home."

"I scarcely went so far as this," said Maitland, smiling.

"Did you not, per Bacco? I was there and heard you. You accused Laguila to his face of being

bought, and named the sum ; and you told Cadorno that you had a copy of his letter promising to surrender the flagship to Garibaldi."

"And they listened to me with an admirable patience."

"I don't know that ; I am certain Cadorno will send you a message before the week is over."

"And why not before the day was over ? Are these accusations a man sleeps upon ?"

"The King commanded them both to reply to your charges formally and distinctly, but not with the sword ; and he was right so far."

"At all events, was it kingly to tell me of the favours that had been bestowed upon me, and to remind me that I was an alien, and unknown ?"

"The King was angry."

"He was angrier when I handed back his patent, and told him that I did not care to be the last-made noble of a dynasty."

"It was outrageous. I was shocked to hear you ; and for one so young, I was struck with the dignity with which he heard you."

"I don't think he understood me ; he was impassive, because he did not know he was wounded. But why do I talk of these things ? they have no longer the faintest interest for me. Except

yourself, there is not a man in the cause I care for."

"This is a mere passing depression, my dear Maitland. All things seem sad-coloured to you now. Wait till to-morrow, or wait till there be a moment of danger, and you will be yourself again."

"As for that," said Maitland, bitterly, "I am terribly myself just now. The last eight or ten years of my life were the dream; now is the awakening. But cheer up, my old friend; I will stand by *you*, though I care very little for the cause you fight for. I will still serve on the Staff, and play out my part to the fall of the curtain."

"What a strange scene that council was this morning!" said Caffarelli, half wishing to draw him from the personal theme.

"What a strange thing to call a council, where not merely men walked in and out unbidden, but where a chance traveller could sit down amongst the King's advisers, and give his opinion like a servant of the crown! Do you even know his name?"

"I'm not sure that I do; but it sounded like Tchernicheff. He distinguished himself against the Turks on the Danube."

"And because he routed some ill-disciplined

hordes with others a mere shade more civilised, he comes here to impose his opinion on our councils, and tell us how we are to defend ourselves!"

"I did not hear him utter a word."

"No, but he handed in a paper drawn up by himself, in which he recommends the King to withdraw all the forces in front of Capua, and meet these marauders, where they will least like to fight, in the open. The advice was good—even though it came from a barbarian. In street-fighting your buccaneer is as good as, if not better than, a regular. All the circumstances of the ground favour him. Take him, however, where he must move and manœuvre—where he will have to form and re-form—to dress his line under fire, and occasionally change his flank—then all the odds will be against him. So far the Scythian spoke well. His only miscalculation was to suppose that we will fight anywhere."

"I declare, Maitland, I shall lose temper with you. You can't surely know what insulting things you say."

"I wish they could provoke any other than yourself, mio caro. But come away from this. Let us walk back again. I want to have one more look at those windows before I go."

"And are you really in love?" asked the other.

with more of astonishment in his voice than curiosity.

“ I wish I knew how to make *her* believe it—that’s all,” said he, sadly; and, drawing his arm within his friend’s, moved on with bent-down head, and in silence.

“ I think your friends are about the only travellers in Naples at this moment, and indeed none but English would come here at such a season. The dog-days and the revolution together ought to be too much even for tourist curiosity.”

Caffarelli went on to describe the arrival of the three heavily-laden carriages with their ponderous baggage and their crowd of servants, and the astonishment of the landlord at such an apparition; but Maitland paid him no attention—perhaps did even not hear him.

Twice or thrice Caffarelli said something to arouse notice or attract curiosity, even to pique irritability, as when he said—“ I suppose I must have seen your beauty, for I saw two—and both good-looking—but neither such as would drive a man distracted out of pure admiration. Are you minding me? Are you listening to me?”

“ No. I have not heard one word you were saying.”

“Civil, certainly; but, seriously, Maitland, is there not something more pressing to do at this moment than to loiter along the Chiaja to catch a glimpse of the closed curtains within which some blonde angel may be taking her tea?”

“Go home, and I will join you later on. I have given orders about the horses. My man will have all in readiness by daybreak. You seem to me most terribly eager to have your head smashed. The King ought to reward your valour. It will be the only ‘Cross’ he will have to bestow.”

Caffarelli turned impatiently from him, and walked away.

Maitland looked after him for a moment, and then continued his way. He sauntered on, rather like one seeking to kill time than to reach a goal, and once or twice he stopped, and seemed to reflect whether he would go on. At last he reached a spot where a broad path of light streamed across the street, and extended till it was lost in the thick foliage of the garden on the seaside, and, looking suddenly up, he saw he was in front of the great hotel of Naples, “L’Universo.” The drawing-room windows were open on a long balcony, and Maitland could see into the well-lighted room certain figures which he persuaded himself he could re-

cognise even through the muslin curtains, which slightly moved and waved in the faint night-air. As he still strained his eyes to mark the scene, two figures approached the window, and passed out upon the balcony. There could be no mistake—they were Alice and her sister; and so perfect the stillness of the air, and so thin withal, that he could hear the sound of their voices, though not trace their words.

“Is it not delicious here, Alice?” said Bella. “These are the glorious nights of Italy Maitland used to tell us of—so calm, so balmy, and so starry.”

“What was that Skeffy was saying to you about Maitland as you came up-stairs?” asked Alice, sharply.

“Oh, it was a rumour he mentioned that Maitland had quarrelled with the Court party. He had advised something, or rejected something; in fact, I paid little attention, for I know nothing of these Italian plots and schemes, and I like Maitland much better when he does not speak of them.”

“Is he here now, do you know?”

“Yes; Skeff said he saw him this morning.”

“I hope and pray he may not hear that we have arrived. I trust that we may not see him.”

“And why so, Alice, dearest?”

“Can you ask me?”

“I mean, why not receive him on the terms of an easy intimacy? A person of his tact is always quick enough to appreciate the exact amount of favour he is held in.”

“It is of myself I am thinking—not of him,” said she, with something of resentment in her tone.

“If you speak this way, Alice, I shall believe that you care for him.”

“The greater mistake yours, my dear Bella.”

“Well—that you did once care for him, and regret the fact, or regret the change—which is it?”

“Neither, on my honour! He interested me—*I* own to that; but now that I know his mystery, and what a vulgar mystery it is, I am half ashamed that I even felt an interest in him.”

“Gossip would say you did more, Alice—that you gave him encouragement.”

“What an odious word you have impressed into your service! but I deny it; nor was he one to want it. Your adventurer never does.”

“Adventurer!”

“I mean in its least offensive sense; but really

I see no reason why this man's name is to persecute me. I left Ireland half to avoid it. I certainly need not encounter it here."

"And if you meet him?"

"I shall not meet him. I don't intend to go out so long as we are here, and I trust I can refuse to receive him when at home."

"I had almost said, Poor fellow!"

"Say it by all means; compassionate—console him too, if Skeff has no objection."

"Oh, Alice!"

"Your own fault, Bella, if I say provoking things. No, mamma," added she, to some remark from within; "our secrets, as you call them, cannot be overheard; for, first of all, we are talking English; and secondly, there is no person whatever in the street."

Lady Lyle now made her appearance on the balcony, and soon afterwards they all re-entered the room. Maitland sat hours long on the stone bench, watching with intense eagerness as a shadow would pass or repass behind the curtains, and there he remained till all the lights were out in the hotel and the whole house sunk in silence.

CHAPTER LIII.

UNPLEASANT RECKONINGS.

THERE were few busier diplomatists in Europe during these eventful days of Naples than Skeffington Damer; and if England had not her share of influence, it was no fault of his. He sent off special messengers every day. He wrote to F. O. in a cipher, of which it was said no one had the key; and he telegraphed in mystical language to the Admiral at Malta, which went far to persuade the gallant seaman that his correspondent was a maniac. He besieged the Court and the ministerial offices, and went home to receive deputations from the wildest leaders of the extreme democracy. He was determined, as he said, to "know the truth," and he surrounded himself for that purpose with a mass of inextricable perfidy and falsehood; and yet, with all these occupations, he passed his entire mornings with the Lyles, and dined with them every day.

It was a great pleasure, as Sir Arthur said, to be "behind the scenes;" and really the phrase did not ill represent their position, for they knew as much of what was going on upon the stage as people usually do who have only an occasional glimpse, and that from a wrong point of view. Sir Arthur, however, believed Skeffy to be the rising diplomatist, the embryo Talleyrand of Great Britain; and it was strange to see an old, crafty, case-hardened man of the world listening with implicit trustfulness to the hare-brained speculations of a young fellow, whose solitary pretensions were, that he sent off his daily balderdash marked "On Her Majesty's Service," and sealed with the royal arms.

Lady Lyle only half believed in him; and as for Alice, she laughed at, but liked him; while Bella gave him all her confidence, and admired him greatly. And a very nice thing it is of young ladies, and never to be too much commended, how they will hang on the words, and store up the sayings, and repeat the opinions of the man who prefers them. It is not exactly Love, no more than gooseberry-wine is champagne, but it effervesces and exhilarates, and I'm not sure if it does not agree very well with weak constitutions.

Now Skeffy told Bella every morning in the most

mysterious manner how he had checkmated Bresson, the French Minister, and outwitted Caraffa and the Cardinal Riario. They never could make out whence he had his information. The Queen had spent a fortune in paying spies to watch him, but he out-manceuvred them all. Nobody knew—nobody ever could know—the resources of his craft; and indeed, except Louis Napoleon, there was not a man in Europe had fathomed the depth of his astuteness. “I have to pretend,” would he say, “to be a light, flippant, volatile creature, given up to pleasure, fond of play, of the ballet, and all that sort of thing. I let them hear every day of the sums I have lost at lansquenet, and the enormous extravagance of my daily life, but they don’t know what goes on here,” and he would tap his forehead; “they never suspect what plots and plans and machinations are at work within that brain they imagine to be abandoned to enjoyment. It will come out one of these days, dearest Bella; they’ll know who ‘did it’ yet.” And this was a very favourite phrase with him, and Bella caught it up, and talked of the people who had not “done it,” and never could “do it,” and hinted at one whom an ignorant world would awake one morning to see had “done it,” and “done it” to perfection.

To hear him talk, you would say that he rather liked the mistaken estimate the world had formed of him; that it was one of those excellent jokes whose point lay in a surprise; and what a surprise would that be one of these days when he came forth in his true character, the great political genius of Europe! Bella believed it all; not that she was deficient in common sense, or wanting in discernment; but she liked him—there was the secret. She had made her investment in a certain stock, and would persist in regarding it as a most profitable venture; and thus would they pass their mornings—a strange way to make love, perhaps; but that passion, etherealise it how you may, trades on some one form or other of selfishness; and all these endearments were blended with the thought of how happy they should be when they were great people.

Skeffy would bring with him, besides, a whole bagful of papers, despatches, and “private and confidentials,” and suchlike, and make Bella copy out pages for him of that dreary trash, which, like a bad tapestry, has served no other purpose than to employ the small mind that devised it. And he would sit there, with his eyes closed, and dictate to her endless “brief glances” at the present aspect of the Italian question, till the poor girl was half

worn out between the importance of her task and its weariness.

“What’s that you are poring over, Bella?” he asked, as she read over a somewhat lengthy letter.

“It is the complaint of an Englishman at being detained by the authorities, first at Palermo and again here: he was a mere traveller, he asserts, and not in any way engaged in political schemes. He says that this is his fourth appeal to you without an answer, and he declares that if this be not replied to, he will address the Chief Secretary at home.”

“Tell the fellow that a Damer is inaccessible to a menace; tell him that his stupid letter would be promptly referred back to me; and say that, so far as this peninsula is concerned, I am F. O., and to be propitiated by humility, and not outraged by a threat.”

“But if it be really true—if the poor fellow should be imprisoned for nothing, Skeff?”

“If so I shall liberate him;” and as he spoke he arose and walked the room with a haughty stride and a head erect. “Write—

“‘SIR,—I am directed by H. M.’s Chargé d’Affaires’—or rather say ‘The undersigned has to acknowledge the receipt of’—what’s his name?’”

“Samuel M’Gruder.”

“What a name! ‘of Samuel M’Gruder’s letter;

and although he takes exception to the passages marked A and B, and requires explanation of the paragraph C, beginning at the words "nor can I," and ending at "British subject"—"You'll have to copy out the whole of his despatch, Bella, and then I shall mark the passages—where was I?"

"British subject."

"Yes, I remember. 'Yet that, conceding much to the feelings'—no, that is too familiar—'making allowances for an irritability——'"

"I don't think you can say that, Skeff. He has now been seven weeks in confinement."

"Lucky dog that he has not been seven weeks worked almost to a skeleton, like me, with the cares of a whole nation on my head, and the eyes of Europe upon me."

"Just let me say that you will look into his case, and do your best to get him out of prison."

"With all my heart. It is fearfully undignified; but let it go, and I'll send off a messenger to the Prefetto Lanzi to deliver up the prisoner M'Gruder to me to-morrow morning, and we will interrogate him here."

The roll of a drum was now heard in the street without, and from the balcony could be seen an immense crowd of people moving in front of an

infantry regiment, who marched past travel-stained and disordered, and with an indescribable something in their air that indicated, it might be defeat, it might be disaffection.

“Here’s strange news,” said Sir Arthur, as he joined them. “The landlord tells me Garibaldi has landed in Calabria, near Reggio, beaten the royal troops, and is in full march on Naples. The regiment that you see there were ordered off to reinforce the advanced guard, but cried out ‘Viva Garibaldi!’ and have been now recalled, and are to be sent into the fortress.”

“Look!” cried Skeff; “here comes the artillery after them, a strong proof that they don’t trust these fellows. Bella, I must write off the news at once.”

“Let me first finish about M’Gruder,” said she, as she sat down to the table.

“I wish we were all safe back in England,” said Lady Lyle, as she came up.

“I was just thinking the very same thing,” said Sir Arthur.

“Have no fears,” interposed Skeffy; “I shall order up the fleet from Malta. You shall have a frigate—a line-of-battle ship, if you like it better.”

“I’d much rather we had post-horses and an escort,” said Lady Lyle.

“Would that be possible, Damer?”

“All is possible, Sir Arthur, to power properly exercised. I'll go down at once to the War-Office and see what can be done.”

“If it were perfectly safe,” said Bella, “I should like to drive through the streets and see what is going on; and as Alice refuses to go out, we are just enough for one carriage.” The project was agreed to, all the more readily that Skeff assured them his presence was an ægis that all parties would know how to respect: he was, in fact, as he put it, a sort of emblematised British lion, who, with folded paws, was about to take an airing for his own amusement.

“As we drive along,” whispered he to Bella, “just watch the recognitions fellows will throw me—a look, a gesture, a sign, scarcely perceptible, but enough to say, ‘Your Excellency may depend upon us.’”

And Bella felt a certain elation at the thought that she was the chosen one of a man so eminent and so distinguished. And, oh dear, let us not be severe upon her for it! If we could not make occasional swans of our geese in this life, we should be very ill off in matters of ornithology. Away they drove down the Chiaja and up the Toledo, where, amidst wild yells and cries for the King,

and at times for Garibaldi, a dense mass of people surged and swayed like a mighty monster awaking out of slumber and arousing to deeds of violence.

The populace seemed intoxicated, but not with wine or with joy, but a sort of dare-devil recklessness which sought something—anything—to vent its passion upon. Lines of men linked arm in arm, and filling the full breadth of the street, marched rapidly on, chanting wild songs; and it was strange to mark in these the old grey-headed feeble man coupled with the stalwart youth, or perhaps the mere boy. Here and there were groups listening to some street-orator, now greeting his words with a cheer, now with a burst of vociferous laughter; and through all these went other men, busily, eagerly, whispering to this, conferring with that, now exerting every effort of persuasiveness, now seeming to employ incentives to vengeance.

Except the carriage where sat the Lyles, not another vehicle of any kind was to be seen; and as the horses moved slowly along through the dense crowd, many a rude jest and droll comment was passed upon the “matti Inglesi”—the mad English—who had taken such a time and place for a carriage airing. Nor was the courage of the act unrecognised, and twice or thrice a wild cheer

proclaimed what they thought of a nation whose very ladies were above all fear and timidity.

The most striking feature in all this tumult was, that soldiers were seen everywhere mixed up with the civilians; not merely furloughed men in undress, but soldiers in full uniform and perfectly armed, but yet displaying, sometimes ostentatiously, by the way they carried their shakoes or their bayonets, or wore their coats open and unbuttoned, that they no longer respected the claims of discipline.

Patrols on foot or horseback would be met too; but the men, under no restraint, would not only exchange words of greeting with the mob, but accept offers of wine or cigars; and it was seen that the officers were either powerless to prevent or unwilling to curb this indiscipline.

“What does all this portend, Damer?” asked Sir Arthur. “We hear cheers for the King; but all I see seems to threaten his downfall.”

Skeffy was puzzled, and a wiser man might have been puzzled; but his diplomatic instincts forbade such a humiliating avowal, and so he merely muttered something to the purport, that “We” had not fully determined what was to be the issue; and that till “We” had made up our minds, all these signs and portents were mere street-noises.

If I am not perfectly just to him in this rendering of his explanation, I am at least merciful to my reader; and, leaving the party to follow out the exploration, I shall return to the drawing-room they had just quitted, and where Alice now sat alone, and deep in thought. The yells and cries that filled the street outside, and the continual uproar that resounded through the city, were all unheeded by her; and so immersed was she in her reflections, that when a servant entered the room to present the card of a visitor, she was unaware of his presence till he had twice addressed her.

“It cannot be for us,” said she, looking at the name. “I do not know the Count d’Amalfi.”

“He hopes to be better remembered as Mr Maitland,” said that gentleman, as, pushing wide the half-opened door, he approached her and made a low bow.

The servant had time to retire and shut the door before Alice had sufficiently recovered herself to ask Maitland to be seated. So coldly was the request conveyed, however, that if he was not determined on having an interview, he would have affected to make his call an offer of some sort of attention, and taken his leave almost on the instant. Far different were his present intentions;

and as he deposited his hat and cane, and took his place in front of her, there was a methodical slowness that indicated purpose.

“I am almost afraid to tell you, Mr Maitland,” she began, “that I gave orders to be denied to all visitors. They have all gone out to drive, and——”

“It was for that reason I took this opportunity to call, madam,” said he, very quietly, but in a tone of some decision. “I desired to see you all alone.”

“Not, surely, if you were aware that I did not receive?”

“Do not oblige me to convict myself, Mrs Trafford; for I, too, shall be almost afraid to tell the truth,” and a very faint smile moved his mouth as he spoke.

“But, as I conjecture, you would like to meet my father——”

“My visit at present is for you,” said he, interrupting; “and as I cannot assure myself how long the opportunity may last, let me profit by it.”

She became very pale; some fear she certainly felt: but there was more of anger than fear in the thought that this man was, by his manner, almost asserting a right to see and speak with her.

“Mr Maitland is too accomplished a man of the world to need being told that, when a person has

declared an indisposition to receive, it is usually deemed enough to secure privacy."

"Usually—yes; but there are occasions which are not in this category."

"And do you mean to say this is one of them, sir?" said she, haughtily.

"Most certainly, madam, this is one of them!" As Maitland said this he saw the colour mount to her face; and he saw, too, how, now that her proud spirit was, as it were, challenged, she would not think of retreat, but brave him, whatever might come of it.

"Indeed!" said she, with a scornful laugh—"indeed!" and the last syllable was drawn out in an accent of most insolent irony.

"Yes, madam," he continued, in a tone perfectly calm and unimpassioned; "our last relations together fully warrant me to say so much; and however presumptuous it might have been in me to aspire as I did, the gracious favour with which I was listened to seemed to plead for me."

"What favour do you speak of, sir?" said she, with evident agitation.

"I must not risk the faint hope that remains to me, by recalling what you may not wish to remember; but I may at least ask you to bring to mind a

certain evening—a certain night—when we walked together in the garden at Tilney.”

“I do not think I am likely to forget it, sir: some anonymous slanderer has made it the pretext of a most insolent calumny. I do not, I need not say, connect you in any way with this base scandal; but it is enough to make the incident the reverse of a pleasant memory.”

“And yet it was the happiest of my whole life.”

“It is unfortunate, sir, that we should look back to an event with feelings so diametrically opposite.”

Maitland gave no heed to the irony of her tone, but went on. “If I was conscious of my own unworthiness, I had certain things in my favour which served to give me courage—not the least of these was your brother’s friendship.”

“Mark was always proud of being Mr Maitland’s friend,” said she, rather touched by this haughty man’s humility.

“That friendship became very precious to me when I knew his sister. Indeed, from that hour I loved him as a brother.”

“Forgive me, sir, if I interrupt you. At the time to which you allude we would seem to have been living in a perfect realm of misconceptions. Surely it is not necessary to revive them: surely, now that

we have awoke, we need not take up the clue of a dream to assist our reflections."

"What may be the misconceptions you refer to?" said he, with a voice much shaken and agitated.

"One was, it would appear, that Mr Maitland made me certain professions. Another, that he was—that he had—that is, that he held——. I cannot say it, sir; and I beg you to spare me what a rash temper might possibly provoke me to utter."

"Say all that you will; I loved you, Alice."

"You will force me to leave you, sir, if you thus forget yourself."

"I loved you, and I love you still. Do not go, I beg, I implore you. As the proof of how I love you, I declare that I know all that you have heard of me, all that you have said of me; every harsh and cruel word. Ay, Alice, I have read them as your hand traced them, and through all, I love you."

"I will not stoop to ask how, sir; but I will say that the avowal has not raised you in my estimation."

"If I have not your love, I will never ask for your esteem. I wanted your affection, as a man wants that which would make his life a reality. I could have worked for you—I could have braved scores of things I have ever shrunk from; and I had a right to it."

“ A right !—what right ? ”

“ The right of him who loved as I did, and was as ready to prove his love. The man who has done what I have is no adventurer, though that fair hand wrote him one. Remember that, madam ; and remember that you are in a land where men accept no such slights as this you would pass upon me.” His eyes glared with passion as he spoke, and his dark cheeks grew purple. “ You are not without those who must answer for your levity.”

“ Now, sir, I leave you,” said she, rising.

“ Not yet. You shall hear me out. I know why you have treated me thus falsely. I am aware who is my rival.”

“ Let me pass, sir.”

He placed his back to the door, and folded his arms on his breast ; but though he made an immense effort to seem calm, his lips shook as he spoke. “ You shall hear me out. I tell you, I know my rival, and I am ready and prepared to stake my pretensions against his.”

“ Go on, sir, go on ; very little more in this strain will efface any memory I preserved of what you first appeared to me.”

“ Oh, Alice ! ” cried he, in a voice of deep anguish. “ It is despair has brought me to this.

When I came, I thought I could have spoken with calm and self-restraint; but when I saw you—saw what I once believed might have been mine—I forgot all—all but my misery.”

“Suffer me to pass out, sir,” said she, coldly. He moved back, and opened the door wide, and held it thus as she swept past him, without a word or a look.

Maitland pressed his hat deep over his brow, and descended the stairs slowly, one by one. A carriage drove to the door as he reached it, and his friend Caffarelli sprang out and grasped his hand.

“Come quickly, Maitland!” cried he. “The King has left the palace. The army is moving out of Naples to take up a position at Capua. All goes badly. The fleet is wavering, and Garibaldi passed last night at Salerno.”

“And what do I care for all this? Let me pass.”

“Care for it! It is life or death, caro mio! In two hours more the populace will tear in pieces such men as you and myself, if we’re found here. Listen to those yells, ‘*Morte ai Reali!*’ Is it with ‘Death to the Royalists!’ ringing in our ears we are to linger here?”

“This is as good a spot to die in as another,” said Maitland; and he lighted his cigar and sat down on the stone bench beside the door.

“The Twenty-fifth of the Line are in open revolt, and the last words of the King were, ‘Give them to Maitland, and let him deal with them.’”

Maitland shrugged his shoulders, and smoked on.

“Genario has hoisted the cross of Savoy over the fort at Baia,” continued the other, “and no one can determine what is to be done. They all say, ‘Ask Maitland.’”

“Imitate him! Do the same over the Royal Palace!” said the other, mockingly.

“There, there! Listen to that cry! The mob are pouring down the Chiaja. Come away.”

“Let us look at the scoundrels,” said Maitland, taking his friend’s arm, and moving into the street.

Caffarelli pushed and half lifted him into the carriage, and they drove off at speed.

CHAPTER LIV.

SKEFF DAMER TESTED.

WHEN the Lyles returned from their drive, it was to find that Alice was too ill to come down to dinner. She had, she said, a severe headache, and wished to be left perfectly quiet and alone. This was a sore disappointment to Bella, brimful of all she had seen and heard, and burning with impatience to impart how Skeffy had been sent for by the King, and what he said to his Majesty, and how the royal plans had been modified by his sage words ; and, in fact, that the fate of the Neapolitan kingdom was at that moment in the hands of that "gifted creature."

It was such she called him ; and I beg my kind reader not to think the less of her that she so magnified her idol. The happiest days of our lives are the least real, just as the evils which never befall us are the greatest.

Bella was sincerely sorry for her sister's head-

ache; but with all that, she kept stealing every now and then into her room to tell what Skeff said to Caraffa, and the immense effect it produced. "And then, dearest," she went on, "we have really done a great deal to-day. We have sent off three 'formal despatches,' and two 'confidentials,' and Skeff has told my Lord B., Secretary of State though he be, a piece of his mind—he does write so ably when he is roused; and he has declared that he will not carry out his late instructions. Few men would have had courage to say that; but they know that, if Skeff liked, he has only to go into Parliament: there are scores of boroughs actually fighting for him; he would be positively terrible in opposition."

A deep wearied sigh was all Alice's response.

"Yes, dearest, I'm sure I am tiring you; but I must tell how we liberated Mr M'Gruder. He has been, he says, fifty-three days in prison, and really he looks wretched. I might have felt more for the man, but for the cold good-for-nothing way he took all Skeff's kindness. Instead of bursting with gratitude, and calling him his deliverer, all he said was, 'Well, sir, I think it was high time to have done this, which, for aught I see, might just as easily have been done three or perhaps four weeks ago.' Skeff was magnificent; he only waved his hand, and said,

‘Go; you are free!’ ‘I know that well enough,’ said he, in the same sturdy voice; ‘and I intend to make use of my freedom to let the British people know how I have been treated. You’ll see honourable mention of it all, and yourself too, in the ‘Times,’ before ten days are over.’”

“My dear Bella, my head is racking; would you just wet that handkerchief and lay it on my forehead?”

“My poor sweet Alice! and I so cruel, with all my stupid stories; but I thought you’d like to hear about Tony.”

“Tony!—what of Tony?” asked she, raising herself on one elbow and looking up.

“Well, dearest, it was while in search after Tony that M’Gruder got imprisoned. They were sworn friends, it seems. You know, dear, Tony was never very particular in his choice of friends.”

“But what of him—where is he?”

“I’ll tell you everything, if you’ll only have a little patience. Tony, who was living with M’Gruder in Leghorn,—a partner, I think, in some odious traffic—cast-off clothes, I believe,—grew tired of it, or got into debt, or did something that brought him into trouble, and he ran away and joined that mad creature Garibaldi.”

“Well, go on.”

“Well, he had not been gone more than ten days or so, when a lawyer came out from England to say that his uncle, Sir Somebody Butler, had died and left him all he had—a fine estate and I don’t know how much money. When Mr M’Gruder was quite satisfied that all this was true—and like a canny Scotchman he examined it thoroughly—he set off himself to find Tony and tell him his good news; for, as he said, it would have been a terrible thing to let him go risk his life for nothing, now that he had a splendid fortune and a large estate. Indeed, you should have heard Mr M’Gruder himself on this theme. It was about the strangest medley of romance and worldliness I ever listened to. After all, he was a stanch friend, and he braved no common dangers in his pursuit. He had scarcely landed, however, in Sicily, when he was arrested and thrown into prison.”

“And never met Tony?”

“Never—of course not; how could he? He did not even dare to speak of one who served under Garibaldi till he met Skeffy.”

“But where is Tony? Is he safe? How are we to hear of him?” asked Alice, hurriedly.

“Skeff has undertaken all that, Alice. You know how he has relations with men of every party, and

is equally at home with the wildest followers of Mazzini and the courtiers about the throne. He says he'll send off a confidential messenger at once to Garibaldi's camp with a letter for Tony. Indeed, it was all I could do to prevent him going himself, he is so attached to Tony, but I begged and implored him not to go."

"Tony would have done as much for him," said Alice, gloomily.

"Perhaps he would; but remember the difference between the men, Alice. If anything should befall Skeffy, who is there to replace him?"

Alice, perhaps, could not satisfactorily answer this, for she lay back on her bed and covered her face with her hands.

"Not indeed that he would listen to me when I made that appeal to him, but he kept on repeating, 'Tony is the finest, truest-hearted fellow I ever met. *He'd* never have left a friend in the lurch; he'd never have thought of himself if another was in danger; and help him I must and will:' and that's the reason we are waiting dinner, dear, for he would go off to the Minister of War or the President of the Council; and he told papa, as he shook hands, on no account to wait for him, for he might be detained longer than he expected."

As she spoke a tap came to the door, and a servant announced dinner.

“Has Mr Damer arrived?” asked Bella, eagerly.

“No, ma’am, but Sir Arthur has just got a note from him.”

“I must see what he says!” cried she, and left the room.

Sir Arthur was reading the letter when she entered.

“Here’s Skeff gone off to what he calls the ‘front;’ he says that Tony Butler has joined the insurgents, and he must get him out of their hands at any price.”

“But of course, papa, you’ll not permit it; you’ll forbid him peremptorily,” broke in Bella.

“I’m not so sure of that, Bella; because, amongst other reasons, I’m not so sure he’d mind me. Our gifted friend is endowed with considerable self-will.”

“Immense determination, I should rather call it, papa; but, pray, try to stop this mad freak. He is not certainly called on to expose such a life as his, and at such a moment.”

“What am I to do?”

“Go over to him at once—declare that you have the right to speak on such a subject. Say that if he is pleased to overlook the necessity of his pre-

sence here at this crisis, he ought to remember his position with regard to us—ought to think of *me*," said she, with a burst of grief that ended in a shower of tears, and drove her from the room.

Sir Arthur was far more disposed to sit down to his dinner than go off on this mission of affection; but Lady Lyle took the same view of the case as her daughter, and there was no help for it. And although the bland butler repeated "Soup is served, sir," the poor man had to step down-stairs to his carriage and drive off to the Legation.

On arriving there he learned that his Excellency had gone to see the Prime Minister. Sir Arthur set off in the pursuit, which led him from one great office of the state to another, always to discover that the object of his search had just left only five minutes before; till at length his patience became exhausted on hearing that Mr Damer was last seen in company with an officer of rank on the road to Castelamare, whither, certainly, he determined not to follow him.

It was near nine o'clock when he got home to report himself unsuccessful, to meet dark looks from his wife and daughter, and sit down alone to a comfortless dinner, chagrined and disconcerted.

Lady Lyle tried to interest him by relating the

news of Tony Butler's accession to fortune ; but the re-heated mutton and the half-cold *entrées* were too trying to leave any portion of his nature open to such topics, and he sulkily muttered something about the folly of "having snubbed the young fellow"—a taunt Lady Lyle resented by rising and leaving him to his own reflections.

And now to turn to Skeff Damer. I am forced to confess, and I do not make the confession without a certain pain, that our gifted friend had not that amount of acceptance with the ministers of the King that his great talents and his promise might be supposed to have inspired ; nor had he succeeded in acquiring for the country he represented the overwhelming influence he believed to be her due. When, therefore, he drove to Caraffa's house, the Prince frankly told him, what certainly was true, that he had affairs far too weighty on his mind to enter upon that small question H. M.'s Chargé d'Affaires desired to discuss. "Try Carini," said he, "the Minister of Grace and Justice ; he looks after the people who break the law." Skeff grew angry, and the minister bowed him out. He went in succession to some five or six others, all occupied, all overwhelmed with cares, troubles, and anxieties. At last, by a mere accident, he chanced upon Filan-

gieri going off to wait on the King: he was accompanied by a small man, in a very gorgeous uniform, studded over with stars and decorations.

In a few hurried words Skeff told how his friend, a man of rank and fortune, had been seduced by some stupid representations to take service with Garibaldi, and that it was all-important to rescue him from such evil associations, and restore him at once to his friends and country.

“Where is he?”

“Wherever Garibaldi may be—I can’t tell.”

“He’s nearer than we like,” said the other, with a faint smile. “Are you sure your friend will return with you, even if you should track him out?”

“I think I can answer for him. I am almost certain that I can.”

“Can you answer for Garibaldi too?—will *he* give him up?”

“I believe Garibaldi cares a great deal for the good opinion of England; and when he sees *me*, her Majesty’s——”

“Yes, yes, I can understand that. Well, I have no time to give you for more consideration of the matter; but I’ll do better. I’ll give you this gentleman—my aide-de-camp, Colonel the Count M’Caskey; he’ll pass you through our lines, and

go, as flag of truce, to the headquarters of the rebels. The whole thing is a blunder, and I am doing exceedingly wrong; but here we are, making one mistake after another every day, and all regularity and order are totally forgotten." Turning to M'Caskey, he took him aside for a few seconds and spoke eagerly and rapidly to him, and then, once more shaking Skeff's hand, he wished him well through his adventure and drove off.

"Whenever you have all in readiness, sir," said M'Caskey, slightly raising his hat—"and I hope your carriage is a comfortable one—take me up at the Aquila d'Oro, two doors from the Café di Spagna;" uttering the words in a tone of such positive command that Skeffy had only to accede; and, coldly bowing to each other, they separated.

CHAPTER LV.

AMONGST THE GARIBALDIANS.

By heavy bribery and much cajolery, Skeff Damer secured a carriage and horses, and presented himself at the Café di Spagna a little before midnight. It was not, however, till he had summoned M'Caskey for the third time that the gallant Colonel arose and joined him.

“I suspect that the waiter did not tell you I was here, and waiting for you?” said Skeff, somewhat irritated.

“I rather apprehend,” replied M'Caskey, “that you were not aware I was at supper.”

With this brief passage of arms each sank back into his corner, and nothing more was said.

For a long while the way led through that long suburb of Naples that lies on the south of the city and the tramp of the horses over the pavement would have made any conversation difficult to hear. At

length, however, they gained the smooth road, and then Skeff discovered, from the long-drawn breathings of his companion, that he was sound asleep.

By the small wax taper with which he lighted his cigar Skeff examined the features of the man ; and brief as was the inspection, there was enough seen to show him that he was not a subject for either dictation or raillery. The hard, stern, thin-lipped mouth, the knitted brows, the orbits marked with innumerable wrinkles, and an ugly scar, evidently from a sabre, that divided one whisker, and reached from nigh the ear to the chin, presented enough to show that he might easily have chanced upon a more genial fellow-traveller.

Skeff knew that the Neapolitan service had for some years back attracted adventurers from various countries. Poles, Americans, with Irish and Hungarian refugees, had flocked to the scene of what they foresaw must be a struggle, and taken their side with the Royalists or against them as profit or inclination prompted. Now this man's name, M'Caskey, proclaimed him as Irish or Scotch ; and the chances were, in either case, if a renegade from his own country, he would not be over well disposed towards one who represented the might and majesty of England.

"If I could only let him see," thought Skeff, "that I am one of those fellows who have done everything and know every one, a thorough man of the world, and no redtapist, no official pedant, we should get on all the better." He puffed away at his cigar as he thus mused, turning over in his mind by what species of topic he should open acquaintance with his companion.

"That's good tobacco," said M'Caskey, without opening his eyes. "Who's smoking the cheroot?"

"I am. May I offer you one?"

"A dozen if you like," said the Colonel, giving himself a shake, and sitting bolt upright.

Skeff held out his cigar-case, and the other coolly emptied it, throwing the contents into his hat, which lay on the cushion in front of him.

"When old Olozaga was Captain-General of Cuba, he always supplied me with havannahs; but when O'Donnell's party came into power I came down to cheroots, and there I have been ever since. These are not bad."

"They are considered particularly good, sir," said Skeff, coldly.

"*That* I will not say; but I own I am not easy to please either in wine, women, or tobacco."

“ You have had probably large experiences of all three ?”

“ I should like much to meet the man who called himself my equal.”

“ It might be presumptuous in me, perhaps, to stand forward on such ground ; but I too have seen something of life.”

“ You ! you !” said M‘Caskey, with a most frank impertinence in his tone.

“ Yes, sir, I, I—Mr Skeffington Damer, her Majesty’s representative and Chargé d’Affaires at this Court.”

“ Where the deuce was it I heard your name ? Damer — Damer — Skeff — Skeffy—I think they called you ? Who could it be that mentioned you ?”

“ Not impossibly the newspapers, though I suspect they did not employ the familiarity you speak of.”

“ Well, Skeff, what’s all this business we’re bent on ? What wild-goose chase are we after here ?”

Damer was almost sick with indignation at the fellow’s freedom ; he nearly burst with the effort it cost him to repress his passion ; but he remembered how poor Tony Butler’s fate lay in the balance, and that if anything should retard his journey by even an hour, that one hour might decide his friend’s destiny.

“Might I take the liberty to observe, sir, that our acquaintance is of the very shortest; and until I shall desire, which I do not anticipate, the privilege of addressing you by your Christian name——”

“I am called Milo,” said M‘Caskey; “but no man ever called me so but the late Duke of Wellington; and once, indeed, in a moment of enthusiasm, poor Byron.”

“I shall not imitate them, and I desire that you may know me as Mr Damer.”

“Damer or Skeffy—I don’t care a rush which—only tell where are we going, and what are we going for?”

Skeff proceeded in leisurely fashion, but with a degree of cold reserve that he hoped might check all freedom, to explain that he was in search of a young countryman, whom he desired to recall from his service with Garibaldi, and restore to his friends in England.

“And you expect me to cross over to Garibaldi’s lines?” asked M‘Caskey, with a grin.

“I certainly reckon on your accompanying me wherever I deem it essential to proceed in furtherance of my object. Your General said as much when he offered me your services.”

“No man disposes of M‘Caskey but the Sovereign he serves.”

“Then I can’t see what you have come for!” cried Skeff, angrily.

“Take care, take care,” said the other, slowly.

“Take care of what?”

“Take care of Skeffington Damer, who is running his head into a very considerable scrape. I have the most tenacious of memories; and there’s not a word—not a syllable—falls from you, I’ll not make you accountable for hereafter.”

“If you imagine, sir, that a tone of braggadocio——”

“There you go again. Braggadocio costs blood, my young fellow.”

“I’m not to be bullied.”

“No; but you might be shot.”

“You’ll find me as ready as yourself with the pistol.”

“I am charmed to hear it, though I never met a fellow brought up at a desk that was so.”

Skeff was by no means deficient in courage, and, taken with a due regard to all the conventional usages of such cases, he would have “met his man” as became a gentleman; but it was such a new thing in his experiences to travel along in a carriage

arranging the terms of a duel with the man who ought to have been his pleasant companion, and who indeed, at the very moment, was smoking his cheroots, that he lost himself in utter bewilderment and confusion.

“What does that small flask contain?” said M‘Caskey, pointing to a straw-covered bottle, whose neck protruded from the pocket of the carriage.

“Cherry brandy,” said Skeff, dryly, as he buttoned the pocket-flap over it.

“It is years upon years since I tasted that truly British cordial.”

Skeff made no reply.

“They never make it abroad, except in Switzerland, and there, too, badly.”

Still was Skeff silent.

“Have you got a sandwich with you?”

“There is something eatable in that basket—I don’t know what,” said Skeff, pointing to a little neatly-corded hamper. “But I thought you had just finished supper when I drove up.”

“You’re a Londoner, I take it,” said M‘Caskey.

“Why so, sir? for what reason do you suppose so?”

“The man who reminds another of the small necessity there is to press him to take something—be it meat or drink—must be a Cockney.”

“I am neither a Cockney, nor accustomed to listen to impertinence.”

“Hand me your flask, and I’ll give you my opinion of it, and that will be better than this digression.”

The impudence seemed superhuman, and in this way overcame all power of resistance; and Skeffy actually sat there looking on while M’Caskey cut the cords of the little provision-basket and arranged the contents on the front seat of the carriage, assuring him, as he ate, that he “had tasted worse.”

For some time the Major continued to eat and drink, and was so completely immersed in this occupation as to seem quite oblivious of his companion. He then lighted his cigar and smoked on till they reached Caserta, where the carriage halted to change horses.

“The fellow is asking for something for the ostler,” said M’Caskey, nudging Skeffy with his elbow as he spoke.

“My servant, sir, looks to these details,” said Skeff, haughtily.

“Take these, old boy,” said M’Caskey, pitching out to him the basket with the fragments of his late meal, and the silver forks and cup it contained;

and the horses whirled the carriage along at full speed as he did so.

“You are perfectly munificent, sir,” cried Skeff, angrily, “with what does not belong to you. The proprietor of the Hotel d’Universo will probably look to you for payment for his property.”

“If your friend of the Universo has a salt-spoon of his own this time to-morrow, he’ll be a lucky dog.”

“How so? What do you mean?”

“I mean, sir, that as the troops withdraw, pillage will begin. There is but one force in Naples that could control a mob.”

“And that is?”

“The Camorra! and but one man could command the Camorra, and he is here!”

“Indeed!” said Skeff, with the very faintest possible sarcasm.

“As I tell you, sir. Colonel M’Caskey might have saved that city; and instead of it he is rumbling along over a paved road, going heaven knows where, with heaven knows whom, for heaven knows what!”

“You are either rude or forgetful, sir. I have already told you my name and quality.”

“So you have, Skeff; but as a man rises in the

service, he forgets the name of the uncommissioned officers. You are Attaché, or what is it?"

"I am Chargé d'Affaires of Great Britain."

"And devilish few will be the affairs you'll have in your charge this day week."

"How do you make out that?"

"First of all, if we are to pass through our lines to reach Garibaldi, all our fellows will fire a parting salute after us as we go—ay, and with ball. Secondly, as we approach the rebels they'll pay us the same attention."

"Not with our flag of truce flying?"

"Your flag of truce, Skeffy, will only show them that we come unarmed, and make their aim all the steadier in consequence."

"And why was I told that your presence would be protection?"

"Because, sir, if it should fail to be, it is that no other man's in Europe could be such."

"I'll not turn back, if you mean that," said Skeff, boldly; and for the first time on the journey M'Caskey turned round and took a leisurely survey of his companion.

"You are, I hope, satisfied with my personal appearance," said Skeff, insolently.

"Washy, washy," said M'Caskey, dryly; "but I

have met two or three of the same stamp who had pluck."

"The freedom of your tongue, sir, inclines me very considerably to doubt *yours*."

M'Caskey made a bound on his seat, and threw his cigar through the window, while he shouted to the postilion to stop.

"Why should he stop?" asked Skeff.

"Let us settle this at once; we'll take each of us one of the carriage lamps, and fire at the word Three. One—two—three! Stop, I say."

"No, sir; I shall hold myself at your orders, time and place fitting, but I'll neither shoot nor be shot at like a brigand."

"I have travelled with many men, but in my long and varied experience, I never saw a fellow so full of objections. You oppose everything. Now I mean to go asleep; have you anything against *that*, and what is it?"

"Nothing—nothing whatever!" muttered Skeff, who for the first time heard words of comfort from his companion's lips.

Poor Skeff! is it too much to say that, if you had ever imagined the possibility of such a fellow-traveller, you would have thought twice ere you went on this errand of friendship? Perhaps it

might be unfair to allege so much, but unquestionably, if his ardour were not damped, his devotion to his friend was considerably disturbed by thoughts of himself and his own safety.

Where could this monster have come from? what land could have given him birth? what life had he led? how could a fellow of such insolent pretensions have escaped being flayed alive ere he reached the age he looked to be?

Last of all, was it in malice and out of malevolence that Filangieri had given him this man as his guide, well knowing what their companionship must end in? This last suspicion, reassuring so far, as it suggested dreams of personal importance, rallied him a little, and at last he fell asleep.

The hours of the night rolled over thus; and just as the dawn was breaking the calèche rattled into the ruinous old piazza of Nocera. Early as it was, the market-place was full of people, amongst whom many were soldiers, with or without arms, but evidently under no restraint of discipline, and to all seeming doubtful and uncertain what to do.

Aroused from his sleep by the sudden stoppage of the carriage, M'Caskey rubbed his eyes and looked out. "What is all this?" cried he. "Who are these fellows I see here in uniform? What are they?"

“Part of Cardarelli’s brigade, your Excellency,” said a café-keeper who had come to the carriage to induce the travellers to alight. “General Cardarelli has surrendered Soveria to Garibaldi, and his men have dispersed.”

“And is there no officer in command here to order these fellows into arrest?” cried M‘Caskey, as he sprang out of the carriage into the midst of them. “Fall in!” shouted he in a voice of thunder; “fall in, and be silent: the fellow who utters a word I’ll put a bullet through.”

If the first sight of the little fellow thus insolently issuing his orders might have inspired laughter, his fierce look, his flashing eye, his revolver in hand, and his coat blazing with orders, speedily overcame such a sentiment, and the disorderly rabble seemed actually stunned into deference before him.

“What!” cried he, “are you deserters? Is it with an enemy in front that I find you here? Is it thus that you show these civilians what stuff soldiers are made of?” There was not a degrading epithet, not a word of infamous reproach, he did not hurl at them. They were Vili! Birbanti! Ladri! Malandrini! Codardi! They had dishonoured their fathers and mothers, and wives and sweethearts. They had degraded the honour of the soldier, and

the Virgin herself was ashamed of them. "Who laughs there? Let him come out to the front and laugh here!" cried he. And now, though a low murmur little indicative of mirth ran through the crowd, strange to say, the men began to slink away, at first one by one, then in groups and parties, so that in very few minutes the piazza was deserted, save by a few of the townsfolk, who stood there half terrified, half fascinated by the daring insolence of this diminutive hero.

Though his passion seemed almost choking him, he went on with a wonderful fluency to abuse the whole nation. They were brigands for three centuries, and brigands they would be for thirty more, if Providence would not send an earthquake to swallow them up, and rid the world of such rascals. He scoffed at them, he jeered them; he told them that the few Sicilians that followed Garibaldi would make slaves of the whole kingdom, taking from the degenerate cowards of Calabria wives, daughters, homes, and households; and it was only when the last straggler shuffled slowly away, and he stood alone in the square, that he would consent to re-enter the carriage and pursue his journey.

"I'll know every face amongst them if I meet them again," said he to Skeffy, "and it will be an

evil day for the scoundrels when that time comes." His wrath continued during the entire stage, and never flagged in its violence till they reached a cluster of poor cabins, around which a guard of soldiers was stationed. Here they were refused a further passage, since at Mauro, three miles farther on, Melani, with a force of three thousand men and some guns, held the pass against the Garibaldians. M'Caskey was not long in explaining who he was, nor indeed very modest in proclaiming his personal importance; and the subaltern, with every show of deference to such greatness, detached a corporal of his guard to accompany them to the General's quarters. The General was asleep when they reached Mauro; he had been, they said, "up all night," but they did not add it was in the celebration of an orgie, in which the festivities were more classic than correct. M'Caskey, however, learned that at about five miles in front Garibaldi's advanced-guard was posted, and that Garibaldi himself had ridden up and reconnoitred their position on the evening before.

"We expect to be attacked by noon," said the officer, in a tone the very reverse of hopeful or encouraging.

"You can hold this pass against twenty thousand," said M'Caskey.

“We shall not try,” said the other. “Why should we be the only men to get cut to pieces?”

The ineffable scorn of the little Colonel as he turned away was not lost on the other; but he made no reply to it, and retired. “We are to have an escort as far as Ravello; after that we are to take care of ourselves: and I own to you I think we shall be all the safer when we get out of the reach of his Majesty’s defenders.”

“There,” cried the sergeant who acted as their guard—“there, on that rock yonder, are the Reds. I’ll go no farther.”

And as they looked they saw a small group of red-shirted fellows lying or lounging on a small cliff which rose abruptly over a stream crossed by a wooden bridge. Attaching his handkerchief to his walking-stick, M’Caskey stepped out boldly. Skeffy followed; they reached the bridge, crossed it, and stood within the lines of the Garibaldians. A very young, almost boyish-looking, officer met them, heard their story, and with much courtesy told them that he would send one of his men to conduct them to headquarters. “You will not find the General there,” said he, smiling,—“he’s gone on in that direction,” and he pointed as he spoke towards Naples.

Skeff asked eagerly if the young officer had ever heard of Tony Butler, and described with ardour the handsome face and figure of his friend. The other believed he had seen him. There was, he knew, a "giovane Irlandese" who was wounded at Melazzo, and, if he was not mistaken, wounded again about four days back at Lauria. "All the wounded are at Salerno, however," said he, carelessly, "and you are sure to find him amongst them."

CHAPTER LVI.

THE HOSPITAL AT CAVA.

HAD Skeff been in any mood for mirth, he might have enjoyed as rich drollery the almost inconceivable impertinence of his companion, who scrutinised everything, and freely distributed his comments around him, totally regardless that he stood in the camp of the enemy, and actually surrounded by men whose extreme obedience to discipline could scarcely be relied on.

“Uniformity is certainly not studied here,” cried M‘Caskey, as he stared at a guard about to be detached on some duty; “three fellows have grey trousers; two, blue; one, a sort of canvass petticoat; and I see only one real coat in the party.”

A little farther on he saw a group of about a dozen lying on the grass smoking, with their arms in disorderly fashion about, and he exclaimed, “How I’d like to surprise those rascals, and make

a swoop down here with two or three companies of Cacciatori! Look at their muskets; there hasn't been one of them cleaned for a month.

"Here they are at a meal of some sort. Well, men won't fight on beans and olive-oil. My Irish fellows are the only devils can stand up on roots."

These comments were all delivered in Italian, and listened to with a sort of bewildered astonishment, as though the man who spoke them must possess some especial and peculiar privilege to enable him to indulge so much candour.

"That's not a knapsack," said he, kicking a soldier's pack that he saw on the grass; "that's more like a travelling tinker's bundle. Open it, and let's see the inside!" cried he to the owner, who, awed by the tone of command, immediately obeyed, and M'Caskey ridiculed the shreds and patches of raiment, the tattered fragments of worn apparel, in which fragments of cheese and parcels of tobacco were rolled up. "Why, the fellows have not even risen to the dignity of pillage," said he. "I was sure we should have found some saintly ornaments or a piece of the Virgin's petticoat among their wares."

With all this freedom, carried to the extreme of impertinence, none molested, none ever questioned

them ; and as the guide had accidentally chanced upon some old friends by the way, he told M'Caskey that they had no further need of him—that the road lay straight before them, and that they would reach Cava in less than an hour.

At Cava they found the same indifference. They learned that Garibaldi had not come up, though some said he had passed on with a few followers to Naples, and others maintained that he had sent to the King of Naples to meet him at Salerno to show him the inutility of all resistance, and offer him a safe-conduct out of the kingdom. Leaving M'Caskey in the midst of these talkers, and not perhaps without some uncharitable wish that the gallant Colonel's bad tongue would involve him in serious trouble, Skeffy slipped away to inquire after Tony.

Every one seemed to know that there was a brave "Irlandese,"—a daring fellow who had shown himself in the thick of every fight ; but the discrepant accounts of his personal appearance and looks were most confusing. Tony was fair-haired, and yet most of the descriptions represented a dark man, with a bushy black beard and mustache. At all events, he was lying wounded at the convent of the Capuccini, on a hill about a mile from the town ; and

Father Pantaleo—Garibaldi's Vicar, as he was called—offered his services to show him the way. The Frate—a talkative little fellow, with a fringe of curly dark-brown hair around a polished white head—talked away, as they went, about the war, and Garibaldi, and the grand future that lay before Italy, when the tyranny of the Pope should be overthrown, and the Church made as free—and indeed he almost said, as easy—as any jovial Christian could desire.

Skeffy, by degrees, drew him to the subject nearest his own heart at the moment, and asked about the wounded in hospital. The Frate declared that there was nothing very serious the matter with any of them. He was an optimist. Some died, some suffered amputations, some were torn by shells or grape-shot. But what did it signify? as he said. It was a great cause they were fighting for, and they all agreed it was a pleasure to shed one's blood for Italy. "As for the life up there," said he, pointing to the convent, "it is a *vita da Santi*—the 'life of saints themselves.'"

"Do you know my friend Tony the Irlandese?" asked Skeff, eagerly.

"If I know him! Per Bacco, I think I know him. I was with him when he had his leg taken off."

Skeff's heart sickened at this terrible news, and he could barely steady himself by catching the Fra's arm. "Oh, my poor dear Tony," cried he, as the tears ran down his face—"my poor fellow!"

"Why did you pity him? Garibaldi gave him his own sword, and made him an officer on the day of the battle. It was up at Calanzaro, so that he's nearly well now."

Skeff poured in innumerable questions. How the mischance occurred, and where? how he bore up under the dreadful operation? in what state he then was? if able to move about, and how? And as the Fra was one of those who never confessed himself unable to answer anything, the details he obtained were certainly of the fullest and most circumstantial.

"He's always singing; that's how he passes his time," said the Frate.

"Singing! how strange! I never knew him to sing. I never heard him even hum a tune."

"You'll hear him now, then. The fellows about curse at him half the day to be silent, but he doesn't mind them, but sings away. The only quiet moment he gives them is while he's smoking."

"Ah, yes! he loves smoking."

"There—stop. Listen. Do you hear him? he's at it now." Skeff halted, and could hear the sound

of a full deep voice, from a window overhead, in one of those prolonged and melancholy cadences which Irish airs abound in.

“Wherever he got such doleful music I can’t tell, but he has a dozen chants like that.”

Though Skeff could not distinguish the sounds, nor recognise the voice of his friend, the thought that it was poor Tony who was there singing in his solitude, maimed and suffering, without one near to comfort him, so overwhelmed him that he staggered towards a bench, and sat down sick and faint.

“Go up and say that a friend, a dear friend, has come from Naples to see him; and if he is not too nervous or too much agitated, tell him my name; here it is.” The friar took the card and hurried forward on his mission. In less time than Skeff thought it possible for him to have arrived, Pantaleo called out from the window, “Come along; he is quite ready to see you, though he doesn’t remember you.”

Skeff fell back upon the seat at the last words. “Not remember me! my poor Tony—my poor, poor fellow—how changed and shattered you must be, to have forgotten me!” With a great effort he rallied, entered the gate, and mounted the stairs—slowly, indeed, and like one who dreaded the scene that

lay before him. Pantaleo met him at the top, and, seeing his agitation, gave him his arm for support. "Don't be nervous," said he, "your friend is doing capitally: he is out on the terrace in an arm-chair, and looks as jolly as a cardinal."

Summoning all his courage, Skeff walked bravely forwards, passed down the long aisle, crowded with sick and wounded on either side, and passed out upon a balcony at the end, where, with his back towards him, a man sat looking out over the landscape.

"Tony, Tony!" said Skeffy, coming close. The man turned his head, and Skeff saw a massive-looking face, all covered with black hair, and a forehead marked by a sabre-cut. "This is not my friend. This is not Tony!" cried he, in disappointment.

"No, sir; I'm Rory Quin, the man that was with him," said the wounded man, submissively.

"And where is he himself? Where is Tony?" cried he.

"In the little room beyond, sir. They put him there when he began to rave; but he's better now, and quite sensible."

"Take me to him at once; let me see him," said Skeff, whose impatience had now mastered all prudence.

The moment after, Skeff found himself in a small chamber, with a single bed in it, beside which a Sister of Charity was seated, busily employed laying cloths wet with iced water on the sick man's head. One glance showed that it was Tony. The eyes were closed, and the face thinner, and the lips dry; but there was a hardy manhood in the countenance, sick and suffering as he was, that told what qualities a life of hardship and peril had called into activity. The Sister motioned to Skeff to sit down, but not to speak. "He's not sleeping," said she, softly, "only dozing."

"Is he in pain?" asked Skeffy.

"No; I have no pain," said Tony, faintly.

Skeff bent down to whisper some words close to his ear, when he heard a step behind. He looked up and saw it was M'Caskey, who had followed him. "I came here, sir," said the Colonel, haughtily, "to express my astonishment at your unceremonious departure, and also to say that I shall now hold myself as free of all further engagement towards you."

"Hush, be quiet," said Skeff, with a gesture of caution.

"Is that your friend?" asked M'Caskey, with a smile.

Tony slowly opened his eyes at these words, looked at the speaker, turned his gaze then on Skeff, gave a weak, sickly smile, and then, in a faint, scarce audible voice, said, "So he *is* your godfather, after all."

Skeff's heart grew full to bursting, and for a moment or two he could not speak.

"There—there, no more," whispered the Sister, and she motioned them both to withdraw. Skeff arose at once, and slipped noiselessly away, but the Colonel stepped boldly along, regardless of everything and every one.

"He's wandering in his mind, I take it," said M'Caskey, in a loud, unfeeling tone.

"By all that's holy, there's the scoundrel I'm dying to get at," screamed Rory, as the voice caught his ear. "Give me that crutch; let me have one lick at him, for the love of Mary!"

"They're all mad here, that's plain," said M'Caskey, turning away with a contemptuous air. "Sir," added he, turning towards Skeff, "I have the honour to salute you;" and with a magnificent bow he withdrew, while Rory, in a voice of wildest passion and invective, called down innumerable curses on his head, and inveighed even against the bystanders for not securing the "greatest villain in Europe."

“I shall want to send a letter to Naples,” cried out Skeff to the Colonel; “I mean to remain here;” but M’Caskey never deigned to notice his words, but walked proudly down the stairs and went his way.

CHAPTER LVII.

AT TONY'S BEDSIDE.

My story draws to a close, and I have not space to tell how Skeff watched beside his friend, rarely quitting him, and showing in a hundred ways the resources of a kind and thoughtful nature. Tony had been severely wounded; a sabre-cut had severed his scalp, and he had been shot through the shoulder; but all apprehension of evil consequences was now over, and he was able to listen to Skeff's wondrous tidings, and hear all the details of his accession to wealth and fortune. His mother—how she would rejoice at it! how happy it would make her!—not for her own sake, but for his; how it would seem to repay to her all she had suffered from the haughty estrangement of Sir Omerod, and how proud she would be at the recognition, late though it came! These were Tony's thoughts; and very often, when Skeff imagined him to be follow-

ing the details of his property, and listening with eagerness to the description of what he owned, Tony was far away in thought at the cottage beside the Causeway, and longing ardently when he should sit at the window, with his mother at his side, planning out some future in which they were to be no more separated.

There was no elation at his sudden fortune, nor any of that anticipation of indulgence which Skeff himself would have felt, and which he indeed suggested. No. Tony's whole thoughts so much centred in his dear mother, that she entered into all his projects; and there was not a picture of enjoyment wherein she was not a foreground figure.

They would keep the cottage—that was his first resolve: his mother loved it dearly; it was associated with years long of happiness and of trials too; and trials can endear a spot when they are nobly borne, and the heart will cling fondly to that which has chastened its emotions and elevated its hopes. And then, Tony thought, they might obtain that long stretch of land that lay along the shore, with the little nook where the boats lay at anchor, and where he would have his yacht. "I suppose," said he, "Sir Arthur Lyle would have no objection to my being so near a neighbour?"

“Of course not; but we can soon settle that point, for they are all here.”

“Here?”

“At Naples, I mean.”

“How was it that you never told me that?” asked he, sharply.

Skeff fidgeted—bit his cigar—threw it away; and with more confusion than became so distinguished a diplomatist, stammered out, “I have had so much to tell you—such lots of news;” and then with an altered voice he added, “besides, old fellow, the doctor warned me not to say anything that might agitate you; and I thought—that is, I used to think—there was something in that quarter, eh?”

Tony grew pale, but made no answer.

“I know she likes you, Tony,” said Skeff, taking his hand and pressing it. “Bella, who is engaged to me—I forget if I told you that——”

“No, you never told me!”

“Well, Bella and I are to be married immediately—that is, as soon as I can get back to England. I have asked for leave already; they’ve refused me twice. It’s all very fine saying to me that I ought to know that in the present difficulties of Italy no man could replace me at this Court. My answer

to that is: Skeff Damer has other stuff in him as well as ambition. He has a heart just as much as a head. Nor am I to go on passing my life saving this dynasty. The Bourbons are not so much to me as my own happiness, eh?"

"I suppose not," said Tony, dryly.

"You'd have done the same, wouldn't you?"

"I can't tell. I cannot even imagine myself filling any station of responsibility or importance."

"My reply was brief: Leave for six months' time, to recruit an over-taxed frame and over-wrought intellect; time also for them to look out what to offer me, for I'll not go to Mexico, nor to Rio; neither will I take Washington, nor any of the Northern Courts. Dearest Bella must have climate, and I myself must have congenial society; and so I said, not in such terms, but in meaning, Skeff Damer is only yours at *his* price. Let them refuse me—let me see them even hesitate, and I give my word of honour, I'm capable of abandoning public life altogether, and retiring into my woods at Tilney, leaving the whole thing at sixes and sevens."

Now, though Tony neither knew what the "whole thing" meant, nor the dire consequences to which his friend's anger might have consigned it, he muttered something that sounded like a hope that he

would not leave Europe to shift for herself at such a moment.

“Let them not drive me to it, that’s all,” said he, haughtily; and he arose and walked up and down with an air of defiance. “The Lyles do not see this—Lady Lyle especially. She wants the peerage for her daughter, but ambition is not always scrupulous.”

“I always liked her the least of them,” muttered Tony, who never could forget the sharp lesson she administered to him.

“She’ll make herself more agreeable to you now, Master Tony,” said Skeff, with a dry laugh.

“And why so?”

“Can’t you guess?”

“No.”

“On your word?”

“On my word, I cannot.”

“Don’t you think Mr Butler of something or other in Herefordshire is another guess man from Tony Butler of nowhere in particular?”

“Ah! I forgot my change of fortune; but if I had even remembered it, I’d never have thought so meanly of *her*.”

“That’s all rot and nonsense. There’s no meanness in a woman wanting to marry her daughter

well, any more than in a man trying to get a colonelcy or a legation for his son. You were no match for Alice Trafford three months ago. Now both she and her mother will think differently of your pretensions."

"Say what you like of the mother, but you shall not impute such motives to Alice."

"Don't *you* get red in the face and look like a tiger, young man, or I'll take my leave and send that old damsel here with the ice-pail to you."

"It was the very thing I liked in you," muttered Tony, "that you never did impute mean motives to women."

"My poor Tony! the fellow who has seen life as I have, who knows the thing in its most minute anatomy, comes out of the investigation infernally case-hardened; he can't help it. I love Alice. Indeed, if I had not seen Bella, I think I should have married Alice. There, you are getting turkey-cock again. Let us talk of something else. What the deuce was it I wanted to ask you?—something about that great Irish monster in the next room, the fellow that sings all day: where did you pick him up?"

Tony made no reply, but lay with one hand over his eyes, while Skeff went on rambling over the odds

and ends he had picked up in the course of Rory Quin's story, and the devoted love he bore to Tony himself. "By the way, they say that it was for you Garibaldi intended the promotion to the rank of officer, but that you managed to pass it to this fellow, who couldn't sign his name when they asked him for it."

"If he couldn't write, he has left his mark on some of the Neapolitans!" said Tony, fiercely; "and as for the advancement, he deserved it far more than I did."

"It was a lucky thing for that aide-de-camp of Filangieri who accompanied me here, that your friend Rory hadn't got two legs, for he wanted to brain him with his crutch. Both of you had an antipathy to him, and indeed I own to concurring in the sentiment. My godfather you called him!" said he, laughing.

"I wish he had come a little closer to my bedside, that's all," muttered Tony; and Skeff saw by the expression of his features that he was once more unfortunate in his attempt to hit upon an unexciting theme.

"Alice knew of your journey here, I think you said?" whispered Tony, faintly.

"Yes. I sent them a few lines to say I was setting out to find you."

“How soon could I get to Naples? Do you think they would let me move to-morrow?”

“I have asked that question already. The doctor says in a week; and I must hasten away to-night,—there’s no saying what confusion my absence will occasion. I mean to be back here by Thursday to fetch you.”

“Good fellow! Remember, though,” added he, after a moment, “we must take Rory. I can’t leave Rory here.”

Skeff looked gravely.

“He carried *me* when I was wounded out of the fire at Melazzo, and I am not going to desert him now.”

“Strange situation for H.M.’s Chargé d’Affaires,” said Skeff—“giving protection to the wounded of the rebel army.”

“Don’t talk to me of rebels. We are as legitimate as the fellows we were fighting against. It was a good stand-up fight, too—man to man some of it; and if it wasn’t that my head reels so when I sit or stand up, I’d like to be at it again.”

“It is a fine bull-dog—just a bull-dog,” said Skeff, patting him on the head, while in the compassionate pity of his voice he showed how humbly he ranked the qualities he ascribed to him. “Ah! now I

remember what it was I wished to ask you (it escaped me till this moment): who is the creature that calls himself Sam M'Gruder?"

"As good a fellow as ever stepped, and a true friend of mine. What of him?"

"Don't look as if you would tear me in pieces, and scatter the fragments to the four winds of heaven. Sir, I'll not stand it—none of your buccaneering savageries to *me!*"

Tony laughed, and laughed heartily, at the air of offended dignity of the other; and Skeff was himself disposed at last to smile at his own anger. "That's the crying sin of *your* nature, Tony," said he. "It is the one defect that spoils a really fine fellow. I tell you frankly about it, because I'm your friend; and if you don't curb it, you'll never be anything—never! never!"

"But what is this fault? you have forgotten to tell it."

"Over and over again have I told it. It is your stupid animal confidence in your great hulking form; your coarse reliance on your massive shoulders—a degenerate notion that muscle means manhood. It is here, sir—here;" and Skeff touched his forehead with the tip of his finger; "here lies the godlike attribute. And until you come to feel that, you

never will have arrived at the real dignity of a great creature."

"Well, if I be the friend of one, Skeffy, it will satisfy all my ambition," said he, grasping his hand warmly; "and now what of M'Gruder? how did you come to know of him?"

"Officially; officially, of course. Skeffington Damer and Sam M'Gruder might revolve in ether for centuries and their orbits never cross! but it happened that this honest fellow had gone off in search of you into Sicily; and, with that blessed propensity for blundering the British subject is gifted with, had managed to offend the authorities and get imprisoned. Of course he appealed to me. They all appeal to *me!* but at the moment, unhappily for him, the King was appealing to *me*, and Cavour was appealing to *me*, and so was the Emperor; and, I may mention in confidence, so was Garibaldi!—not in person, but through a friend. I know these things must be. Whenever a fellow has a head on his shoulders in this world, the other fellows who have no heads find it out and work *him*. Ay, sir, work him! That's why I have said over and over again the stupid dogs have the best of it. I declare to you, on my honour, Tony, there are days I'd rather be *you* than be Skeff Damer!"

Tony shook his head.

“I know it sounds absurd, but I pledge you my sacred word of honour I *have* felt it.”

“And M’Gruder?” asked Tony.

“M’Gruder, sir, I liberated! I said, Free him! and, like the fellow in Curran’s celebrated passage, his chains fell to the ground, and he stood forward, not a bit grateful—far from it—but a devilish crusty Scotchman, telling me what a complaint he’d lodge against me as soon as he arrived in England.”

“No, no; he’s not the fellow to do that.”

“If he did, sir, *it* would crush him—crush him! The Emperor of Russia could not prefer a complaint against Skeff Damer, and feel the better of it!”

“He’s a true-hearted, fine fellow,” said Tony.

“With all my heart I concede to him all the rough virtues you may desire to endow him with; but please to bear in mind, Master Tony, that a man of your station and your fortune cannot afford such intimacies as your friend Rory here and this M’Gruder creature.”

“Then I was a richer man when I had nothing, for I *could* afford it then,” said Tony, sturdily; “and I tell you more, Skeffy—I mean to afford it still. There is no fellow living I love better—no, nor as well—as I love yourself; but even for your love I’ll

not give up the fine-hearted fellows who were true to me in my days of hardship, shared with me what they had, and gave me—what was better to me—their loving-kindness and sympathy.”

“ You’d bring down the house if you said that in the Adelphi, Tony.”

“ It’s well for you that I can’t get out of bed,” said Tony, with a grim laugh.

“ There it is again—another appeal to the brute man and the man brute! Well, I’ll go to dinner, and I’ll tell the fair Sister to prepare your barley-water, and administer it in a more diluted form than heretofore;” and, adjusting his hat so as to display a favourite lock to the best advantage, and drawing on his gloves in leisurely fashion, Skeff Damer walked proudly away, bestowing little benevolent gestures on the patients as he passed, and intimating by certain little signs that he had taken an interest in their several cases, and saying by a sweet smile, “ You’ll be the better of this visit of mine. You’ll see, you will.”

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE 6TH OF SEPTEMBER.

ON the evening of the 6th September a corvette steamed rapidly out of the Bay of Naples, threading her way deviously through the other ships of war, unacknowledged by salute — not even an ensign dipped as she passed.

“There goes the King and the monarchy,” said Skeff, as he stood on the balcony with the Lyles, and pointed to the fast-retreating vessel.

“I suppose the sooner *we* leave the better,” said Lady Lyle, whose interest in political affairs was very inferior to that she felt on personal matters.

“Skeff says that the *Talisman* will take us on board,” said Sir Arthur.

“Yes,” said Skeff; “Captain Paynter will be here by-and-by to take your orders, and know when he is to send in his boats for you; and though I feel assured my general directions will be

carried out here, and that no public disturbance will take place, you will all be safer under the Union Jack."

"And what of Tony Butler? when is he to arrive?" asked Bella.

"Tony," said Skeff, "is to arrive here to-night. I have had a note from his friend M'Gruder, who has gone down to meet him, and is now at Salerno."

"And who is his friend M'Gruder?" asked Lady Lyle, superciliously.

"A rag-merchant from Leghorn," said Skeff; "but Tony calls him an out-and-out good fellow; and I must say he didn't take five minutes to decide when I told him Tony was coming up from Cava, and would be glad to have his company on the road."

"These are of course exceptional times, when all sorts of strange intimacies will be formed; but I *do* hope that Tony will see that his altered circumstances as to fortune require from him more care in the selection of his friends than he has hitherto been distinguished for."

"Don't trouble yourself about that, my dear," said Sir Arthur; "a man's fortune very soon impresses itself on all he says and does."

"I mistake him much," said Bella, "if any wealth will estrange him from one of those he cared for in

his humbler days. Don't you agree with me, Alice?"

Alice made no reply, but continued to gaze at the ships through a glass.

"The danger is that he'll carry that feeling to excess," said Skeff; "for he will not alone hold to all these people, but he'll make you and me hold to them too."

"That would be impossible, perfectly impossible," said my Lady, with a haughty toss of her head.

"No, no; I cannot agree to go that far," chimed in Sir Arthur.

"It strikes me," said Alice, quietly, "we are all of us deciding a little too hastily as to what Tony Butler will or will not do. Probably a very slight exercise of patience would save us some trouble."

"Certainly not, Alice, after what Mr Damer has said. Tony would seem to have thrown down a sort of defiance to us all. We must accept him with his belongings, or do without him."

"He shall have *me* on his own terms," said Skeff. "He is a noble savage, and I love him with all my heart."

"And you will know his rag friend?" asked Lady Lyle.

"Ay, that will I; and an Irish creature too that

he calls Rory—a fellow of six feet four, with a voice like an enraged bull and a hand as wide as one of these flags!”

“It is Damon and Pythias over again, I declare!” said Lady Lyle. “Where did he pick up his monster?”

“They met by chance in England, and, equally by chance, came together to Italy, and Tony persuaded him to accompany him and join Garibaldi. The worthy Irishman, who loved fighting and was not very particular as to the cause, agreed; and though he had originally come abroad to serve in the Pope’s army, some offence they had given him made him desert, and he was well pleased not to return home without, as he said, ‘*batin’* somebody.’ It was in this way he became a Garibaldian. The fellow, it seems, fought like a lion; he has been five times wounded, and was left for dead on the field; but he bears a charm which he knows will always protect him.”

“A charm—what is the charm?”

“A medallion of the Pope, which he wears around his neck, and always kisses devoutly before he goes into battle.”

“The Pope’s image is a strange emblem for a Garibaldian, surely,” said Sir Arthur, laughing.

“Master Rory thinks it will dignify any cause; and as he never knew what or for whom he was fighting, this small bit of copper saved him a world of trouble and casuistry; and so in the name of the Holy Father he has broken no end of Neapolitan skulls.”

“I must say Mr Butler has surrounded himself with some choice associates,” said Lady Lyle; “and all this time I have been encouraging myself to believe that so very young a man would have had no connections, no social relations, he could not throw off without difficulty.”

“The world will do all this sifting process for him, if we only have patience,” said Sir Arthur; and indeed it is but fair to say that he spoke with knowledge, since, in his own progress through life, he had already made the acquaintance of four distinct and separate classes in society, and abandoned each in turn for that above it.

“Was he much elated, Mr Damer,” asked Lady Lyle, “when he heard of his good fortune?”

“I think he was at first; but it made so little impression on him, that more than once he went on to speculate on his future, quite forgetting that he had become independent; and then, when he remembered it, he certainly did look very happy and cheerful.”

“And what sort of plans has he?” asked Bella.

“They’re all about his mother; everything is for *her*. She is to keep that cottage, and the ground about it, and he is to make a garden for her; and it seems she likes cows—she is to have cows. It’s a lucky chance that the old lady hadn’t a taste for a plesiosaurus, or he’d be offering a prize for one to-morrow.”

“He’s a dear good fellow, as he always was,” said Bella.

“The only real change I see in him,” said Skeff, “is, that now he is never grumpy—he takes everything well; and if crossed for a moment, he says, ‘Give me a weed; I must smoke away that annoyance.’”

“How sensual!” said my Lady; but nobody heeded the remark.

At the moment, too, a young midshipman saluted Damer from the street, and informed him that the first cutter was at the jetty to take the party off to the Talisman; and Captain Paynter advised them not to delay very long, as the night looked threatening. Lady Lyle needed no stronger admonition; she declared that she would go at once; and although the Captain’s own gig, as an attention of honour, was to be in to take her, she would not wait, but set out immediately.

“You’ll take care of me, Skeffy,” said Alice, “for

I have two letters to write, and shall not be ready before eleven o'clock."

For a while all was bustle and confusion. Lady Lyle could not make up her mind whether she would finally accept the frigate as a refuge or come on shore again the next day. There were perils by land and by water, and she weighed them and discussed them, and turned fiercely on everybody who agreed with her, and quarrelled with all round. Sir Arthur, too, had his scruples, as he bethought him of the effect that would be produced by the fact that a man of his station and importance had sought the protection of a ship of war; and he asked Skeff if some sort of brief protest—some explanation—should not be made in the public papers, to show that he had taken the step in compliance with female fears, and not from the dictates of his own male wisdom. "I should be sorry, sincerely sorry, to affect the Funds," said he; and really the remark was considerate.

As for Bella, she could not bear being separated from Skeffy, he was so daring, so impulsive, as she said, and with all this responsibility on him now—people coming to him for everything, and all asking what was to be done—he needed more than ever support and sympathy.

And thus is it the world goes on, as unreal, as fictitious, as visionary as anything that ever was put on the stage and illuminated by footlights. There was a rude realism outside in the street, however, that compensated for much of this. There, all was wildest fun and jollity; not the commotion of a people in the throes of a revolution, not the highly-wrought passion of an excited populace mad with triumph; it was the orgie of a people who deemed the downfall of a hated government a sort of carnival occasion, and felt that mummery and tomfoolery were the most appropriate expressions of delight.

Through streets crowded with this dancing, singing, laughing, embracing, and mimicking mass, the Lyles made their way to the jetty reserved for the use of the ships of war, and soon took their places, and were rowed off to the frigate, Skeffy waving his adieux till darkness rendered his gallantry unnoticed.

All his late devotion to the cares of love and friendship had made such inroads on his time that he scarcely knew what was occurring, and had lamentably failed to report to "the Office" the various steps by which revolution had advanced, and was already all but installed as master of the

kingdom. Determined to write off a most telling despatch, he entered the hotel, and, seeing Alice engaged letter-writing at one table, he quietly installed himself at another, merely saying, "The boat will be back by midnight, and I have just time to send off an important despatch."

Alice looked up from her writing, and a very faint smile curled her lip. She did not speak, however; and after a moment continued her letter.

For upwards of half an hour the scraping sounds of the pens were the only noises in the room, except at times a little low murmur as Skeff read over to himself some passage of unusual force and brilliancy.

"You must surely be doing something very effective, Skeff," said Alice, from the other end of the room, "for you rubbed your hands with delight, and looked radiant with triumph."

"I think I have given it to them!" cried he. "There's not another man in the line would send home such a despatch. Canning wouldn't have done it in the old days, when he used to bully them. Shall I read it for you?"

"My dear Skeff, I'm not Bella. I never had a head for questions of politics. I am hopelessly stupid in all such matters."

"Ah, yes: Bella told me that. Bella herself,

indeed, only learned to feel an interest in them through me ; but, as I told her, the woman who will one day be an ambassadress cannot afford to be ignorant of the great European game in which her husband is a player."

"Quite true ; but I have no such ambitions before me ; and fortunate it is, for really I could not rise to the height of such lofty themes."

Skeff smiled pleasantly ; her humility soothed him. He turned to the last paragraph he had penned and re-read it.

"By the way," said Alice, carelessly, and certainly nothing was less apropos to what they had been saying, though she commenced thus—"By the way, how did you find Tony looking—improved, or the reverse?"

"Improved in one respect ; fuller, browner, more manly, perhaps ; but coarser ; he wants the—you know what I mean—he wants this!" and he swayed his arm in a bold sweep, and stood fixed, with his hand extended.

"Ah, indeed!" said she, faintly.

"Don't you think so—don't you agree with me, Alice?"

"Perhaps to a certain extent I do," said she, diffidently.

“How could it be otherwise, consorting with such a set? You’d not expect to find it there?”

Alice nodded assent all the more readily that she had not the vaguest conception of what “it” might mean.

“The fact is, Alice,” said he, arising and walking the room with immense strides, “Tony will always be Tony!”

“I suppose he will,” said she, dryly.

“Yes; but you don’t follow me. You don’t appreciate my meaning. I desired to convey this opinion, that Tony being one of those men who cannot add to their own natures the gifts and graces which a man acquires who has his successes with your sex——”

“Come, come, Skeff, you must neither be metaphysical nor improper. Tony is a very fine boy; only a boy, I acknowledge, but he has noble qualities; and every year he lives will, I feel certain, but develop them further.”

“He won’t stand the ‘boy’ tone any longer,” said Skeff, dryly. “I tried it, and he was down on me at once.”

“What did he say when you told him we were here?” said she, carelessly, while putting her papers in order.

“ He was surprised.”

“ Was he pleased?”

“ Oh, yes, pleased, certainly; he was rather afraid of meeting your mother, though.”

“ Afraid of mamma! how could that be?”

“ Some lesson or other she once gave him sticks in his throat; something she said about presumption, I think.”

“ Oh no, no; this is quite impossible—I can’t credit it.”

“ Well, it might be some fancy of his—for he has fancies, and very queer ones too. One was about a godfather of mine. Come in—what is it?” cried he, as a knock came to the door.

“ A soldier below stairs, sir, wishes to speak to you,” said the waiter.

“ Ah! something of importance from Filangieri, I’ve no doubt,” said Skeff, rising and leaving the room. Before he had gone many paces, however, he saw a large, powerful figure in the red shirt and small cap of the Garibaldians, standing in the corridor, and the next instant he turned fully round—it was Tony.

“ My dear old Tony, when did you arrive?”

“ This moment; I am off again, however, at once, but I wouldn’t leave without seeing you.”

“Off, and where to?”

“Home—I’ve taken a passage to Marseilles in the Messageries boat, and she sails at two o’clock. You see I was no use here till this arm got right, and the General thought my head wouldn’t be the worse of a little quiet; so I’ll go back and recruit, and if they want me they shall have me.”

“You don’t know who’s there?” whispered Skeff. Tony shook his head. “And all alone too,” added the other, still lower. “Alice—Alice Trafford.”

Tony grew suddenly very pale, and leaned against the wall.

“Come in; come in at once, and see her. We have been talking of you all the evening.”

“No, no—not now,” said Tony, faintly.

“And when, if not now? You’re going off, you said.”

“I’m in no trim to pay visits; besides, I don’t wish it. I’ll tell you more some other time.”

“Nonsense; you look right well in your brigand costume, and with an old friend, not to say— Well, well, don’t look sulky,” and as he got thus far—he had been gradually edging closer and closer to the door—he flung it wide open, and called out, “Mr Tony Butler!” Pushing Tony inside, and then closing the door behind, he retreated, laughing heartily to himself over his practical joke.

CHAPTER LIX.

AN AWKWARD MOMENT.

ALICE started as she heard the name Tony Butler, and for a moment neither spoke. There was confusion and awkwardness on either side—all the greater that each saw it in the other. She, however, was the first to rally; and, with a semblance of old friendship, held out her hand, and said, “I am so glad to see you, Tony, and to see you safe.”

“I’d not have dared to present myself in such a dress,” stammered he out; “but that scamp Skeffy gave me no choice: he opened the door and pushed me in.”

“Your dress is quite good enough to visit an old friend in. Won’t you sit down?—sit here.” As she spoke she seated herself on an ottoman, and pointed to a place at her side. “I am longing to hear something about your campaigns. Skeff’ was

so provoking—he only told us about what he saw at Cava, and his own adventures on the road.”

“I have very little to tell, and less time to tell it. I must embark in about half an hour.”

“And where for?”

“For home.”

“So that if it had not been for Skeff’s indiscretion, I should not have seen you?” said she, coldly.

“Not at this moment—not in this guise.”

“Indeed!” And there was another pause.

“I hope Bella is better. Has she quite recovered?” asked he.

“She is quite well again; she’ll be sorry to have missed you, Tony. She wanted, besides, to tell you how happy it made her to hear of all your good fortune.”

“My good fortune! Oh, yes!—to be sure. It was so unlooked for,” added he, with a faint smile, “that I have hardly been able to realise it yet—that is, I find myself planning half-a-dozen ways to earn my bread, when I suddenly remember that I shall not need them.”

“And I hope it makes you happy, Tony?”

“Of course it does. It enables me to make my mother happy, and to secure that we shall not be separated. As for myself alone, my habits are

simple enough, and my tastes also. My difficulty will be, I suppose, to acquire more expensive ones."

"It is not a very hard task, I believe," said she, smiling.

"Not for others, perhaps; but I was reared in narrow fortune, Alice, trained to submit to many a privation, and told too—I'm not sure very wisely—that such hardships are all the more easily borne by a man of good blood and lineage. Perhaps I did not read my lesson right. At all events, I thought a deal more of my good blood than other people were willing to accord it; and the result was, it misled me."

"Misled you! and how—in what way?"

"Is it you who ask me this?—you, Alice, who have read me such wise lessons on self-dependence, while Lady Lyle tried to finish my education by showing the evils of over-presumption; and you were both right, though I didn't see it at the time."

"I declare I do not understand you, Tony!" said she.

"Well, I'll try to be clearer," said he, with more animation. "From the first day I knew you, Alice, I loved you. I need not say that all the difference in station between us never affected my love. You were too far above me in every gift and grace to

make rank, mere rank, ever occur to my mind, though others were good enough to jog my memory on the subject."

"Others ! of whom are you speaking?"

"Your brother Mark for one ; but I don't want to think of these things. I loved you, I say ; and to that degree, that every change of your manner towards me made the joy or the misery of my life. This was when I was an idle youth, lounging about in that condition of half dependence that, as I look back on, I blush to think I ever could have endured. My only excuse is, however, that I knew no better."

"There was nothing unbecoming in what you did."

"Yes, there was though. There was this : I was satisfied to hold an ambiguous position—to be a something, neither master nor servant, in another man's house, all because it gave me the daily happiness to be near you, and to see you, and to hear your voice. That was unbecoming, and the best proof of it was, that, with all my love and all my devotion, you could not care for me."

"Oh, Tony! do not say that."

"When I say care, you could not do more than care ; you couldn't love me."

"Were you not always as a dear brother to me?"

“ I wanted to be more than brother, and when I found that this could not be, I grew very careless, almost reckless, of life ; not but that it took a long time to teach me the full lesson. I had to think over, not only all that separated us in station, but all that estranged us in tone of mind ; and I saw that your superiority to me chafed me, and that if you should ever come to feel for me, it would be through some sense of pity.”

“ Oh, Tony !”

“ Yes, Alice, you know it better than I can say it ; and so I set my pride to fight against my love, with no great success at first. But as I lay wounded in the orchard at Melazzo, and thought of my poor mother, and her sorrow if she were to hear of my death, and compared her grief with what yours would be, I saw what was real in love, and what was mere interest ; and I remember I took out my two relics—the dearest objects I had in the world—a lock of my mother’s hair and a certain glove—a white glove you may have seen once on a time ; and it was over the little braid of brown hair I let fall the last tears I thought ever to shed in life ; and here is the glove—I give it back to you. Will you have it ?”

She took it with a trembling hand ; and in a

voice of weak but steady utterance said, "I told you that this time would come."

"You did so," said he, gloomily.

Alice rose and walked out upon the balcony; and after a moment Tony followed her. They leaned on the balustrade side by side, but neither spoke.

"But we shall always be dear friends, Tony, shan't we?" said she, while she laid her hand gently over his.

"Oh, Alice!" said he, plaintively, "do not—do not, I beseech you—lead me back again into that land of delusion I have just tried to escape from. If you knew how I loved you—if you knew what it costs me to tear that love out of my heart—you'd never wish to make the agony greater to me."

"Dear Tony, it was a mere boyish passion. Remember for a moment how it began. I was older than you—much older as regards life and the world—and even older by more than a year. You were so proud to attach yourself to a grown woman—you a mere lad; and then your love—for I will grant it was love—dignified you to yourself. It made you more daring where there was danger, and it taught you to be gentler and kinder and more con-

siderate to every one. All your good and great qualities grew the faster that they had those little vicissitudes of joy and sorrow, the sun and rain of our daily lives; but all that is not love."

"You mean there is no love where there is no return of love?"

She was silent.

"If so, I deny it. The faintest flicker of a hope was enough for me—the merest shadow—a smile, a passing word—your mere 'Thank you, Tony,' as I held your stirrup—the little word of recognition you would give when I had done something that pleased you,—these—any of them—would send me home happy—happier, perhaps, than I ever shall be again."

"No, Tony, do not believe that," said she, calmly; "not," added she, hastily, "that I can acquit myself of all wrong to you. No; I was in fault—gravely in fault. I ought to have seen what would have come of all our intimacy—I ought to have known that I could not develop all that was best in your nature without making you turn in gratitude—well, in love—to myself; but shall I tell you the truth? I over-estimated my power over you. I not only thought I could make you love, but unlove me;

and I never thought what pain that lesson might cost—each of us.”

“It would have been fairer to have cast me adrift at first,” said he, fiercely.

“And yet, Tony, you will be generous enough one of these days to think differently!”

“I certainly feel no touch of that generosity now.”

“Because you are angry with me, Tony—because you will not be just to me; but when you have learned to think of me as your sister, and can come and say, Dear Alice, counsel me as to this, advise me as to that—then, there will be no ill-will towards me for all I have done to teach you the great stores that were in your own nature.”

“Such a day as that is distant,” said he, gloomily.

“Who knows? The changes which work within us are not to be measured by time; a day of sorrow will do the work of years.”

“There! that lantern at the peak is the signal for me to be off. The skipper promised to give me notice; but if you will say ‘stay!’ be it so. No, no, Alice, do not lay your hand on my arm if you would not have me again deceive myself.”

“You will write to me, Tony?”

He shook his head to imply the negative.

“Well, to Bella, at least?”

“I think not. I will not promise. Why should I? Is it to try and knot together the cords we have just torn, that you may break them again at your pleasure?”

“How ungenerous you are!”

“You reminded me a while ago it was my devotion to you that civilised me; is it not natural I should go back to savagery as my allegiance was rejected?”

“You want to be Garibaldian in love as in war,” said she, smiling.

The deep boom of a gun floated over the bay, and Tony started.

“That’s the last signal—good-bye.” He held out his hand.

“Good-bye, dear Tony,” said she. She held her cheek towards him. He hesitated, blushed till his face was in a flame, then stooped and kissed her. Skeff’s voice was heard at the instant at the door, and Tony rushed past him and down the stairs, and then, with mad speed, dashed along to the jetty, leaped into the boat, and, covering his face with his hands, never raised his head till they were alongside.

“You were within an inch of being late, Tony,” cried M’Gruder, as he came up the side. “What detained you?”

“I’ll tell you all another time—let me go below now;” and he disappeared down the ladder. The heavy paddles flapped slowly, then faster, and the great mass moved on, and made for the open sea.

CHAPTER LX.

A DECK WALK.

THE steamer was well out to sea when Tony appeared on deck. It was a calm starlight night—fresh, but not cold. The few passengers, however, had sought their berths below, and the only one who lingered on deck was M'Gruder and one other, who, wrapped in a large boat-cloak, lay fast asleep beside the binnacle.

"I was thinking you had turned in," said M'Gruder to Tony, "as you had not come up."

"Give me a light—I want a smoke badly. I felt that something was wrong with me, though I didn't know what it was. Is this Rory here?"

"Yes, sound asleep, poor fellow."

"I'll wager a trifle he has a lighter heart than either of us, Sam."

"It might easy be lighter than mine," sighed M'Gruder, heavily.

Tony sighed too, but said nothing, and they walked along side by side, with that short jerking stride men pace a deck with, feeling some sort of companionship, although no words were exchanged between them.

“You were nigh being late,” said M’Gruder, at last. “What detained you on shore?”

“I saw her!” said Tony, in a low muffled voice.

“You saw her! Why, you told me you were determined not to see her.”

“So I was, and so I intended. It came about by mere accident. That strange fellow Skeffy, you’ve heard me speak of—he pushed me plump into the room where she was, and there was nothing to be done but to speak to her.”

“Well?”

“Well! I spoke,” said he, half-gruffly; and then, as if correcting the roughness of his tone, added, “It was just as I said it would be; just as I told you. She liked me well enough as a brother, but never thought of me as anything else. All the interest she had taken in me was out of friendship. She didn’t say this haughtily, not a bit; she felt herself much older than me, she said; that she felt herself better was like enough, but she never hinted it, but she let me feel pretty plainly that we were not made

for each other ; and though the lesson wasn't much to my liking, I began to see it was true."

"Did you really?"

"I did," said he, with a deep sigh. "I saw that all the love I had borne her was only paid back in a sort of feeling half-compassionate, half-kindly—that her interest in me was out of some desire to make something out of me ; I mean, to force me to exert myself and do something—anything besides living a hanger-on at a great house. I have a notion, too—heaven knows if there's anything in it—but I've a notion, Sam, if she had never known me till now—if she had never seen me idling and lounging about in that ambiguous position I held—something between gamekeeper and reduced gentleman—that I might have had a better chance."

M'Gruder nodded a half assent, and Tony continued, "I'll tell you why I think so. Whenever she asked me about the campaign and the way I was wounded, and what I had seen, there was quite a change in her voice, and she listened to what I said very differently from the way she heard me when I talked to her of my affection for her."

"There's no knowing them ! there's no knowing them !" said M'Gruder, drearily ; "and how did it end ?"

“It ended that way.”

“What way?”

“Just as I told you. She said she’d always be the same as a sister to me, and that when I grew older and wiser I’d see that there should never have been any closer tie between us. I can’t repeat the words she used, but it was something to this purport,—that when a woman has been lecturing a man about his line of life, and trying to make something out of him, against the grain of his own indolence, she can’t turn suddenly round and fall in love, even though *he* was in love with *her*.”

“She has a good head on her shoulders, she has,” muttered M’Gruder.

“I’d rather she had a little more heart,” said Tony, peevishly.

“That may be, but she’s right, after all.”

“And why is she right? why shouldn’t she see me as I am now, and not persist in looking at me as I used to be?”

“Just because it’s not her humour, I suppose; at least, I don’t know any better reason.”

Tony wheeled suddenly away from his companion, and took two or three turns alone. At last he said, “She never told me so, but I suppose the truth was, all this time she *did* think me very presumptuous;

and that what her mother did not scruple to say to me in words, Alice had often said to her own heart."

"You are rich enough now to make you her equal."

"And I'd rather be as poor as I used to be and have the hopes that have left me."

M'Gruder gave a heavy sigh, and, turning away, leaned on the bulwark and hid his face. "I'm a bad comforter, Tony," said he at last, and speaking with difficulty. "I didn't mean to have told you, for you have cares enough of your own, but I may as well tell you—read that." As he spoke, he drew out a letter and handed it to him; and Tony, stooping down beside the binnacle light, read it over twice.

"This is clear and clean beyond me," exclaimed he, as he stood up. "From any other girl I could understand it; but Dolly—Dolly Stewart, who never broke her word in her life—I never knew her tell a lie as a little child. What can she mean by it?"

"Just what she says there—she thought she could marry me, and she finds she cannot."

"But why?"

"Ah! that's more than she likes to tell me—more, mayhap, than she'd tell any one."

"Have you any clue to it?"

“None—not the slightest.”

“Is your sister-in-law in it? Has she said or written anything that Dolly could resent?”

“No; don’t you mark what she says at the end? ‘You must not try to lighten any blame you would lay on me by thinking that any one has influenced me. The fault is all my own. It is I myself have to ask your forgiveness.’”

“Was there any coldness in your late letters? was there anything that she could construe into change of affection?”

“Nothing—nothing.”

“What will her father say to it?” said Tony, after a pause.

“She’s afraid of that herself. You mind the words? ‘If I meet forgiveness from you I shall not from others, and my fault will bear its heavy punishment on a heart that is not too happy.’ Poor thing! I do forgive her—forgive her with all my heart; but it’s a great blow, Tony.”

“If she was a capricious girl, I could understand it, but that’s what she never was.”

“No, no; she was true and honest in all things.”

“It may be something about her father; he’s an old man, and failing. She cannot bear to leave him, perhaps, and it’s just possible she couldn’t

bring herself to say it. Don't you think it might be that?"

"Don't give me a hope, Tony. Don't let me see a glimpse of light, my dear friend, if there's to be no fulfilment after."

The tone of emotion he spoke in made Tony unable to reply for some minutes. "I have no right to say this, it is true," said he, kindly; "but it's the nearest guess I can make: I know, for she told me so herself, she'd not go and be a governess again if she could help it."

"Oh, if you were to be right, Tony! Oh, if it was to be as you suspect, for we could make him come out and live with us here! We've plenty of room, and it would be a pleasure to see him happy, and at rest, after his long life of labour. Let us read the letter over together, Tony, and see how it agrees with that thought:" and now they both crouched down beside the light and read it over from end to end. Here and there were passages that they pondered over seriously, and some they read twice and even thrice; and although they brought to this task the desire to confirm a speculation, there was that in the tone of the letter that gave little ground for their hope. It was so self-accusing throughout, that it was plain she herself

laid no comfort to her own heart in the thought of a high duty fulfilled.

“Are you of the same mind still?” asked M’Gruder, sadly, and with little of hopefulness in his voice; and Tony was silent.

“I see you are not. I see that you cannot give me such a hope.”

“Have you answered this yet?”

“Yes, I have written it; but it’s not sent off. I kept it by me to read over, and see that there was nothing harsh or cruel—nothing I would not say in cold blood; for oh, Tony! I will avow it was hard to forgive her; no, I don’t mean that, but it was hard to bring myself to believe I had lost her for ever. For a while I thought the best thing I could do, was to comfort myself by thinking how false she was, and I took out all her letters, to convince me of her duplicity; but what do you think I found? They all showed me, what I never saw till then, that she was only going to be my wife out of a sort of resignation; that the grief and fretting of her poor father at leaving her penniless in the world, was more than she could bear; and that to give him the comfort of his last few days in peace, she’d make any sacrifice; and through all the letters, though I never saw it before, she laid stress on what she

called doing her best to make me happy, but there was no word of being happy herself."

Perhaps Tony did not lay the same stress on this that his friend did; perhaps no explanation of it came readily to his mind; at all events, he made no attempt at comment, and only said,

"And what will your answer be?"

"What can it be? to release her, of course."

"Ay, but how will you say it?"

"Here's what I have written; it is the fourth attempt, and I don't much like it yet, but I can't do it better." And once more they turned to the light while M'Gruder read out his letter. It was a kind and feeling letter; it contained not one word of reproach, but it said that, into the home he had taken, and where he meant to be so happy, he'd never put foot again. "You ought to have seen it, Tony," said he, with a quiver in his voice. "It was all so neat and comfortable; and the little room that I meant to be Dolly's own, was hung round with prints, and there was a little terrace, with some orange-trees and myrtles, that would grow there all through the winter—for it was a sheltered spot under the Monte Nero; but it's all over now."

"Don't send off that letter. I mean, let me see her and speak to her before you write. I shall be

at home, I hope, by Wednesday, and I'll go over to the Burnside—or, better still, I'll make my mother ask Dolly to come over to us. Dolly loves her as if she were her own mother, and if any one can influence her she will be that one."

"But I'd not wish her to come round by persuasion, Tony. Dolly's a girl to have a will of her own, and she's never made up her mind to write me that letter without thinking well over it."

"Perhaps she'll tell my mother her reasons. Perhaps she'll say why she draws back from her promise."

"I don't even know that I'd like to drive her to that; it mightn't be quite fair."

Tony flung away his cigar with impatience; he was irritated, for he bethought him of his own case, and how it was quite possible no such scruples of delicacy would have interfered with him if he could only have managed to find out what was passing in Alice's mind.

"I'm sure," said M'Gruder, "you agree with me, Tony; and if she says, Don't hold me to my pledge, I have no right to ask, Why?"

A short shrug of the shoulders was all Tony's answer.

"Not that I'd object to your saying a word for

me, Tony, if there was to be any hope from it—saying what a warm friend could say of one he thought well of. You've been living under the same roof with me, and you know more of my nature, and my ways and my temper, than most men, and mayhap what you could tell her might have its weight."

"That I know and believe."

"But don't think only of me, Tony. *She's* more to be considered than I am; and if this bargain was to be unhappy for her, it would only be misery for both of us. You'd not marry your own sweetheart against her own will?"

Tony neither agreed to nor dissented from this remark. The chances were that it was a proposition not so readily solved, and that he'd like to have thought over it.

"No; I know you better than that," said M'Gruder once more.

"Perhaps not," remarked Tony; but the tone certainly gave no positive assurance of a settled determination. "At all events, I'll see what I can do for you."

"If it was that she cares for somebody else that she couldn't marry—that her father disliked, or that he was too poor—I'd never say one word; because who can tell what changes may come in life, and

the man that couldn't support a wife now, in a year or two may be well off and thriving? And if it was that she really liked another—you don't think that likely? Well, neither do I; but I say it here, because I want to take in every consideration of the question; but I repeat, if it were so, I'd never utter one word against it. Your mother, Tony, is more likely to find *that* out than any of us; and if she says Dolly's heart is given away already, that will be enough. I'll not trouble nor torment her more."

Tony grasped his friend's hand, and shook it warmly, some vague suspicion darting through him at the time that this rag-merchant was more generous in his dealing with the woman he loved than he, Tony, would have been. Was it that he loved less, or was it that his love was more? Tony couldn't tell; nor was it so very easy to resolve it either way.

As day broke, the steamer ran into Leghorn to land some passengers and take in others; and M'Gruder, while he took leave of Tony, pointed to a red-tiled roof rising amongst some olive-trees—the quaint little pigeon-house on top surmounted with a weather-vane fashioned into an enormous letter S.

“There it is,” said he, with a shake in his voice; “that was to have been her home. I’ll not go near it till I hear from you, and you may tell her so. Tell her you saw it, Tony, and that it was a sweet little spot, where one might look for happiness if they could only bring a quiet heart to it. And above all, Tony, write to me frankly and openly, and don’t give me any hopes if your own conscience tells you I have no right to them.”

With a strong grasp of the hand, and a long full look at each other in silence, M’Gruder went over the side to his boat, and the steamer ploughed on her way to Marseilles.

CHAPTER LXI.

TONY AT HOME AGAIN.

THOUGH Tony was eager to persuade Rory to accompany him home, the poor fellow longed so ardently to see his friends and relations, to tell all that he had done and suffered for "the cause," and to show the rank he had won, that Tony yielded at last, and only bound him by a promise to come and pass his Christmas at the Causeway; and now he hastened on night and day, feverishly impatient to see his mother, and yearning for that affection which his heart had never before so thirsted after.

There were times when he felt that, without Alice, all his good fortune in life was valueless; and it was a matter of utter indifference whether he was to see himself surrounded with every means of enjoyment, or rise each morning to meet some call of labour. And then there were times when he thought of the great space that separated them—not in con-

dition, but in tastes and habits and requirements. She was of that gay and fashionable world that she adorned—made for it, and made to like it; its admiration and its homage were things she looked for. What would he have done if obliged to live in such a society? His delight was the freedom of an out-of-door existence—the hard work of field-sports, dashed with a certain danger that gave them their zest. In these he admitted no man to be his superior; and in this very conscious strength lay the pride that sustained him. Compel him, however, to live in another fashion—surround him with the responsibilities of station, and the demands of certain ceremonies—and he would be wretched. “Perhaps she saw all that,” muttered he to himself “With that marvellous quickness of hers, who knows if she might not have foreseen how unsuited I was to all habits but my own wayward, careless ones? And though I hope I shall always be a gentleman, in truth there are some forms of the condition that puzzle me sorely.

“And, after all, have I not my dear mother to look after and make happy? and what a charm it will give to life to see her surrounded with the little objects she loved and cared for! What a garden she shall have!” Climate and soil, to be sure, were

stiff adversaries to conquer, but money and skill could fight them ; and that school for the little girls—the fishermen's daughters—that she was always planning, and always wondering Sir Arthur Lyle had never thought of, she should have it now, and a pretty building, too, it should be. He knew the very spot to suit it, and how beautiful he would make their own little cottage, if his mother should still desire to live there. Not that he thought of this positively with perfect calm and indifference. To live so near the Lyles, and live estranged from them, would be a great source of unpleasantness, and yet how could he possibly renew his relations there, now that all was over between Alice and himself? “Ah,” thought he at last, “the world would stand still if it had to wait for stupid fellows like me to solve its difficulties. I must just let events happen, and do the best I can when they confront me :” and then mother would be there ; mother would counsel and advise him ; mother would warn him of this, and reconcile him to that ; and so he was of good cheer as to the future, though there were things in the present that pressed him sorely.

It was about an hour after dark of a starry, sharp October evening, that the jaunting-car on which he

travelled drove up to the spot where the little path-way turned off to the cottage, and Jeanie was there with her lantern waiting for him.

“You’ve no a’ that luggage, Maister Tony?” cried she, as the man deposited the fourth trunk on the road.

“How’s my mother?” asked he, impatiently—
“is she well?”

“Why wouldn’t she be weel, and hearty too?” said the girl, who rather felt the question as savouring of ingratitude, seeing what blessings of fortune had been showered upon them.

As he walked hurriedly along, Jeanie trotted at his side, telling him, in broken and disjointed sentences, the events of the place—the joy of the whole neighbourhood on hearing of his new wealth; their hopes that he might not leave that part of the country; what Mrs Blackie of Craigs Mills said at Mrs Dumphy’s christening, when she gave the name of Tony to the baby, and wouldn’t say Anthony; and how Dr M’Candlish improved the occasion for “twa good hours, wi’ mair text o’ Scripture than wad make a Sabbath-day’s discourse; and ech, Maister Tony, it’s a glad heart I’ll hae o’ it all, if I could only think that you’ll no be going to keep a man creature—a sort of a butler like—there’s no such wastefu’

bodies in the world as they, and wanting mair ceremonies than the best gentlemen in the land." Before Tony had finished assuring her that no change in the household should displace herself, they had reached the little wicket: his mother, as she stood at the door, caught the sound of his voice, rushed out to meet him, and was soon clasped in his arms.

"It's more happiness than I hoped for—more, far more," was all she could say, as she clung to him. Her next words were uttered in a cry of joy, when the light fell full upon him in the doorway—"you're just your father, Tony; it's your own father's self I see standing before me, if you had not so much hair over your face."

"I'll soon get rid of that, mother, if you dislike it."

"Let it be, Master Tony—let it be," cried Jeanie; "though it frightened me a bit at first, it's no so bad when one gets used to it."

Though Mrs Butler had determined to make Tony relate every event that took place from the day he left her, in regular narrative order, nothing could be less connected, nothing less consecutive, than the incidents he recounted. Now it would be some reminiscence of his messenger days—of his meeting with that glorious Sir Joseph, who treated him so handsomely; then of that villain who stole his despatches; of his

life as a rag-merchant, or his days with Garibaldi. Rory, too, was remembered; and he related to his mother the pious fraud by which he had transferred to his humble follower the promotion Garibaldi had bestowed upon himself.

“He well deserved it, and more; he carried me, when I was wounded, through the orchard at Melazzo on his back, and though struck with a bullet himself, never owned he was hit till he fell on the grass beside me—a grand fellow that, mother, though he never learned to read.” And there was a something of irony in his voice as he said this, that showed how the pains of learning still rankled in his mind.

“And you never met the Lyles? how strange!” exclaimed she.

“Yes, I met Alice; at least,” said he, stooping down to settle the log on the fire, “I saw her the last evening I was at Naples.”

“Tell me all about it.”

“There’s no all. I met her, we talked together for half an hour or so, and we parted; there’s the whole of it.”

“She had heard, I suppose, of your good fortune?”

“Yes, Skeff had told them the story, and, I take it, made the most of our wealth; not that rich

people like the Lyles would be much impressed by our fortune."

"That may be true, Tony, but rich folk have a sympathy with other rich folk, and they're not very wrong in liking those whose condition resembles their own. What did Alice say? Did she give you some good advice as to your mode of life?"

"Yes, plenty of that; she rather likes advice-giving."

"She was always a good friend of yours, Tony. I mind well when she used to come here to hear your letters read to her. She ever made the same remark: Tony is a fine true-hearted boy; and when he's moulded and shaped a bit by the pressure of the world, he'll grow to be a fine true-hearted man."

"It was very gracious of her, no doubt," said he, with a sharp short tone; "and she was good enough to contribute a little to that selfsame 'pressure' she hoped so much from."

His mother looked at him to explain his words, but he turned his head away and was silent.

"Tell me something about home, mother. How are the Stewarts? Where is Dolly?"

"They are well, and Dolly is here; and a dear good girl she is. Ah, Tony! if you knew all the

comfort she has been to me in your absence—coming here through sleet and snow and storm, and nursing me like a daughter.”

“I liked her better till I learned how she had treated that good-hearted fellow Sam M’Gruder. Do you know how she has behaved to him?”

“I know it all. I read her letters, every one of them.”

“And can you mean that you defend her conduct?”

“I mean that if she were to marry a man she did not love, and were dishonest enough not to tell him so, I’d not attempt to defend her. There’s what I mean, Tony.”

“Why promise him, then—why accept him?”

“She never did.”

“Oh!” exclaimed he, holding up both his hands.

“I know what I say, Tony. It was the Doctor answered the letter in which Mr M’Gruder proposed for Dolly. He said that he could not, would not, use any influence over his daughter; but that, from all he had learned of Mr M’Gruder’s character, he would give his free consent to the match.”

“Well, then, Dolly said——”

“Wait a bit, I am coming to Dolly. She wrote back that she was sorry he had not first written to herself, and she would frankly have declared she

did not wish to marry; but now, as he had addressed her father—an old man in failing health, anxious above all things about what was to become of her when he was removed—the case was a more difficult one, since to refuse his offer was to place herself in opposition to her father's will—a thing that in all her life had never happened. ‘You will see from this,’ said she, ‘that I could not bring to you that love and affection which would be your right, were I only to marry you to spare my father's anxieties. You ought to have more than this in your wife, and I cannot give you more; therefore do not persist in this suit, or, at all events, do not press it.’”

“But I remember your writing me word that Dolly was only waiting till I left M'Gruder's house, or quitted the neighbourhood, to name the day she would be married. How do you explain that?”

“It was her father forced her to write that letter: his health was failing, and his irritability had increased to that degree that at times we were almost afraid of his reason, Tony; and I mind well the night Dolly came over to show me what she had written. She read it in that chair where you are

sitting now, and when she finished she fell on her knees, and, hiding her face in my lap, she sobbed as if her poor heart was breaking."

"So, in fact, she was always averse to this match."

"Always. She never got a letter from abroad that I couldn't have told it by her red eyes and swelled eyelids, poor lassie!"

"I say 'poor fellow!' mother; for I declare that the man who marries a woman against her will has the worst of it."

"No, no, Tony; all sorrows fall heaviest on the helpless. When at last the time came that she could bear no more, she rallied her courage and told her father that if she were to marry M'Gruder it would be the misery of her whole life. He took it very ill at first; he said some very cruel things to her; and, indeed, it was only after seeing how I took the lassie's side, and approved of all she had done, that he yielded and gave way. But he isn't what he used to be, Tony. Old age, they say, makes people sometimes sterner and harder. A grievous thing to think of, that we'd be more worldly just when the world was slipping away beneath us; and so what do you think he does? The same day that

Dolly writes that letter to M'Gruder, he makes her write to Dr M'Candlish to say that she'd take a situation as a governess with a family going to India, which the Doctor mentioned was open to any well-qualified young person like herself. 'Ye canna say that your "heart will be broke wi' treachery" here, lassie,' said her father, jeering at what she said in her tears about the marriage."

"You oughtn't to suffer this, mother; you ought to offer Dolly a home here with yourself."

"It was what I was thinking of, Tony; but I didn't like to take any step in it till I saw you and spoke to you."

"Do it, by all means—do it to-morrow."

"Not to-morrow, Tony, nor even the next day; for Dolly and the Doctor left this to pass a few days with the M'Candlishes at Articlave, and they'll not be back before Saturday; but I am so glad that you like the plan—so glad that it came from yourself, too."

"It's the first bit of pleasure our new wealth has given us, mother; may it be a good augury!"

"That's a heathenish word, Tony, and most unsuited to be used in thankfulness for God's blessings."

Tony took the rebuke in good part, and, to change the topic, laughingly asked if she thought Garibaldians never were hungry, for she had said nothing of supper since he came.

“Jeanie has been in three times to tell you it was ready, and the last time she said she’d come no more; but come and we’ll see what there’s for us.”

CHAPTER LXII.

SKEFF DAMER'S LAST "PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL."

AFTER some four or five days passed almost like a dream—for while he stood in the midst of old familiar objects, all Tony's thoughts as to the future were new and strange—there came a long letter from Skeff Damer, announcing his approaching marriage with Bella—the "dear old woman of Tilney" having behaved "beautifully." "Short as the time has been since you left this, my brave Tony, great events have occurred. The King has lost his throne, and Skeff Damer has gained an estate. I would have saved him, for I really like the Queen; but that his obstinacy is such, the rescue would have only been a reprieve, not a pardon. Sicily I meant for us—I mean for England—myself to be the Viceroy. The silver mines at Stromboli have never been worked since the time of Tiberius; they contain untold wealth: and as to

coral fishery, I have obtained statistics will make your teeth water. I can show you my calculations in hard figures, that in eight years and four months I should be the richest man in Europe—able to purchase the soil of the island out and out, if the British Government were stupid enough not to see that they ought to establish me and my dynasty there. These are now but visions—grand and glorious visions, it is true—and dearest Bella sheds tears when I allude to them.

“I have had a row with ‘the Office;’ they blame me for the downfall of the monarchy, but they never told me to save it. To you I may make the confession, it was the two days I passed at Cava cost this Bourbon his crown. Not that I regret, my dear Tony, this tribute to friendship. During that interval, as Caraffa expresses it, they were paralysed. ‘Where is Damer?’ ‘Who has seen Skeff?’ ‘What has become of him?’ ‘With whom is he negotiating?’ were the questions on every side; and in the very midst of the excitement, back comes the fellow M‘Caskey, the little fiery-faced individual you insisted in your raving on calling my ‘godfather,’ and declares that I am in the camp of the Garibaldians, and making terms and stipulations with the General himself. The

Queen-Mother went off in strong hysterics when she heard it; the King never uttered a word—has never spoken since—and the dear Queen merely said, ‘Damer will never betray us.’ These particulars I learned from Francardi. Meanwhile Garibaldi, seeing the immense importance of my presence at his headquarters, pushes on for the capital, and enters Naples, as he gives out, with the concurrence and approval of England! You will, I have no doubt, hear another version of this event. You will be told bushels of lies about heroic daring and frantic popular enthusiasm. To your friendly breast I commit the truth, never to be revealed, however, except to a remote posterity.

“One other confession, and I have done—done with politics for ever. You will hear of Garibaldi as a brave, straightforward, simple-minded, unsuspectful man, hating intrigues of all kinds. This is totally wrong. With all his courage, it is as nothing to his craft. He is the deepest politician, and the most subtle statesman in Europe, and, to my thinking—mind, it is *my* estimate I give you—more of Machiavelli than any man of his day. Bear this in mind, and keep your eye on him in future. We had not been five minutes together till each of us read the other. We were the two ‘Augurs’ of the

Latin satirist, and if we didn't laugh, we exchanged a recognition just as significant. I ought to tell you that he is quite frantic at my giving up political life, and he says that my retirement will make Cavour's fortune, for there is no other man left fit to meet him. There was not a temptation, not a bribe, he did not throw out to induce me to withhold my resignation; and when he found that personal advantages had no weight with me, he said, 'Mind my words, Monsieur Damer; the day will come when you will regret this retirement. When you will see the great continent of Europe convulsed from one end to the other, and yourself no longer in a position to influence the course of events, and guide the popular will, you will bitterly regret this step.' But I know myself better. What could the Peerage, what could the Garter, what could a seat in the Cabinet do for me? I have been too long and too much behind the scenes to be dazzled by the blaze of the 'spectacle.' I want repose, a home, the charms of that domestic life which are denied to the mere man of ambition. Bella, indeed, has her misgivings, that to live without greatness—greatness in action, and greatness to come—will be a sore trial to me; but I tell her, as I tell you, my dear friend, that it is exactly the men who, like

myself, have moved events, and given the spring to the greatest casualties, who are readiest to accept tranquillity and peace as the first of blessings. Under the shade of my old elms at Tilney—I may call them mine already, as Reeves and Tucker are drawing out the deeds—I will write my memoirs,—one of the most interesting contributions when it appears, that history has received for the last century. I can afford to be fearless, and I will be ; and if certain noble lords go down to posterity with tarnished honour and diminished fame, they can date the discovery to the day when they disparaged a Damer.

“ Now for a minor key. We led a very jolly life on board the *Talisman* ; only needing yourself to make it perfect. My Lady L. was ‘ out of herself ’ at your not coming ; indeed, since your accession to fortune, she has discovered some very amiable and some especially attractive qualities in your nature, and that, ‘ if you fall amongst the right people ’—I hope you appreciate the sort of accident intended—you will become a very superior article. Bella is, as always, a sincere friend ; and though Alice says nothing, she does not look ungrateful to him who speaks well of you. Bella has told me in confidence—mind, in confidence—that all is broken off

between Alice and you, and says it is all the better for both ; that you were a pair of intractable tempers, and that the only chance for either of you, is to be allied to somebody or something that would consent to think you perfection, and yet manage you as if you were not what is called ‘absolute wisdom.’

“Bella also said, ‘Tony might have had some chance with Alice had he remained poor,’ the opposition of her family would have had its weight in influencing her in his favour ; but now that he is a prize in the matrimonial lottery, she is quite ready to see any defects he may have, and set them against all that would be said in his behalf. Last of all, she likes her independence as a widow. I half suspected that Maitland had been before you in her favour ; but Bella says not. By the way, it was the fortune that has fallen to you Maitland had always expected—Sir Omerod having married, or, as some say, not married, his mother, and adopted Maitland, who contrived to spend about eighty thousand of the old man’s savings in ten or eleven years. He is a strange fellow, and mysterious to the last. Since the overthrow of the Government, we have been reduced to ask protection to the city from the secret society called the Camorra, a set of

Neapolitan Thugs, who cut throats in reciprocity; and it was by a guard of these wretches that we were escorted to the ship's boats when we embarked. Bella swears that the chief of the gang was no other than Maitland, greatly disguised, of course; but she says that she recognised him by his teeth as he smiled accidentally. It would be, of course, at the risk of his life he was there, since anything that pertained to the Court would, if discovered, be torn to fragments by the people. My 'godfather' had a narrow escape on Tuesday last. He rode through the Toledo in full uniform, amidst all the people, who were satisfied with hissing him instead of treating him to a stiletto, and the rascal grinned an insolent defiance as he went, and said, as he gained the Piazza, 'You're not such bad *canaille*, after all; I have seen worse in Mexico.' He went on board a despatch-boat in the bay, and ordered the commander to take him to Gaeta; and the oddest of all is, the officer complied, overpowered, as better men have been, by the scoundrel's impertinence. Oh Tony, to *you*—to yourself, to your heart's most secret closet, fast to be locked, when you have my secret inside of it—to *you*, I own, that the night I passed in that wretch's company is the darkest page of my existence. He overwhelmed me with insult,

and I had to bear it, just as I should have to bear the buffeting of the waves if I had been thrown into the sea. I'd have strangled him then and there if I was able, but the brute would have torn me limb from limb if I attempted it. Time may diminish the acuteness of this suffering, but I confess to you, up to this, when I think of what I went through, my humiliation overpowers me. I hope fervently you may meet him one of these days. You have a little score of your own, I suspect, to settle with him ; at all events, if the day of reckoning comes, include my balance, and trust to my eternal gratitude.

“Here have come Alice and Bella to make me read out what I have written to you ; of course I have objected. This is a strictly ‘private and confidential.’ What we do for the blue-books, Master Tony, we do in a different fashion. Alice, perhaps, suspects the reasons of my reserve—‘appreciates my reticence,’ as we say in the ‘Line.’

“At all events, she tells me to make you write to her. ‘When Tony,’ said she, ‘has found out that he was only in love with me because I made him better known to his own heart, and induced him to develop some of his own fine qualities, he’ll begin to see that we may and ought to be excellent

friends ; and some day or other, when there shall be a Mrs Tony, if she be a sensible woman, she'll not object to the friendship.' She said this so measuredly and calmly, that I can almost trust myself to say I have reported her word for word. It reads to me like a very polite *congé*. What do you say to it ?

"The Lyles are going back at the end of the month, but Alice says she'll winter at Cairo. There is an insolent independence about these widows, Tony, that adds one more terror to death. I protest I'd like to haunt the woman that could employ her freedom of action in this arbitrary manner.

"Dearest Bella insists on your coming to our wedding : it will come off at Tilney, strictly private. None but our nearest relatives, not even the Duke of Dullchester, nor any of the Howards. They will feel it ; but it can't be helped, I suppose. Cincinnati had to cut his connections too, when he took to horticulture. You, however, must not desert me ; and if you cannot travel without Rory, bring him with you.

"I am impatient to get away from this, and seek the safety of some obscure retreat ; for I know the persecution I shall be exposed to to withdraw my resignation and remain. To this I will never con-

sent. I give it to you under my hand, Tony, and I give it the more formally, as I desire it may be historic. I know well the whining tone they will assume—just as well as if I saw it before me in a despatch. ‘What are we to tell the Queen?’ will be the cry. My dignified answer will be, ‘Tell her that you made it impossible for one of the ablest of her servants to hold his office with dignity. Tell her, too, that Skeff Damer has done enough for honour—he now seeks to do something for happiness.’ Back to office again I will not go. Five years and two months of unpaid services have I given to my country, and England is not ashamed to accept the unrewarded labours of her gifted sons! My very ‘extraordinaries’ have been cavilled at. I give you my word of honour, they have asked me for vouchers for the champagne and lobsters with which I have treated some of the most dangerous regicides of Europe—men whose language would make your hair stand on end, and whose sentiments actually curdled the blood as one listened to them.

“The elegant hospitalities which I dispensed, in the hope—vain hope!—of inducing them to believe that the social amenities of life had extended to our insular position,—these the Office declares they have nothing to do with; and insolently asks me,

‘Are there any other items of my pleasure whose cost I should wish to submit to Parliament?’

“Ask Talleyrand, ask Metternich, ask any of our own people—B., or S., or H.—since when have cookery and the ballet ceased to be the lawful weapons of diplomacy?”

“The day of reckoning for all this, my dear Tony, is coming. At first I thought of making some of my friends in the House move for the correspondence between F. O. and myself—the Damer papers they would be called, in the language of the public journals—and thus bring on a smashing debate. Reconsideration, however, showed me that my memoirs, ‘Five Years of a Diplomatist on Service,’ would be the more fitting place; and in the pages of those volumes you will find revelations more astounding, official knaveries more nefarious, and political intrigues more Machiavellian, than the wildest imagination for wickedness has ever conceived. What would they not have given rather than see such an exposure? I almost think I will call my book, “‘Extraordinaries” of a Diplomatist.’ Sensational and taking both, that title! You mustn’t be provoked if, in one of the lighter chapters—there must be light chapters—I stick in that little adventure of your own with my godfather.”

“Confound the fellow!” muttered Tony, and with such a hearty indignation, that his mother heard him from the adjoining room, and hastened in to ask who or what had provoked him. Tony blundered out some sort of evasive reply, and then said, “Was it Dr Stewart’s voice I heard without there a few minutes ago?”

“Yes, Tony; he called in as he was passing to Coleraine on important business. The poor man is much agitated by an offer that has just been made him to go far away over the seas, and finish his days, one may call it, at the end of the world. Some of this country folk, it seems, who settled in New Zealand, at a place they call Wellington Gap, have invited him to go out there and minister among them; and though he’s not minded to make the change at his advanced time of life, nor disposed to lay his bones in a far-away land, yet for Dolly’s sake—poor Dolly, who will be left friendless and homeless when he is taken away—he thinks maybe it’s his duty to accept the offer; and so he’s gone in to the town to consult Dr M’Candlish and the elder Mr M’Elwain, and a few other sensible men.”

“Why won’t Dolly marry the man she ought to marry—a good true-hearted fellow, who will treat

her well and be kind to her? Tell me that, mother."

"It mauna be—it mauna be," said the old lady, who, when much moved, frequently employed the Scotch dialect unconsciously.

"Is there a reason for her conduct?"

"There is a reason," said she, firmly.

"And do you know it? has she told you what it is?"

"I'm not at liberty to talk over this matter with you, Tony. Whatever I know, I know as a thing confided to me in honour."

"I only asked, Was the reason one that you yourself were satisfied with?"

"It was, and is," replied she, gravely.

"Do you think from what you know, that Dolly would listen to any representations I might make her? for I know M'Gruder thoroughly, and can speak of him as a friend likes to speak."

"No, no, Tony—don't do it! don't do it!" cried she, with a degree of emotion that perfectly amazed him, for the tears swam in her eyes, and her lips trembled as she spoke. He stared fixedly at her, but she turned away her head, and for some minutes neither spoke.

"Come, mother," said Tony, at last, and in his

kindest voice, "you have a good head of your own,—think of some way to prevent the poor old Doctor from going off into exile."

"How could we help him that he would not object to?"

"What if you were to hit upon some plan of adopting Dolly? You have long loved her as if she were your own daughter, and she has returned your affections."

"That she has," muttered the old lady, as she wiped her eyes.

"What use is this new wealth of ours, if it benefit none but ourselves, mother? Just get the Doctor to talk it all over with you, and say to him, 'Have no fears as to Dolly; she shall never be forced to marry against her inclinations—merely for support; her home shall be here with us, and she shall be no dependant neither.' I'll take care of that."

"How like your father you said these words, Tony!" cried she, looking at him with a gaze of love and pride together; "it was his very voice, too."

"I meant to have spoken to her on poor M'Gruder's behalf—I promised him I would; but if you tell me it is of no use——"

"I tell you more, Tony—I tell you it would be cruel; it would be worse than cruel," cried she, eagerly.

“Then I’ll not do it, and I’ll write to him to-day and say so, though, heaven knows, I’ll be sorely puzzled to explain myself; but as he is a true man, he’ll feel that I have done all for the best, and that if I have not served his cause it has not been for any lack of the will!”

“If you wish it, Tony, I could write to Mr M’Gruder myself. A letter from an old body like me is sometimes a better means to break a misfortune than one from a younger hand. Age deals more naturally with sorrow, perhaps.”

“You will be doing a kind thing, my dear mother,” said he, as he drew her towards him, “and to a good fellow who deserves well of us.”

“I want to thank him, besides, for his kindness and care of you, Tony; so just write his address for me there on that envelope, and I’ll do it at once.”

“I’m off for a ramble, mother, till dinner-time,” said Tony, taking his hat.

“Are you going up to the Abbey, Tony?”

“No,” said he, blushing slightly.

“Because, if you had, I’d have asked you to fetch me some fresh flowers. Dolly is coming to dine with us, and she is so fond of seeing flowers on the centre of the table.”

“No; I have nothing to do at the Abbey. I’m off towards Portrush.”

“Why not go over to the Burnside and fetch Dolly?” said she, carelessly.

“Perhaps I may—that is, if I should find myself in that quarter; but I’m first of all bent on a profound piece of thoughtfulness or a good smoke—pretty much the same thing with *me*, I believe. So good-bye for a while.”

His mother looked after him with loving eyes till the tears dulled them; but there are tears which fall on the affections as the dew falls on flowers, and these were of that number.

“His own father—his own father!” muttered she, as she followed the stalwart figure till it was lost in the distance.

CHAPTER LXIII.

AT THE COTTAGE BESIDE THE CAUSEWAY.

I MUST use more discretion as to Mrs Butler's correspondence than I have employed respecting Skeff Damer's. What she wrote on that morning is not to be recorded here. It will be enough if I say that her letter was not alone a kind one, but that it thoroughly convinced him who read it that her view was wise and true, and that it would be as useless as ungenerous to press Dolly further, or ask for that love which was not hers to give.

It was a rare event with her to have to write a letter. It was not, either, a very easy task; but if she had not the gift of facile expression, she had another still better for her purpose—an honest nature steadfastly determined to perform a duty. She knew her subject, too, and treated it with candour, while with delicacy.

While she wrote, Tony strolled along, puffing his

cigar or relighting it, for it was always going out, and dreaming away in his own misty fashion over things past, present, and future, till really the actual and the ideal became so thoroughly commingled he could not well distinguish one from the other. He thought—he knew, indeed, he ought to be very happy. All his anxieties as to a career and a livelihood ended, he felt that a very enjoyable existence might lie before him, but somehow—he hoped he was not ungrateful—but somehow he was not so perfectly happy as he supposed his good fortune should have made him.

“ Perhaps it will come later on ; perhaps when I am active and employed ; perhaps when I shall have learned to interest myself in the things money brings around a man ; perhaps, too, when I can forget—ay, that was the lesson was hardest of all.” All these passing thoughts, a good deal dashed through each other, scarcely contributed to enlighten his faculties ; and he rambled on over rocks and yellow strand, up hillsides, and through fern-clad valleys, not in the least mindful of whither he was going.

At last he suddenly halted, and saw he was in the shrubberies of Lyle Abbey, his steps having out of old habit taken the one same path they had

followed for many a year. The place was just as he had seen it last. Trees make no marvellous progress in the north of Ireland, and a longer absence than Tony's would leave them just as they were before. All was neat, orderly, and well kept; and the heaps of dried leaves and brushwood ready to be wheeled away, stood there as he saw them when he last walked that way with Alice. He was poor then, without a career, or almost a hope of one; and yet was it possible, could it be possible, that he was happier than he now felt? Was it that Love sufficed for all, and that the heart so filled had no room for other thoughts than those of her it worshipped? He certainly had loved her greatly. She—she alone made up that world in which he had lived. Her smile, her step, her laugh, her voice—ay, there they were, all before him. What a dream it was! Only a dream after all; for she never cared for him. She had led him on to love her, half in caprice, half in a sort of compassionate interest for a poor boy—boy she called him—to whom a passion for one above him was certain to elevate and exalt him in his own esteem. "Very kind, doubtless," muttered he, "but very cruel too. She might have remembered that this same dream was to have a very rough awaking. I had built

nearly every hope upon one, and that one, she well knew, was never to be realised. It might not have been the most gracious way to do it, but I declare it would have been the most merciful, to have treated me as her mother did, who snubbed my pretensions at once. It was all right that I should recognise her superiority over me in a hundred ways; but perhaps she should not have kept it so continually in mind, as a sort of barrier against a warmer feeling for me. I suppose this is the fine-lady view of the matter. This is the theory that young fellows are to be civilised, as they call it, by a passion for a woman who is to amuse herself by their extravagancies, and then ask their gratitude for having deceived them.

“I’ll be shot if I *am* grateful,” said he, as he threw his cigar into the pond. “I’m astonished—amazed—now that it’s all over” (here his voice shook a little), “that my stupid vanity could have ever led me to think of her, or that I ever mistook that patronising way she had towards me for more than good-nature. But, I take it, there are scores of fellows who have had the selfsame experiences. Here’s the seat I made for her,” muttered he, as he came in front of a rustic bench. For a moment a savage thought crossed him that he would break it

in pieces, and throw the fragments into the lake—a sort of jealous anger lest some day or other she might sit there with “another;” but he restrained himself, and said, “Better not; better let her see that her civilising process has done something, and that though I have lost my game I can bear my defeat becomingly.”

He began to wish that she were there at that moment. Not that he might renew his vows of love, or repledge his affection; but to show her how calm and reasonable—ay, reasonable was her favourite word—he could be; how collectedly he could listen to her, and how composedly reply. He strolled up to the entrance door. It was open. The servants were busy in preparing for the arrival of their masters, who were expected within the week. All were delighted to see Master Tony again, and the words somehow rather grated on his ears. It was another reminder of that same “boyhood” he bore such a grudge against. “I am going to have a look out of the small drawing-room window, Mrs Hayles,” said he to the housekeeper, cutting short her congratulations, and hurrying upstairs.

It was true he went up for a view; but not of the coast-line to Fairhead, fine as it was. It was

of a full-length portrait of Alice, life-size, by Grant. She was standing beside her horse—the Arab Tony trained for her. A braid of her hair had fallen, and she was in the act of arranging it, while one hand held up her drooped riding-dress. There was that in the air and attitude that bespoke a certain embarrassment with a sense of humorous enjoyment of the dilemma. A sketch from life, in fact, had given the idea of the picture, and the reality of the incident was unquestionable.

Tony blushed a deep crimson as he looked and muttered, "The very smile she had on when she said good-bye. I wonder I never knew her till now."

A favourite myrtle of hers stood in the meadow; he broke off a sprig of it, and placed it in his button-hole, and then slowly passed down the stairs and out into the lawn. With very sombre thoughts and slow steps he retraced his way to the cottage. He went over to himself much of his past life, and saw it, as very young men will often in such retrospects, far less favourably as regarded himself than it really was. He ought to have done—heaven knows what. He ought to have been—scores of things which he never was, perhaps never could be. At all events there was one thing he never should have imagined, that Alice Lyle—she was

Alice Lyle always to him—in her treatment of him was ever more closely drawn towards him than the others of her family. “It was simply the mingled kindness and caprice of her nature that made the difference; and if I hadn’t been a vain fool I’d have seen it. I see it now, though; I can read it in the very smile she has in her picture. To be sure I have learned a good deal since I was here last; I have outgrown a good many illusions. I once imagined this dwarfed and stunted scrub to be a wood. I fancied the Abbey to be like a royal palace; and in Sicily a whole battalion of us have bivouacked in a hall that led to suites of rooms without number. If a mere glimpse of the world could reveal such astounding truths, what might not come of a more lengthened experience?”

“How tired and weary you look, Tony!” said his mother, as he threw himself into a chair; “have you overwalked yourself?”

“I suppose so,” said he, with a half smile. “In my poorer days I thought nothing of going to the Abbey and back twice—I have done it even thrice—in one day; but perhaps this weight of gold I carry now is too heavy for me.”

“I’d like to see you look more grateful for your good fortune, Tony,” said she, gravely.

“I’m not ungrateful, mother; but up to this I have not thought much of the matter. I suspect, however, I was never designed for a life of ease and enjoyment. Do you remember what Dr Stewart said one day, ‘You may put a weed in a garden, and dig round it and water it, and it will only grow to be a big weed after all.’”

“I hope better from Tony—far better,” said she, sharply. “Have you answered M’Carthy’s letter? have you arranged where you are to meet the lawyers?”

“I have said in Dublin. They couldn’t come here, mother; we have no room for them in this crib.”

“You must not call it a crib for all that. It sheltered your father once, and he carried a very high head, Tony.”

“And for that very reason, dear mother, I’m going to make it our own home henceforth,—without you’d rather go and live in that old manor-house on the Nore; they tell me it is beautiful.”

“It was there your father was born, and I long to see it,” said she, with emotion. “Who’s that coming in at the gate, Tony?”

“It is Dolly,” said he, rising, and going to the door to meet her.

“My dear Dolly,” cried he, as he embraced her, and kissed her on either cheek; “this brings me back to old times at once.”

If it was nothing else, the total change in Tony’s appearance abashed her; the bronzed and bearded man looking many years older than he was, seemed little like the Tony she had seen last; and so she half shrank back from his embrace, and, with a flushed cheek and almost constrained manner, muttered some words of recognition.

“How well you are looking,” said he, staring at her, as she took off her bonnet, “and the nice glossy hair has all grown again, and I vow it is brighter and silkier than ever.”

“What’s all this flattery about bright een and silky locks I’m listening to?” said the old lady, coming out laughing into the hall.

“It’s Master Tony displaying his foreign graces at my expense, ma’am,” said Dolly, with a smile.

“Would you have known him again, Dolly? would you have thought that great hairy creature there was our Tony?”

“I think he is changed—a good deal changed,” said Dolly, without looking at him.

“I didn’t quite like it at first; but I’m partly getting used to it now; and though the Colonel

never wore a beard on his upper lip, Tony's more like him now than ever." The old lady continued to ramble on about the points of resemblance between the father and son, and where certain traits of manner and voice were held in common; and though neither Tony nor Dolly gave much heed to her words, they were equally grateful to her for talking.

"And where's the Doctor, Dolly? are we not to see him at dinner?"

"Not to-day, ma'am; he's gone over to M'Laidlaw's to make some arrangements about this scheme of ours—the banishment, he calls it."

"And is it possible, Dolly, that he can seriously contemplate such a step?" asked Tony, gravely.

"Yes; and very seriously too."

"And you, Dolly; what do you say to it?"

"I say to it what I have often said to a difficulty, what the old Scotch adage says of 'the stout heart to the stey brae.'"

"And you might have found more comforting words, lassie—how the winds can be tempered to the shorn lamb," said the old lady, almost rebukefully; and Dolly drooped her head in silence.

"I think it's a bad scheme," said Tony, boldly, and as though not hearing his mother's remark.

“For a man at the Doctor’s age to go to the other end of the globe, to live in a new land, and make new friendships at his time of life, is, I’m sure, a mistake.”

“That supposes that we have a choice; but my father thinks we have no choice.”

“I cannot see that. I cannot see that what a man has borne for five-and-thirty or forty years—he has been that long at the Burnside, I believe—he cannot endure still longer. I must have a talk with him myself over it.” And unconsciously—quite unconsciously—Tony uttered the last words with a high-sounding importance, so certain is it that in a man’s worldly wealth there is a store of self-confidence that no mere qualities of head or heart can ever supply; and Dolly almost smiled at the assured tone and the confident manner of her former playfellow.

“My father will be glad to see you, Tony—he wants to hear all about your campaigns; he was trying two nights ago to follow you on the map, but it was such a bad one he had to give up the attempt.”

“I’ll give you mine,” cried the old lady, “the map Tony brought over to myself. I’ll no just give it, but I’ll lend it to you; and there’s a cross

wherever there was a battle, and a red cross wherever Tony was wounded."

"Pooh, pooh, mother! don't worry Dolly about these things; she'd rather hear of pleasanter themes than battles and battle-fields. And here is one already—Jeanie says, 'dinner.'"

"Where did you find your sprig of myrtle at this time?" asked Dolly, as Tony led her in to dinner.

"I got it at the Abbey. I strolled up there to-day," said he, in a half-confusion. "Will you have it?"

"No," said she, curtly.

"Neither will I, then," cried he, tearing it out of his button-hole and throwing it away.

What a long journey in life can be taken in the few steps from the drawing-room to the dinner-table!

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE END.

As Dr Stewart had many friends to consult and many visits to make—some of them, as he imagined, farewell ones—Dolly was persuaded, but not without difficulty, to take up her residence at the cottage till he should be able to return home. And a very pleasant week it was. To the old lady it was almost perfect happiness. She had her dear Tony back with her after all his dangers and escapes, safe and sound, and in such spirits as she had never seen him before. Not a cloud, not a shadow, now ever darkened his bright face; all was good-humour, and thoughtful kindness for herself and for Dolly.

And poor Dolly, too, with some anxious cares at her heart—a load that would have crushed many—bore up so well that she looked as cheery as the others, and entered into all the plans that Tony

formed about his future house, and his gardens, and his stables, as though many a hundred leagues of ocean were not soon to roll between her and the spots she traced so eagerly on the paper. One evening they sat even later than usual. Tony had induced Dolly, who was very clever with her pencil, to make him a sketch for a little ornamental cottage—one of those uninhabitable little homesteads, which are immensely suggestive of all the comforts they would utterly fail to realise; and he leaned over her as she drew, and his arm was on the back of her chair, and his face so close at times that it almost touched the braids of the silky hair beside him.

“You must make a porch there, Dolly; it would be so nice to sit there with that noble view down the glen at one’s feet, and three distinct reaches of the Nore visible.”

“Yes, I’ll make a porch; I’ll even make you yourself lounging in it. See, it shall be perfect bliss!”

“What does that mean?”

“That means smoke, sir; you are enjoying the heavenly luxury of tobacco, not the less intensely that it obscures the-view.”

“No, Dolly, I’ll not have that. If you put me there, don’t have me smoking; make me sitting

beside you as we are now—you drawing, and I looking over you.”

“But I want to be a prophet as well as a painter, Tony. I desire to predict something that will be sure to happen, if you should ever build this cottage.”

“I swear I will—I’m resolved on it.”

“Well, then, so sure as you do, and so sure as you sit in that little honeysuckle-covered porch, you’ll smoke.”

“And why not do as I say? Why not make you sketching——”

“Because I shall not be sketching; because, by the time your cottage is finished, I shall be probably sketching a Maori chief, or a war-party bivouacking on the Raki-Raki.”

Tony drew away his arm and leaned back in his chair, a sense almost of faintish sickness creeping over him.

“Here are the dogs, too,” continued she. “Here is Lance with his great majestic face, and here Gertrude with her fine pointed nose and piercing eyes, and here’s little Spicer as saucy and pert as I can make him without colour; for one ought to have a little carmine for the corner of his eye, and a slight tinge to accent the tip of his nose. Shall I

add all your 'emblems,' as they call them, and put in the fishing-rods against the wall, and the landing-net, and the guns and pouches?"

She went on sketching with inconceivable rapidity, the drawing keeping pace almost with her words.

But Tony no longer took the interest he had done before in the picture, but seemed lost in some deep and difficult reflection.

"Shall we have a bridge—a mere plank will do—over the river here, Tony? and then this zigzag pathway will be a short way up to the cottage."

He never heard her words, but arose and left the room. He passed out into the little garden in front of the house, and leaning on the gate looked out into the dark still night. Poor Tony! impenetrable as that darkness was, it was not more difficult to peer through than the thick mist that gathered around his thoughts.

"Is that Tony?" cried his mother from the doorway.

"Yes," said he, moodily, for he wanted to be left to his own thoughts.

"Come here, Tony, and see what a fine manly letter your friend Mr M'Gruder writes in answer to mine."

Tony was at her side in an instant, and almost

tore the letter in his eagerness to read it. It was very brief, but well deserved all she had said of it. With a delicacy which perhaps might scarcely have been looked for in a man so educated and brought up, he seemed to appreciate the existence of a secret he had no right to question; and bitterly as the resolve cost him, he declared that he had no longer a claim on Dolly's affection.

"I scarcely understand him, mother; do you?" asked Tony.

"It's not very hard to understand, Tony," said she, gravely. "Mr M'Gruder sees that Dolly Stewart could not have given him her love and affection as a man's wife ought to give, and he would be ashamed to take her without it."

"But why couldn't she? Sam seems to have a sort of suspicion as to the reason, and I cannot guess it."

"If he does suspect, he has the nice feeling of a man of honour, and sees that it is not for one placed as he is to question it."

"If any man were to say to me, 'Read that letter, and tell me what does it infer,' I'd say the writer thought that the girl he wanted to marry liked some one else."

"Well, there's one point placed beyond an infer-

ence, Tony; the engagement is ended, and she is free."

"I suppose she is very happy at it."

"Poor Dolly has little heart for happiness just now. It was a little before dinner a note came from the Doctor to say that all the friends he had consulted advised him to go out, and were ready and willing to assist him in every way to make the journey. As January is the stormy month in these seas, they all recommended his sailing as soon as he possibly could; and the poor man says very feelingly, 'To-morrow, mayhap, will be my farewell sermon to those who have sat under me eight-and-forty years.'"

"Why did you not make some proposal like what I spoke of, mother?" asked he, almost peevishly.

"I tried to do it, Tony, but he wouldn't hear of it. He has a pride of his own that is very dangerous to wound, and he stopped me at once, saying, 'I hope I mistake your meaning; but lest I should not, say no more of this for the sake of our old friendship.'"

"I call such pride downright want of feeling. It is neither more nor less than consummate selfishness."

"Don't tell him so, Tony, or maybe you'd fare

worse in the argument. He has a wise deep head, the Doctor."

"I wish he had a little heart with it," said Tony, sulkily, and turned again into the garden.

Twice did Jeanie summon him to tea, but he paid no attention to the call; so engrossed, indeed, was he by his thoughts, that he even forgot to smoke, and not impossibly the want of his accustomed weed added to his other embarrassments.

"Miss Dolly's for ganging hame, Master Tony," said the maid at last, "and the mistress wants you to go wi' her."

As Tony entered the hall, Dolly was preparing for the road. Coquetry was certainly the least of her accomplishments, and yet there was something that almost verged on it in the hood she wore, instead of a bonnet, lined with some plushy material of a rich cherry colour, and forming a frame around her face that set off all her features to the greatest advantage. Never did her eyes look bluer or deeper—never did the gentle beauty of her face light up with more of brilliancy. Tony never knew with what rapture he was gazing on her till he saw that she was blushing under his fixed stare.

The leave-taking between Mrs Butler and Dolly

was more than usually affectionate ; and even after they had separated, the old lady called her back and kissed her again.

“ I don't know how mother will bear up after you leave her,” muttered Tony, as he walked along at Dolly's side ; “ she is fonder of you than ever.”

Dolly murmured something, but inaudibly.

“ For my own part,” continued Tony, “ I can't believe this step necessary at all. It would be an ineffable disgrace to the whole neighbourhood to let one we love and revere as we do him, go away in his old age, one may say, to seek his fortune. He belongs to us, and we to him. We have been linked together for years, and I can't bear the thought of our separating.”

This was a very long speech for Tony, and he felt almost fatigued when it was finished ; but Dolly was silent, and there was no means by which he could guess the effect it had produced upon her.

“ As to my mother,” continued he, “ she'd not care to live here any longer—I know it. I don't speak of myself, because it's the habit to think I don't care for any one or anything—that's the estimate people form of *me*, and I must bear it as I can.”

“ It's less than just, Tony,” said Dolly, gravely.

“Oh, if I am to ask for justice, Dolly, I shall get the worst of it,” said he, laughing, but not merrily.

For a while they walked on without a word on either side.

“What a calm night!” said Dolly, “and how large the stars look! They tell me that in southern latitudes they seem immense.”

“You are not sorry to leave this, Dolly?” murmured he, gloomily; “are you?”

A very faint sigh was all her answer.

“I’m sure no one could blame you,” he continued. “There is not much to attach any one to the place, except, perhaps, a half-savage like myself, who finds its ruggedness congenial.”

“But you will scarcely remain here now, Tony; you’ll be more likely to settle at Butler Hall, won’t you?”

“Wherever I settle it shan’t be here, after you have left it,” said he, with energy.

“Sir Arthur Lyle and his family are all coming back in a few days, I hear.”

“So they may; it matters little to me, Dolly. Shall I tell you a secret? Take my arm, Dolly—the path is rough here—you may as well lean on me. We are not likely to have many more walks

together. Oh dear! if you were as sorry as I am, what a sad stroll this would be!"

"What's your secret, Tony?" asked she, in a faint voice.

"Ah! my secret, my secret," said he, ponderingly; "I don't know why I called it a secret—but here is what I meant. You remember, Dolly, how I used to live up there at the Abbey formerly. It was just like my home. I ordered all the people about just as if they had been my own servants—and, indeed, they minded my orders more than their master's. The habit grew so strong upon me, of being obeyed and followed, that I suppose I must have forgot my own real condition. I take it I must have lost sight of who and what I actually was, till one of the sons—a young fellow in the service in India—came back and contrived to let me make the discovery, that, though I never knew it, I was really living the life of a dependant. I'll not tell you how this stung me, but it did sting me—all the more that I believed, I fancied, myself—don't laugh at me—but I really imagined I was in love with one of the girls—Alice. She was Alice Trafford then."

"I had heard of that," said Dolly, in a faint voice.

"Well, she too undeceived me—not exactly as

unfeelingly nor as offensively as her brother, but just as explicitly—you know what I mean?"

"No; tell me more clearly," said she, eagerly.

"I don't know how to tell you. It's a long story—that is to say, I was a long while under a delusion, and she was a long while indulging it. Fine ladies, I'm told, do this sort of thing when they take a caprice into their heads to civilise young barbarians of my stamp."

"That's not the generous way to look at it, Tony."

"I don't want to be generous—the adage says one ought to begin by being just. Skeffy—you know whom I mean, Skeff Damer—saw it clearly enough—he warned me about it. And what a clever fellow he is! would you believe it, Dolly? he actually knew all the time that I was not really in love when I thought I was. He knew that it was a something made up of romance and ambition and boyish vanity, and that my heart, my real heart, was never in it."

Dolly shook her head, but whether in dissent or in sorrow it was not easy to say.

"Shall I tell you more?" cried Tony, as he drew her arm closer to him, and took her hand in his; "shall I tell you more, Dolly? Skeff read me as I

could not read myself. He said to me, 'Tony, this is no case of love, it is the flattered vanity of a very young fellow to be distinguished not alone by the prettiest, but the most petted woman of society. *You,*' said he, 'are receiving all the homage paid to her at second-hand.' But more than all this, Dolly; he not merely saw that I was not in love with Alice Trafford, but he saw with whom my heart was bound up, for many and many a year."

"Her sister, her sister Bella," whispered Dolly.

"No, but with yourself, my own own Dolly," cried he, and turning, and before she could prevent it, he clasped her in his arms, and kissed her passionately.

"Oh, Tony!" said she, sobbing, "you that I trusted, you that I confided in, to treat me thus."

"It is that my heart is bursting, Dolly, with this long pent-up love, for I now know I have loved you all my life long. Don't be angry with me, my darling Dolly; I'd rather die at your feet than hear an angry word from you. Tell me if you can care for me; oh, tell me, if I strive to be all you could like and love, that you will not refuse to be my own."

She tried to disengage herself from his arm; she trembled, heaved a deep sigh, and fell with her head on his shoulder.

“And you are my own,” said he, again kissing her; “and now the wide world has not so happy a heart as mine.”

Of those characters of my story who met happiness, it is as well to say no more. A more cunning craftsman than myself has told us, that the less we track human life, the more cheerily we shall speak of it. Let us presume, and it is no unfair presumption, that, as Tony's life was surrounded with a liberal share of those gifts which make existence pleasurable, he was neither ungrateful nor unmindful of them. Of Dolly I hope there need be no doubt. “The guid dochter is the best warrant for the guid wife:” so said her father, and he said truly.

In the diary of a Spanish guerilla chief, there is mention of a “nobile Inglese,” who met him at Malta, to confer over the possibility of a landing in Calabria, and the chances of a successful rising there. The Spaniard speaks of this man as a person of rank, education, and talents, high in the confidence of the Court, and evidently warmly interested

in the cause. He was taken prisoner by the Piedmontese troops on the third day after they landed, and, though repeatedly offered life under conditions it would have been no dishonour to accept, was tried by court-martial, and shot.

There is reason to believe that the "nobile Inglese" was Maitland.

From the window where I write, I can see the promenade on the Pincian Hill, and if my eyes do not deceive me I can perceive that at times the groups are broken, and the loungers fall back, to permit some one to pass. I have called the waiter to explain the curious circumstance, and asked if it be royalty that is so deferentially acknowledged. He smiles, and says—"No. It is the major domo of the palace exacts the respect you see. He can do what he likes at Rome. Antonelli himself is not greater than the Count M'Caskey."

As some unlettered guide leads the traveller to the verge of a cliff, from which the glorious landscape beneath is visible, and winding river and embowered homestead, and swelling plain and far-off mountain, are all spread out beneath for the eye to revel over, so do I place you, my valued reader, on that spot from which the future can be seen, and

modestly retire that you may gaze in peace, weaving your own fancies at will, and investing the scene before you with such images and such interests as best befit it.

My part is done: if I have suggested something for *yours*, it will not be all in vain that I have written 'Tony Butler.'

THE END.

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