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WALTER COLYTON ;

A TALE OF 1688.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," &c. &c.

Remember, O my friends! the laws, the rights,
The generous plan of power delivered down,
From age to age, by your renown'd forefathers:
O let it never perish in your hands,
But piously transmit it to your children!

CATO.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
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TO WILLIAM HESELTINE, Esq.

OF TURRET HOUSE, SOUTH LAMBETH.

DEAR HESELTINE,

THERE might be some boldness in inscribing a Historical Novel to so correct an antiquary as the Author of “ The Last of the Plantagenets,” did I not feel assured that in perusing the following pages, your kindness will invariably prompt you to merge the critic in the friend. Under this impression, I venture to prefix your name to my little work, not only as a trifling token of my respect for your talents and your virtues, but that I may have the pleasure of subscribing myself in public, as I have done for so many years in private,

Your sincere friend,

THE AUTHOR.

Brighton, March, 1830.

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WALTER COLYTON.

CHAPTER I.

Now I pray thee, shepherd, tell it not forth,
Here is a long tale, and little worth.

SPENSER.

ABOUT five miles to the south-east of Bridgewater is the village of Weston-Zoyland, a place of little note in the present day, but which in the time of James the Second derived a transient celebrity from its immediate vicinity to Sedgemoor, where the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth was defeated by the King's troops under the command of the Earl of Feversham. On the morning when our history commences, the slow, deep tone of the passing-bell an-

nounced that a burial was about to take place; a circumstance, indeed, which was rendered sufficiently manifest by a newly dug grave in one corner of the church-yard, with its deal boards and piles of earth on either side. It was spring time, and all nature, in the vernal renewal of her youth and bloom, was as bright and vivacious as if nought that then lived was doomed to die. Every thing seemed teeming with life and enjoyment. Gay and brilliant was the smile with which the sun lighted up the whole rejoicing landscape; the cattle frolicked in their pastures, the birds sang their amorous descant with a clear and lusty voice, the bees were busily humming about the flowers, the river Parret sparkled and prattled in its rapid course round the south of the village, and the wind made cheerful music in the trees as it wafted towards the church, whence it was soon to bear away in an opposite direction the deep toll of the passing-bell, the solemn sounds of the open-air burial-service, and the sobs of bereaved relatives. There was something contradictory,

too, something almost startling and unnatural in the vivid light which the sun threw down into the narrow grave, gleaming as it did upon the mouldering fragments of human beings who had once sported in the rays of the same unfading luminary, and revealing to the gazer's eye those unutterable secrets of the sepulchre, which from their revolting nature we could wish to be ever shrouded in impervious gloom. It looked almost like a mockery of death to see its mysteries, which had been so long buried in deep darkness, thus thrown open to the vulgar gaze, and flickering in the glare of sunshine.

Many of the villagers had been to inspect the grave, and five living figures still remained near it. Three of these were children, drawn to the spot by curiosity, clinging together that they might encourage one another to look down into "the pit-holé," as they sidled towards it step by step, and recoiling with awe-stricken looks after they had snatched a single hasty peep. Still, however, they lingered beside the mounds of earth, timidly turning over with their feet the

relics of human bones, or the remains of a mouldering coffin-plate, and looking earnestly at one another at every fresh discovery of this nature, though their little throbbing hearts were too full of an undefined fear and reverence to allow them to utter a syllable. Their half-open mouths, however, and their anxious, glistening eyes, sufficiently betrayed their emotion, until, as they walked slowly away, occasionally looking back and pointing to the grave, their feelings found vent in an eager, and yet half-suppressed whispering.

The two remaining figures consisted of an old crone, bent almost double with age, seated upon an adjoining grave, and an ancient silver-headed peasant supporting himself upon a crutch-headed stick as he conversed with her, after having reverently doffed his hat. Far from sympathizing with the children who had just left the spot, the former, although the bones strewed before her might probably have belonged to play-fellows with whom in her girlish days she had scampered along the

church-yard, evinced much of that callousness which old age and poverty, perhaps happily for the sufferers, are so apt to engender. "What zay, Jan Chervil?" croaked the dame, in a broad Somersetshire dialect, and a voice that was frequently interrupted by a deep cough,—
 "Old Adam Chubb be a gwon dead at last, be 'en? Fags! what o' that? Adam Chubb's been dead theese vive year, only 'a never drapp'd. I zeed 'en my own zel last Milemas when 'a was as blind as a wont, an' as dunch as a pooast"*

"Anan!" cried Chervil, not hearing her observation.

"Begummers!" shrieked his companion at the top of her cracked voice, "zim to I thee beest betwattled theezel, amost as bad as old Adam."

"*Old Adam, 'dame?* 'A worn't zo old a'ter all; 'a worn't above vour score, war 'en? And

* *Wont*, a mole—*dunch*, deaf. See "Jennings on the Dialect of the West of England," a book to which the Author has been more than once indebted.

what does thee make zich a duddering noise vor? I can hear 'ee vast enough gif thee 'ool but speak up."

"Lord love us all! Jan Chervil, vew do care when old volk do drap, I dwon't myzel; da zeem zo naat'al, dwon't it? But only ta think o' thic pit-hole right avore us being digged for young Maester Colyton and he not eighteen year old! You 'll come an' zee'n put in the groun', 'ont ye? Ees, I know you 'ool. Poor Maester Richard! he be gwon where all on 's must goo; and my snuff be agwon too," added the sentimental crone, fumbling in the corner of a small canvass bag, "thof it bain't a month zunce I vill'd 'en. Sartin shower I war gawkum enough ta shod zome on't in my yapern while I war tying on it up, but 'tis niver-the-near ta talk o' what 's alost; 'twar var vought and dear abought, but its na use to worret about past misfortins; I never do my own zel, and zo I do hope tha good squire 'ont take on about poor Maester Richard."

"Ay, dame, you an' I may lay down the law

but it be desperd hard for his veather ta think he 'll never zee the vace of his own bwoy na moor, and he the only zon he had left at home, zunce Maester Walter, the young squire be gwon a sodgering. That 's my verdit on the matter, and therevore I zay 't."

"But 'a's got a daughter, han't en, living an' like to live? an' I'se war'nt sh'ool come in now with a hick, step, and jump for the whole fortin, that is put case that the old squire do drap and the young one be akill'd in the wars."

"Ay, dame, when that do happen there 'ool be zum hundred o' good yacres o' land vor zumbody, azide houzen, and beeasts, and ricks o' corn and hay, and gowlden dibs to play duck and mallard wi'. But, Lord! Miss Edith be but a poor pale mommick of a lass, an' if she dwon't zoon grow more brave an' spry, I shoodn' wonder gif she came to lay alongside her brother, Maester Richard, avore ever she war ax'd in church. Zim to I she be but a zickly maid not awver like to be a grawn 'ooman. I had a daughter aince, jist zich another, only a gird'l

stronger, an' she died avore ever she were nineteen."

"Ye mean Meg, dwon't ee, Jan Chervil? I do mind Meg as well as if I zeed her now; Slomaking Meg, as we call'd her, bin her shoes were always slipper-slopper. 'Twardn' she as had the pock-fredden vace, war it?"

"Ees, but it war; there she do lie yonner. Dwon't ee zee thic heap o' graves where the tall thistles do swankum about in the wind? Well, they that be lying there be all Chervils, every one on 'en. There do lie veather, and mother, and granfer, and gramm'er, and poor Meg, and five o' her brothers and zusters. Lord love 'en all! I do often think o' one or t'other on 'en when I do zit in tha zun at our door, atwiddling o' my thumbs."

"Then thee beest a goose-cap for thy pains, Jan. Now I do make a pwint of vorgetting all theazam unket matters, bin I 've enough to do to think o' my oun zel'."

"Ees, but how can I forget 'n, when I never stir a step without this here crutch-headed stick in my hon'?"

“ Why, thee cassn’t ston’ long without it, Jan, I do know that, but what then? It dwon’t talk to thee about thy vamily, a b’leeve.”

“ Ees, but it do tho’. It ’long’d to my gram-m’er, an’ a’ter she to mother, and she gee it to I on her death bed. I do mind her hanging it on her chair when I war a little bwoy, and she were a teaching me my criss-cross lane, and my girt *a*, little *a*, bouncing *b*. She ha’ o’ten rode a cock-horse upon it when she were a youngster, and zo ha’ I, and zo ha’ every one o’ my chillern, an’ zo ha’ half o’ them that now lie cold in yonner graves, an’ zo how can I feel it in my hon’ without thinking of all the hon’s that have held it avore me, an’ that are now nothing but dust an axen? ’Twardn’ much for mother to leave me, but I ’oodn’t part wi’t, no, that’s what I ’oodn’t, not for a zummat.” The old man grasped it firmly as he spoke, and struck it sharply upon the earth, as if to indicate the inflexibility of his resolution, when he sank into a reverie that lasted two or three minutes, at

the conclusion of which he continued, “ ’Tain’t only the Chervils, veather an’ son, and gran’son that this here curtch-headed stick ha’ zeen out and out, but all the gennelvolk, and the poor volk, and the kings and qucens, and the birds and beeasts in the whole wide wordle have died and gone to the pit-hole two or three times awver zunce this here ashen stick war acut, an’ yet it be as strong and as like to last as when it war virst shred from the tree. Theazam be the ways o’ nature I do know, but it be a strange story for all that, bain’t it, dame ?”

“ Fags ! Jan, that be a case above my gump-tion, so I’ll neither mell, nor make wi’t, vor vear I shood spwile the moril on’t ; besides I must jog on to borrow a ha’porth o’ snuff. But you ’ll come ith a’ternoon to see tha poor bwoy laid in the groun’, ’on’t ye, Jan ?”

“ Ay, that ’s what I ’ool, please the Lord ! an zo good bwye to thee, dame, good bwye !” With these words old Chervil, supporting himself upon the stick which had furnished matter for so much of his conversation, quitted the

church-yard, and trudging across a couple of fields, reached the farm house belonging to his son, with whom he had for many years resided.

The youth whose grave he had gone to inspect, was the second son of Jaspar Colyton, a gentleman who had dwelt during the latter part of his life at Bridgwater, generally, however, removing in the summer months to Orchard Place, an old-fashioned house, which stood upon his estate in the immediate vicinity of the village of Weston. From his father, a bold, reckless Cavalier, he had inherited a good constitution, a handsome person, a dissipated improvident disposition, and much of that laxity of principle which passed current among the adherents of Charles for a gay and gentlemanly nonchalance. As these constituted his sole patrimony, and as the Restoration brought him nothing but broken promises, the title of Captain, and the empty memory of his own and his father's services, he had struggled with difficulties and embarrassments of all sorts, never out of spirits, although always in debt, and seldom

free from apprehension of arrest, until he had at last effectually repaired his broken fortunes by marrying a widow, who in the eyes of a pleasure-loving, bailiff-haunted loyalist, possessed abundant attractions in her handsome house at Bridgwater, and her captivating estate of Orchard Place. Dubbed with the title of Squire in virtue of the latter possession, Mr Colyton, the effervescence of whose youthful blood had by this time begun to subside, gradually settled into the orderly indolent country gentleman, caring for little but the quiet enjoyment of those selfish luxuries and personal indulgences which were at first the more keenly relished from the remembrance of former hardships and privations, and which long subsequent habit had converted into almost indispensable accompaniments of his existence. Although somewhat inclined to corpulency at the period of our narrative, he retained much of the figure and comeliness which had first won the widow's regard, exhibiting a sanguine countenance, a merry eye, a good set of teeth, and that com-

placent constitutional smile which sits so naturally upon the features of those who are perfectly satisfied with their own lot, and perfectly indifferent about the fate of others. In his dress he affected the old Cavalier costume, suffering his hair to fall down to his shoulders, trimming his short beard to a point, generally wearing a slouched hat and feather, a sad-coloured vest and doublet, loose turn-over boots, and a rapier by his side; an attire which, in spite of the soberness of its hues, derived an imposing effect from the portliness of his form, and the flushed, gentlemanly character of his good-humoured face.

Mrs. Colyton was connected with an old Puritan family, whose religious and political opinions she still affected to entertain, a frame of mind which, although it had not prevented her marrying the good-looking Captain, gave rise to frequent differences in their matrimonial career. As her husband, however, was too fond of personal comfort, and cared too little for his own party or creed to suffer himself to be put out

of humour, he seldom made any other rejoinder to his wife's rebukes and complaints than by calling for his pipe, whistling a tune, or singing a snatch of some old political song, levelled against the Roundheads, so that they lived together with less of actual dissension than might have been anticipated from the uncongeniality of their respective characters. Mrs. Colyton's bleak-looking and rather shrewish countenance did not render justice to her good qualities; for she was in reality an active, bustling, economical, kind-hearted woman, prone to pique herself a little too loftily upon her superior penetration, prudence, and good management, but justifying her assumption of domestic sway by her husband's avowed indolence and indifference to every thing, except his own little enjoyments.

Some time after the birth of their first son, Mr. and Mrs. Colyton were blessed with twins, and had never any subsequent increase to their family. Richard and Edith, for thus the twins were named, grew up for several years in

health; but as the former advanced towards manhood, he exhibited an unequivocal tendency to consumption, a disease which, in spite of all the cares that could be lavished upon him, occasioned his death before he was eighteen years of age. This youth was the "poor Master Richard," whose open grave in the churchyard had furnished a subject for the colloquy which we have recorded between John Chervil and the old crone. The parents had long ceased to entertain any hope of their son's recovery; from the nature of his complaint, his release was an event rather to be desired than deplored; and, under these circumstances, there was less of grief or distress in the family than is usually felt under such a trying bereavement.

Even his twin sister Edith, between whom and the deceased there had ever existed an affectionate attachment of no common intensity, admitted that his removal to a happier sphere might be almost deemed a subject of congratulation to his friends. She could reconcile

her reason to his loss, but she could not pacify her thrilling heart; she could not fill up the aching and yearning void which his death had occasioned in her bosom; she could not tranquillize those feelings, which, being naturally sensitive, almost to a morbid excess, had now received a shock that testified itself not by any vehement outbursts of grief, but by the more alarming indication of a silent, tearless stupor. With an indefatigable tenderness had she nursed her brother during his long illness; day by day had she watched the progress of his malady, and seen him slowly fade and wither away, until her own declining health sympathized with that of the sufferer; and yet the long anticipation of his dissolution did not appear to have broken the blow when it ultimately fell upon her heart. Theirs indeed had been a mutual attachment, much beyond the common ties of consanguinity. Not only was their personal resemblance perfectly startling, especially when the brother's malady had somewhat checked his growth, and imparted to his

complexion a hectic brilliancy and transparency that assumed a feminine character, but there was an equal similarity in the respective qualities of their mind, almost in every individual taste, habit, and pursuit. In addition to these many sources of endearment, the deceased had wound himself still more intimately around the heart of his sister, by his gentle and patient fortitude, during the progress of his protracted illness.

Although Edith Colyton could hardly be termed beautiful, there was a grace in her figure, and an expression of thought, intelligence, and sensibility in her delicate features, which it was impossible to contemplate without deep interest, and which many observers might think more attractive than all the regular charms of a faultless Belle. So transparent was her complexion, that one hardly knew whether to regret the absence of the roses from her cheek, especially as her fairness assimilated so well with her glossy light brown hair. Her eyes and eyebrows, however, were dark ; the former

being rather deeply set beneath a forehead of more dazzling whiteness, and greater beauty of contour than ever statuary had chiselled out of Parian marble. She was of a contemplative and studious turn; few who marked her exterior placidity would have suspected that she was so sensitive; but it was because her feelings were profound, that they did not betray themselves superficially, in which respect she resembled the waters, of which the surface is generally calm and unruffled in proportion to their depth.

Even while Edith was quite a little girl, her indifference to the common sports and pastimes of childhood had been observed by her mother, who, imagining that her sedateness might proceed from the want of a playfellow of her own sex, procured for her as a companion, Hetty Chervil, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, and the grand-daughter of the old peasant, to whom we have already introduced our readers. Edith, whose temperament disposed her to love every thing, became attached to the new visit-

ant, who was only a few months older than herself; and Mrs. Colyton no sooner found that she took a pleasure in her society, than she determined that Hetty should be permanently domiciliated in the family. This resolution necessitated other measures, that had not been immediately foreseen. It was indispensable that she should receive the same education as the other children, who were instructed at home, lest they should become vulgarised by her ignorance and rusticity. This was accordingly done; she was treated like one of the family; she was enabled to make an appearance befitting the companion of Edith; she was qualified for the observances, and accustomed to the luxuries of genteel life; she had thus grown up to womanhood, without any one having considered what rank she was eventually to occupy, or how she was to be disposed of, should circumstances prohibit her continued residence at Orchard Place; and as to Hetty herself, she found too much pleasure in being a lady, to venture a hint, or to drop a syllable,

that might tend to remove her from her present situation. She was exposed, however, to many of the annoyances invariably entailed upon those who occupy an undefined or inappropriate station in society. Sincerely attached to her parents, as well as to her brothers and sisters at the farm-house, upon the latter of whom she willingly and frequently bestowed such little presents and assistance as her own more fortunate condition enabled her to confer, she was nevertheless ashamed of her family, ashamed of their homely appearance, their rustic dialect, and their comparative ignorance; while she was, at the same time, vexed with herself for the unfilial feeling, which she eagerly condemned, although she could not help entertaining it. The idea of ever returning to the hardships and vulgarity of her original station, and to a society for which she was now so totally unfitted, was that from which she recoiled with the greatest repugnance; and yet she was well aware that Edith's marriage, whenever it should take place, might not improbably reduce her to

this stern necessity. Considerations of this nature were the only ones that occurred to sober, for they could not sadden, a disposition that was naturally buoyant and cheerful, almost to volatility. Her vivacity had been encouraged by Mr. Colyton, not only because he took a pleasure in it himself, but from a belief that it might exercise a beneficial influence upon his daughter, whose constitutional seriousness, so contrary to his own happy flow of spirits, seemed to him to require the exhilaration of some sprightly companion.

Nor was Hetty by any means unqualified to amuse and enliven, for her natural capacity was good; she had diligently improved her opportunities of instruction, and as females were then educated, she might be called an accomplished girl. Her personal attractions moreover were of no mean description. A remarkably fine figure, large and handsome blue eyes, a profusion of bright chesnut hair, and a laughing mouth, rendered still more joyous and pleasant by a dimple on either side, made ample atonement for

that undue ruddiness of the cheeks, and superfluous plumpness of limb, which in the opinion of some of the ill-natured critics of her own sex, betrayed palpable touches of the farmer's daughter. There were male eyes, however, which saw perhaps an additional attraction in these imputed blemishes. Young as she was, Hetty had already made a conquest, and obvious as was the danger of having so young and so attractive an inmate in the house, the sharp-sighted Mrs. Colyton had contrived completely to overlook it. Walter her eldest son, soon ceasing to regard Hetty as his handsome play-fellow, and viewing her rather as the accomplished and captivating friend of his sister than as the daughter of Farmer Chervil, began with the thoughtless inflammability of youth to become vehemently enamoured of her charms, a passion with which he found means to make her acquainted, and which the young lady, not less susceptible and inconsiderate than himself, returned with all the girlish ardour of a first love, excited by her natural anxiety to accomplish a

marriage which should secure her from the dreaded chance of ever relapsing into her original humble station.

Mr. Colyton, too indolent and unobservant, or rather too much engrossed in his own recreations and indulgences to notice this attachment, was no sooner apprised of it by his wife, who had herself made the discovery by mere accident, than he proposed that they should send Hetty back to her parents; but as his spouse justly observed that this would by no means prevent the interviews of the lovers, while it would be a great trial to Edith, in her present delicate and depressed state, to deprive her of her friend, it was finally resolved that Walter, who had always been intended for the army, should enter immediately upon his military career, and be dispatched to some regiment that was stationed at a distance from Somersetshire. His father accordingly purchased a captain's commission, a rank that was then procurable without any previous service, and sending for his son, pointed out to him the great

imprudence, totally unprovided as he was, of forming an engagement with a girl, who, however deserving she might be in other respects, was only a farmer's daughter, without a shilling of portion. Putting the commission into his son's hands, and saluting him for the first time by the title of captain, he then urged his immediate departure for London where his regiment was stationed, a measure to which the enamoured youth was bribed, rather than reconciled, by a handsome donation; and by the prospect of being thus enabled to participate in the pleasures of the capital as soon as he should reach it. Hetty was for one week indignant at his easy compliance with such unreasonable recommendations, and another week saw her inconsolable for his absence; but at the end of this time she was restored to her usual vivacity by the receipt of a letter containing vows of unalterable fidelity couched in all the ardent terms of a youthful and fervid temperament, wherein the writer declared that as love would now stimulate his professional exertions, he doubted

not that success in his new career would speedily qualify him to follow the dearest impulses of his heart, and openly claim his adored Hetty as his bride.

There was one other personage domiciliated at Orchard Place whom we must not omit to notice, although he took but little share in the proceedings of the family. This was Paul Mapletoft, an old bachelor of easy fortune, and the brother of Mrs. Colyton.

He was almost literally a book-worm, devoted to study, and not altogether undistinguished as a writer upon scientific subjects, several of his papers having been read with applause at the Royal Society. His gaunt, wild-looking figure ; his total disregard of ordinary observances in his exterior appointments ; his odd habits ; his fits of absence, in which he would sometimes commit the most ludicrous mistakes, and his custom of talking to himself in his solitary rambles, afforded, it must be confessed, some excuse for those imputations upon his sanity in which the clowns of the vicinage so freely in-

dulged. However eccentric and even *outré* might be his habitudes and appearance, he was a man of sense and learning, a pedant perhaps in semblance but not in reality, being totally free from all affectations or pretension, and having for the basis of his character a tranquil amiability, together with a marvellous fund of simplicity and *naïveté*.

Having thus hastily introduced the reader to the inmates of Orchard Place, it may not be inexpedient, in order that he may feel himself more completely at home, to afford him a passing glance at the house itself, although it presented no features of any very marked character or importance. It was a low rambling irregular structure, altered and enlarged by successive proprietors, until in the confusion of its gable ends and projections you could only guess which was the front by pitching upon that part which was opposite to the back of the premises, the latter being sufficiently indicated by a whole suburb of petty outbuildings and offices, beyond which, upon a gentle ascent, was the

extensive orchard whence the place took its name. The front garden, stretching up to the low projecting porch, was laid out, according to the prevailing French taste, in all sorts of mathematical figures, with clipped evergreens, and rectilinear gravel-walks, their central point of intersection being ornamented with a wooden sun-dial. A ragged wall of red sandstone, pierced by an iron gate, enclosed the premises, and there was a belfry on the house-top, originally intended for an alarum in case of danger, but now applied to the more pleasant and peaceful purpose of summoning the inmates to their dinner.

CHAPTER II.

Tho shall we sporten in delight,
And learn with Lettice to waxe light,
That scornefully looks askaunce ;—
Tho will we little Love awake,
That now sleepeth in Lethe lake,
And pray him leaden our dance.

The Shepheard's Calender.

THE funeral had taken place, “poor Maester Richard,” as the villagers called him, had been attended to the grave by the greater part of the squire’s household, accompanied by nearly the whole population of Weston, and the window-shutters of Orchard Place, which had for several days remained partly closed, were again thrown open, to the great joy of its master, who entertaining a mortal antipahty to gloom

and melancholy, avowed an undisguised abhorrence of dark rooms and long faces. That the living should make themselves wretched because some sick sufferer had been taken out of his misery, he considered to be at all times a glaring inconsistency; it was not therefore without impatience that he had consented to those "shows of sorrow" which are customary upon such occasions. While the house had continued partly closed up, and when he was told that propriety and decorum required him to remain within-doors until after the funeral, he had been sadly at a loss to dispose of his time, especially as the fields and the fresh air were almost as necessary to his enjoyments as to those of a bird. More than once, while the servants, who are generally most ceremonious actors of woe upon such occasions, were whispering together, or stealing about upon tiptoe with lugubrious looks, they were startled by hearing the master of the mansion cracking his hunting-whip, hallooing to his dogs, whistling a merry tune, or singing a snatch of some old

drinking-song. Upon one of these occasional lapses into his habitual mood of cheerfulness, his watchful spouse, scandalized at his forgetfulness, attempted to silence him by a quick rebuke. "Jaspar, Jaspar!" she indignantly exclaimed, "what mean these irreverent and Canaanitish sounds? Is this a merry-making in the house of Tirzah? Is it the banqueting house of the reveller, or is it the house of death and of the mourner?"

"Becky, Becky!" replied the squire, for into this endearing diminutive did he contract the name of Rebecca, "it is at all events *my* house, and consequently my castle; and if a man may not hum a tune in his own fortress, he is a Tom Otter, a Shabbaroon, a dogbolt, and not half so much his own master as a cock upon his own dunghill."

"But if you have no regard for appearances, you might surely evince some little feeling for our poor dear boy, who is now in heaven."

"Well, so I do; for his own sake, for all our sakes, I feel very glad that he *is* there; and

when a fellow is made happy by thinking that those he loved are made happier than himself, how can he show it better than by whistling a tune or singing a song? Not that I knew I was doing one or t'other, for I wasn't dreaming of Richard, poor boy! but of what a fine morning it would have been to take a canter with the dogs over the moor."

"Not a very fitting time, methinks, for such heathen thoughts as these; but you were born among the unregenerate, and will ever remain I fear, an outcast of Israel."

"May I never do an ill turn, Becky, if I don't think myself at this moment a better Christian than you; for I am grateful to Heaven for having taken our son out of his troubles, while, if I may judge by your looks, you have not yet forgiven the Lord for what you must confess to have been an act of mercy."

"Upon these points I shall not condescend to argue with one of your unrighteous notions."

"Becky, my dear, there may be an excellent reason for that."

“None of your Moabitish insinuations, Mr. Colyton; I have maintained a long argument with the Reverend Jedediah Holdworthy upon the subject of Predestination, ay, and have had the best of it too, though he would not admit it; and if I do not reason with a man of your latitudinarian notions, it is because we do not gather figs of thistles. You are the son of a cavalier, and when the fathers have eaten sour grapes, the children’s teeth are sure to be set on edge.”

“There are very few grapes that will set my teeth on edge, Becky, I promise you, especially when they have been converted into wine; and talking of that, I wonder Kit hasn’t brought the little silver tankard of warm sherry that I ordered.”

“For your own sake, my dear, you should abstain from these perilous jests, and for my sake, I must beg that you will so far consider appearances as to refrain from indecorum, and suffer our house of mourning to remain at peace.”

“Nay, Becky,” said the good-humoured

Squire, holding out his hand with a smile—
 “ I am a bad mourner, but as for peace and quietness, I’m a lamb for that ; not one of the Duke of Newcastle’s though. But prythee give me a furlough for an early canter over the moor, for I hate to go sneaking about indoors on a sunshiny morning, as if I were afraid of the bailiffs. And d’ye hear, mistress mine, do tell Kit to carry the warm sherry and the spitting-dish into the smoaking-room, for I shall take a pipe after I have been to the stables to see the dogs fed. *Mort de ma vie!* as we used to say in Flanders, one may as well be knocked on the head as moped to death, and if it were not for a cup of Clary now and then, I should have hung myself before this upon the pigeon-house post, or over the crooked pear tree. Talk of good advice ! there’s none better than that which the old song gives us—

‘ Let’s eat, drink, and play, till the worms do corrupt us,
 ’Tis certain,—*post mortem nulla voluptas,*”

So toll-de-roll, loll-de-roll loll ! ”

“ Singing again, Mr. Colyton ! really this is quite an abomination ; and so is your quoting French, considering that the whole nation are little better than a set of heathenish papists and mass-mongers.”

“ Hilts and daggers ! I had forgotten I was singing ;—but how can I help it, if my tongue has such a bad memory ? and as to my quoting French, it is as honest Latin as was ever preached by a Carmelite Friar. Truce, truce ! mistress mine. I see by the flash of your eye, that your mouth-piece is about to give report, wherefore I will incontinently betake myself to the trenches, or at all events out of earshot.” And so saying, he hurried off towards the stables, unconsciously humming to himself the remainder of the song, and breaking out into a vociferous “ Soho, boys ! yo ho !” as his favourite dogs came leaping and barking around him.

On the morning after the funeral, Hetty Chervil, who had not seen her family for some days, went over to the farm-house, which was

situated in the adjoining hamlet of Liney, to pay them a visit. “Lackadaisy!” cried one of her younger sisters as she recognized her at a distance—“shower as a gun, yonder be our Het, as black as a colley.”

“Zookers!” exclaimed another—“and zo it be! she do look for all the wordle like the parson coming out o’ tha pulpit, dwon’t she?”—and off scampered some of the youngsters, for the Chervils were a numerous family, to anticipate the cakes or little presents with which their sister usually provided herself, on these occasions. Had a stranger accompanied Hetty, he would have been struck by the contrast of the tidy well-furnished parlour at Orchard Place, and the littered appearance of the “room for all purposes” which she entered at the farmhouse, after having passed the horse-shoe nailed at the threshold. Discoloured with smoke, and smelling strongly of tobacco, the whole brick-floored apartment wore a sombre and fuliginous aspect, rendered more conspicuous by the partial housewifery which had bestowed a bright

polish upon the pewter cups and canns ranged above the fire-place. From the wooden *clavy* hung the numerous and heavy keys which had imparted this Somersetshire name to the mantelshelf. There was no other ceiling to the room than the tiled roof, supported upon heavy-cross beams, whence were suspended hams, sides of bacon, empty flasks, strings of turnips and onions, various implements of husbandry, two bird-cages containing a blackbird and a thrush, baskets of all sorts, and in short almost every thing that required to be occasionally put out of the way, and that was capable of suspension from a hook or a nail. From mere habit, for there was not a spark in the grate, an old worn-out sheep dog had stretched himself to sleep before the fire-place, and a favourite cat was nursing a numerous brood of kittens upon a bed of rushes which some of the children had made for her in a snug corner.

The human occupants of this multifarious chamber, which was luckily of spacious dimensions, consisted of the superannuated grandmo-

ther, who having almost entirely survived her faculties, sate at the window plying her spinning wheel, and rarely noticing any thing, though she frequently mumbled to herself a few indistinct sentences. Hetty's mother was carefully pouring some beer into a keg which her eldest son was holding, intending to take it with him into the field, while the father was putting on his strads, or leathern gaiters, for the purpose of accompanying him. Old Jan Chervil, the grandfather, was not present, having seated himself on a sunny bench at the back of the house, where he had remained for some time, twiddling his thumbs, quietly lost in the half-dreaming associations connected with his crutch-headed stick.

As Hetty entered the room, her brother turned so suddenly round as to spill some of the beer from the lade-pail, exclaiming at the same time, "Begummers! who'd ha' thought ha' zeeing thee, zuster, as black as our cart-horse?"

"A murrain take the bwoy!" cried the thrifty mother, too much incensed at the loss of

the beer to think of any thing else; "casn't zee thee'st thrawn down tha funnel? Dost think hops grow upon the hedges, like hurts, and that good yale is only fit to be beskummer'd about the floor, like dish water? Thee shatn't ha' a drap more, no, not if thee be'st as dry as a kexy."

"'Twardn' my fault, mother; but ye've been as cross as a fitchet, that's what ye ha', ever zunce last Hallantide, when we had a sheep stole."

"Come, come Madge," said the husband, "dwon't ye be sa snippy about a thimmul-full o' beer; the lad cood na help it."

"Snippy, Tummas! theease be hord times, and gif we 'ood sar a penny, we mustn't mar a penny. The trubagully bwoy be always a slottering about a zummat or anorra that 'a shoodn'."

"Well now, Madge, dwon't ye be begrumped any moor, when thee ought to be bonny and blissom, zunce Hetty be acome ta zee us. She do look like a zweet maid in her vine new

mourning, dwon't she? Come, my pretty lass, give thy vather a kiss—that 's it—and another on t'other zide. Lord love ye, Het, I niver zeed ony one look more like a born lady, tho'f I zay't that shoodn' zay't. What'll ye take a'ter thy walk? a vew broth, a bit o' figg'd pudding, or zum potted dewberries wi' a curst o' barley-bread and a draught o' yale? Thee woostn't take nought? well then, tell us the news, my zweet maid; how do they all goo an up at Orchard Place, zunce poor maister Richard war laid in the pit-hole?"

“Why, father, the house looks like itself again; the windows are thrown open, the wind and the cheerful sunshine are let into the rooms, and we are all beginning to resume our old occupations. The Squire mounted Roan Rupert immediately after breakfast this morning, and scampered off towards the moor, hallooing and shouting to his dogs, and as glad to get loose as a boy to escape from school. Mrs. Colyton, who seems endeavouring to forget her sorrows by bustling about as much as possible, is setting

every thing to rights, and giving orders to Christopher for a new brewing; and Mr. Mapletoft, who seldom thinks of aught but his books, is ensconced in his library. Poor Edith, however, I am sorry to say, has hardly noticed any thing since her brother's death, but sits silently in her own room, looking vacantly out of window, or gazing upon the floor, while she plucks and twitches her fingers by the hour together, without seeming to know what she is about. She was once before in this melancholy moping way, and her mother, who says she is more likely to recover her spirits if left entirely to herself, will not let me attempt to amuse or console her."

"Lord love ye!" cried the father, who doated upon Hetty, and was inordinately proud of her acquirements, "how purty and how lissome the lass do talk, dwon't she, Madge, jist vor all the wordle like the best o' the gennelvolk? Poor Miss Edith! but sh'ool come to avore long, niver fear."

"Aw, it's a dirdful thing," added the mo-

ther, “when girls do get grumpy and down-hearted o’ thic fashion; but I tell ’ee what, Hetty, thee shall show her the piece o’ writing our Ned ha’ jist vinished; gif that dwon’t rouse her up a bit, and make her bobbish, she must be desperd bad indeed. Aw, our Ned’s the bwoy to write and to summy, be the tutheram where they will. I’ll vetch his piece vor ’ee.”

Though the thrifty dame had scolded Ned for spilling a small portion of the beer, he was after all her favourite child, and she was quite as proud of his writing and summing, rather rare accomplishments in those days for a farmer’s son, as her husband was of Hetty’s superior gentility and acquirements.—“There!” exclaimed the exulting mother, unrolling the boasted specimen of caligraphy—“what zay to thic? theest nivir zeed the likes on’t, a b’leeve; no, nor Miss Edith nither, and I’m cartain shower the sight on’t ’ool do her a gir’d’l o’ good. Now, Hetty, when ye show this ta the Squire, ye may ax a small matter in return. It’s time ye should be a-doing zummat for your

vamily, or else it's no use you're ha'ing the run o' rack and manger at Orchit Place, and zo, I ha' o'ten told 'ee. Mrs. Colyton be hond and glove wi' the Bishop, down at Wells, and the Squire do know the Judge that comes ta our Hizy Prizy 'Sizes. Why couldn't 'em speak to booath, and tell'n how cute a scholard our Ned be, and how 'a can write and summy, and shear ditch, and thatchy, and haymaky, and milk tha cows gif there be need o't, and do all mander o' things. Fags! I shoodn' wonner gif they made'n a girt mon zome time, vor they won't zoon vind sich another, a b'leeve, and wordn' it a pity he shood lose his prefarment, jist for want o' axing?"

Although she could not help smiling at her mother's simplicity, Hetty declared her readiness to promote her brother's advancement by every means in her power, and cheerfully bestowed her praises upon the penmanship, which, in addition to his genius for ditching, thatching, haymaking, and milking, was to procure for Ned some dignified station, either in the church

or the law, it mattered not which. While she was thus occupied, one of her younger sisters, deceived by the patches which Hetty wore in compliance with the then existing fashion, exclaimed—"Lockyzee! there be two black vlies upon our Het's veace! Gee 'em a touse, Het, an' hike 'em off."

"Dear hort! dear hort!" cried another, stroking down the sister's garments with a look of childish wonderment—"What smart clawthes our Het ha' got, as vine as vippence, and what swankin' ruffles do hang down from her elbow, and all as black as if she 'd been a zweeping the chimley!"

"And a black van in her hand," cried another urchin, "ta keep the summer-voy from spwiling her veace."

At this juncture, Margaret, the second sister, a girl, who had a natural turn for drollery, and whose jealousy had been piqued at the sight of the handsome mourning, came sailing and flaunting into the room, having hastily dressed herself up to imitate, or rather to ridicule, as well

as she could, the sable appointments of Hetty. A black tarpawling loosely enveloped her body, her father's slouch hat, pinned up on one side, was poised jauntily upon her head, two large dabs of black paint represented the cheek patches, and as she sidled forwards, she fanned herself affectedly with a dark rabbit-skin cap, belonging to one of her brothers. As soon as the shriek of laughter, occasioned by this fantastical disguise, had subsided, Margaret, who had continued all the time swimming about, and curtsying with a mock ceremony, exclaimed—“ Fags ! why shouldn't I be a vine lady as well as Madam Hetty ? I can wamble like a mallard, instead o' walking straight forrard ; I can fan mysel' when I bain't whot ; I can hondle a patch-box wi' a pretty air,”—she conceitedly twirled about a tobacco-box, with which she had provided herself—“ and what's more, I know that the Vrench vor good morning, is *bong swor*, and so, ladies and gennelmen, I have the honour ta wish ye all good bwye ; vor, as I be a vine lady, I be goeing ta the Cat and

Fiddle ta zee Jem Chubb and Joe Seeley play a bout o' skittles. Billy! hauld up my train, casn't? a vine lady, you know, must always have a page to hippety-hoppety behind her."—Billy, willingly lending himself to the joke, held up the extremity of the tarpawling; and thus lacqueyed, Margaret paraded once more round the room, ducking and diving to every one she encountered, dropped a most profound and ceremonious curtsey at the door, and disappeared, to the accompaniment of another peal of laughter.

"Lors love us all!" cried the mother, holding her sides, for she was well-disposed to relish a little bantering at Hetty's expense—"who'd goo to Bedgwater, and gee zixpence ta zee the player volk, when they may stay at huom, an' zee our Meg for a nought. Aw, she be a rare lass, zummat hearam-skearum amaybe, in her haydigees, but as hard a worker, vor all that, as 'ere a choor-woman in all Zomersetshire."

"Well, well, Madge, let's ha' done wi' this litter and stuff," said her husband, who was

by no means equally well pleased at the attempt to turn his favourite into ridicule, "we're not aplaying May-games yet, nor gooin' ta ride Skimmerton. I suppaws. A'ter all Meg 'll niver come anigh her zuster, that's my verdict, and therevore, I zay't."

"Meg ha' niver been abroke in vor't, like she, tha more 's tha pity; but vor all that she do look desperd striking in her Zunday donnins."

"Hetty, my zweet maid," said the father, "what 's come o' your old playfellow the captain? you ha'n't a told us nought about 'n."

"La, father!" cried the daughter, somewhat confused at the question, for her family knew nothing of the attachment and mutual engagement subsisting between them, "I thought I had mentioned that the squire got a letter from him last week, and that he had joined his regiment in London."

"Well, he war a lissome lad, and always had a strout in's walk, vor all the wordle like a sodger. But we must hike off ta field, how-

somever. Ned, thy mother zays bin thee canst scrawl a bit wi' a pen, thee shouldst be a lord-keeper, or a bishop, or a judge, or a deputy common-councilman, or zome sich girt chap as thic, but vor tha present thee must bundle off wi' me to sheer the thistles out o'tha ten yaeres."

"Ees, vather, and ye'll spit up the zenvy out o' tha parrick field, 'on't ye?"

"Aw, Ned, that's what I'ool. Well, good bwy, Hetty, good bwy! thee'dst better take a bisky and a horn o'yale avore thee go'st, vor there be a gir'd'l o' doust vleering about tha ruads, and I'm shower thee must be adrowthy."

The farmer and his son, the latter carrying the little cask of beer slung at the end of his spitter, or weeding hoe, now set off to join the men in the fields, and Hetty having chatted for some time longer with the remainder of her family, took her departure for Orchard Place. "Het! Het! d'won't ye rumple tha piece," was bawled after her by her mother who had carefully rolled and tied up her son's *chef-d'œuvre*,

“and dwon’t ye let any o’ tha gennelvolk spwile it, vor thay ’on’t zoon zee sich another, a b’leeve.”

On her arrival at home Hetty hastened to make the necessary alterations in her dress, and then proceeded into the dining-room where she found Mr. and Mrs. Colyton, the former of whom had no sooner caught sight of her than he exclaimed, “Ah! that’s what I like to see. A plump wench with a light tread and a light heart, a merry eye and a rosy cheek, for which latter, Hetty, you may thank the fresh air of the fields. Zooks! I fancy that I myself look ten years younger, and I’m sure that I feel so, since I took a gallop over the moor which has given me a hunter’s appetite. Why doesn’t the bell ring? If my stomach speaks a syllable of truth it must be dinner time. I shall not spare our meal, Becky, I promise you, and when I have quieted these intestine commotions, the only ones about which a wise man will trouble his head, I shall be ready for my slippers, my easy chair, a bottle of cool claret, and my afternoon’s nap, hey! what say you mistress mine?”

“ I told Christopher not to ring the bell for fear of disturbing Edith, who complains of her head, and is trying to compose herself to sleep.”

“ Adso ! I had quite forgotten poor Edith. Has not the silly chit given over moping yet ? Tush ! this is a foolish wilfulness, which I hate, unless when it leads a girl to be blithe and buxom, cheerful and chirruping, freakish and frolicsome. You have been her instructress, Becky, and should have taught her more resignation.”

“ You forget that she is ill, as well as unhappy ; but I doubt not that two or three nights’ refreshing sleep will restore her usual frame of mind.”

“ Which is always a cup too low to please me. Well, since she is not coming to join us, we may as well order dinner, for I shall not fancy the chine if it is a minute overdone.”

“ Jaspar, my dear, why will you attach such importance to these creature comforts ?”

“ Because when the creature comes to be turned of fifty, these are the best comforts that

are left to him. When I was a lusty young cavalier, I liked nothing better than to be armed with back, breast and head-piece, to be mounted on a trusty charger, and to tilt at the first enemy that came to hand; and when I doff'd my harness, who so ready as the gallant Jaspas Colyton to make love to all the donzellas and Dulcineas, from a duchess to a Bona Roba? Mars has given me the go-by, and Hymen's torch has put out Cupid's; but Bacchus sticks to me like a leech, and by all the flasks and flaggons in Christendom! I will be a leech myself, so long as I can suck the blood of the grape. For the sack of a town I have no longer any fancy, the sack that is worn by a belle tempts me no more, but for your sherry's sack my taste is stronger than ever, and therefore will I sing to the last, in the words of Frank Beaumont—

'Of all the juice
 Which the gods produce,
 Sack shall be preferred before 'em;
 'Tis sack that shall
 Create us all,
Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, virorum.

“And what will your sack bring you to in the end, unless it be to sackcloth and ashes?” asked Mrs. Colyton, committing an unconscious pun. “Ah, Jaspar! you live as if you were never to die, and I fear you will die as if you were never to live.”

“*Mort de ma vie!* mistress mine, I shall never live to die in the regular way, but be brought to an empty and untimely end unless I incontinently swallow an elixir vitæ in the shape of dinner. Hah! here comes Kit to announce it. *Allons, mes enfans, à la gloire,* as I once heard a Frenchman say, just before he was knocked on the head. Shall I show you the way?—This is the only sort of storming party that I now like to head, where we have dinner benches instead of hungry trenches, and a full dish instead of an empty ditch. Forwards!”

“But we cannot go down-stairs till brother Paul has joined us. I called him myself, and he will be here in a few minutes.”

“Then he will the sooner follow us. Our

dinner would give us but a cold welcome were we to wait for him; and if hunger will eat its way through a stone wall, it may well stand excused for making the best of its way down stairs." With these words the Squire,—who in spite of his unfailing good-humour, and even of an imposing appearance of courtesy in his demeanour, was a mere sensualist, and one of the most selfish of mortals,—bowed politely to his companions, hastened to the dinner-table, and made an immediate attack upon the viands.

"Sister, did you want me?—methought I heard you knock at my door," said Paul Mapletoft, entering shortly after they had begun their meal, with spectacles on his nose, a pen in one hand, and a half-written sheet of paper in the other.—"What! how! hey! are you at dinner? Goodnow! I protest I thought we had all dined some time ago."

"Why, Mapletoft," cried the Squire—"if you did not carry a card in your waistcoat pocket to refer to, I believe you would sometimes forget your own name, and lose all recol-

lection of your being alive, were we not occasionally to vivify your memory. I never knew one of these studious abstracted fellows that was good for much out of his own study."

"When you cast general reflections of this sort, Jaſpar," said the wife, "I presume you mean to except the present company."

"If I did it wouldn't benefit Mapletoft, for he is one of the absent company. How! mistress mine, said I not well?"

"Paul is not absent from the want of thought, however, like some of the staring, muddled, phlegmatic drones of our acquaintance, but from an excess of it. Whenever his mind wanders from us, we may be assured that it is employed upon subjects more worthy its consideration."

"That can hardly be the case just now," said the Squire, helping himself liberally to the best part of the chine, and then pushing it on to his neighbour,—“for there is a noble joint before him, a couple of chickens within carving distance, a bottle of claret on one side of him,

and a tankard of toasted ale on the other, and I know not therefore how his thoughts can be better employed, unless they can pour nectar and ambrosia down his throat."

"*Nectar et ambrosiam, latices epulasque Deorum,*" cried Mapletoft, rubbing his hands suddenly together with the delight usually elicited by any classical reminiscence. "Ambrosia was supposed to confer immortality upon those who tasted it;—now if a mortal were to steal and devour some of this celestial food, and Jupiter were to condemn him to death for the offence, how would he carry his own sentence into execution? Hah! A puzzling consideration for the Olympian Jack Ketch. And if the liquid Nectar possessed the same quality, could a man be drowned in it? A knotty case! a knotty case!"

"He is upon Mount Olympus at this very moment," cried the Squire, "and has clean forgotten Orchard House, the chickens, and the chine, and, what's more amazing, the claret too."

“ I beg your pardon—I am quite at home, I assure you, and ready to do ample justice to this goodly viand. Sister, shall I help you? Hetty, you have nothing upon your plate.”

“ You exaggerate Paul’s little habits of abstraction,” said Mrs. Colyton, addressing her husband.—“ He never forgets what relates to others, though he may not always remember to take care of number one, in which respect you are too apt to offer a contrast to him.”

“ Kit!” said Mapletoft, who had cut two or three delicate slices, laid them on a plate, and handed them to the servant,—“ take these upstairs to Mr. Richard. The poor lad is fond of chine, and, I dare say, will be able to pick a bit in spite of his illness.”

His companions stared at him as he spoke, and then looked at one another in painful amazement. “ Paul! Paul!” angrily exclaimed his sister, “ how can you trifle thus with our feelings? Surely, surely, you cannot have forgotten that ——”

“ Oh no! he never forgets what relates to

others," interposed the Squire, as he shrugged his shoulders.

"What! how! hey!" ejaculated Mapletoft, with a bewildered expression—"Goodnow! I beseech you to forgive me—truly it had quite escaped me that the poor dear boy died yesterday."

"Was buried yesterday, you mean," said Hetty—"you *must* remember that you attended the funeral."

"And so I did, I vow and protest. Poor boy! poor boy! Rebecca—Jaspar—Hetty!—I beg your pardon!—I beg your pardon!"—Fixing his eyes upon his plate, that he might escape the reproaching looks of his sister, Mapletoft addressed himself perseveringly to his dinner, and, for fear of making any fresh mistakes, scarcely uttered another syllable during the remainder of the meal. When it was concluded, he returned to his study, anxious to escape from the raillery of his brother-in-law, who loved to banter him upon his eccentricities.

“ My dear,” said Mr. Colyton, stretching himself and yawning, as soon as he was left alone with his wife—“ I’m very uneasy about Edith, *very*, and I have been thinking—pah ! this wine gets thick at the bottom—thinking, that if you don’t rouse her up a bit, the poor child will mope herself out of her wits.”

“ Prythee, Jaspar, leave all that to me. You must be aware that I understand the management of a family much better than you can pretend to do.”

“ As, for instance, Becky, it was your superior forethought and wisdom that educated a handsome farmer’s daughter with our son Walter, on purpose that he might fall in love with her as he grew up.”

“ But was it not I who counselled your immediately sending him into the army ?”

“ Why, I must confess, that you had prudence and penetration enough to shut the door after the steed was stolen.—Push me the sherry, will you ?—It was your good housewifery that nearly occasioned Orchard Place to be burnt

down last spring, because you would defer sweeping the parlour chimney until we had left off fires. It was your improvements in the granary that spoiled me thirty quarters of wheat; and it was your economy in the stable that lost us two fine horses, by feeding them on damaged forage. My favourite roan Rupert would have followed them, had I not taken the management of him into my own hand."

"I have no spirits to argue with you, Mr. Colyton,—my feelings are too much wounded by our recent loss. Alas! when I am suffering as a bereaved mother, it is hard to endure additional vexation from the unkindness of a husband."

"Gad! Becky! I never meant to be unkind, and it would hurt me deeply if I thought ——" Seeing that his wife had left the room, the Squire, instead of following up this seemingly affectionate exordium, put on his slippers, adjusted himself in his easy chair, smoked a pipe, finished his cool bottle of claret, and began to

hum and mumble to himself as he yawned and stretched—

“ This is the wine,
Which in former time
Each wise one of the Magi
Was wont to carouse,
In a frolicsome blouse,
Recubans sub tegmine fagi.”

At the conclusion of which, he closed his eyes, and fell so fast asleep, that he was not even disturbed by his own loud snoring.

CHAPTER III.

O answer me :

Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cearments;—why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws
To cast thee up again.

HAMLET.

AS the smallest personal indulgence was an object of importance in the opinion of Mr. Colyton, strict orders had been given to his household that they should never disturb him in the enjoyment of his evening's nap, an injunction which was so well obeyed upon the present occasion, that he continued his *siesta*, dreaming of dogs, horses, tankards of spiced sherry, and such other similar luxuries as en-

grossed the greater share of his waking meditations, until it became quite dusk, when his slumbers were not less suddenly than alarmingly broken by a hubbub in the hall, and the loud screams of a female. Starting up and snatching his rapier from its scabbard, the bewildered squire rushed to the scene of disturbance, where to his utter amazement he beheld his wife struggling in the arms of two peasants, and shrieking as if for help. In the confusion of his half-awakened faculties he concluded that they were attempting to convey her forcibly away from the house, under which impression he instantly raised his weapon and was about to deal a perilous blow on the head of one of the supposed assailants, when the man, falling on his knees and disclosing the well-known features of an honest labourer in the village, cried out with no small alarm, "War the diggons, squire! dwon't ye cut at me wi' thic girt sword. I'se Teddy Chubb, and theeas be Bill Coomb, dwon't ye knaw us?"

"Chubb! Coomb! how came you here?"

—what's the meaning of all this? and whither were you dragging Mrs. Colyton?" enquired the squire, rubbing his eyes and lowering his weapon, which, however, he still firmly grasped.

"There—zoftly—zo! let her down upon the groun', vor tha poor lady ha' zwounded away agin," said Teddy, addressing his companion; and then turning to the squire he continued, "Lookee, Maester, gif you 'll put up your whinyard Ise tell ye the whol tote o' the story, but I 'ont tell ye anought gif ye keep it whivering avore me o' thic vashion—I 'ont, begummers!"

The squire sheathed his rapier, and the peasant resumed,—“Why, ye zee, squoire, Bill Coomb and I were hiking huom to Weston a'ter vinishing our work, when jist as we came to the church-yord, I zeed a zummat tottling along among tha grave-stwons. Bill zeed 'n too, and propauzed that we should hirn round a t'other zide tha church, bin he war a little matter timmersom or zo; but, says I, 'Bill,'

says I, 'thic can't be a gwust or else 'twould be as white as a whimming-sheet, and theeas be as black as a crow, and may be 'tis as good a Christian soul as you and I.'—'Sim like it,' says Bill, 'but I bain't gooing to play blind-duck-and-Davy wi' a witch, or a Joan-in-the-wad, and I look ou 't thic be one or t'uither.' Well, squoire, while we were a colloguing together, the crittur dodder'd out o' tha gate-shord, and fell durn in tha ruad wi' a dismal groan. Zo then I gee Bill a pog wi' my elbow, and says I, 'Bill, thic 's a flesh and blood 'ooman, I 'll take my woth, zo let 's g'auver to her, and zee what 's the matter.' Bill didn't much vancy tha job, but 'a went wi' me, and cartain shower it war a lady that had zwounded away as dead as ditch-water ; but, zuggers ! how we did stare when we hulved her auver, and looked in her veace and vound it war Mistress Colyton ! Zo we raught her up, took her atween us, and vetched her to Orchit Place, and as zoon as we came to the hall she began to zuffy a bit, and opened her eyes, and looked about her in a sort

of mizmaze, and then off she went screeching and struggling vor all the wordle as if she war betwattled, and the hollabeloo vetched ye out wi' your cutlash in your hon'; and zo, squoire, thic be the whol tote o' tha story."

By the time Teddy Chubb had concluded his narrative, Hetty and two or three of the servants had rushed into the hall, followed by Harper, Mrs. Colyton's maid, carrying a large bottle of Hungary water. The latter personage, assuming an air of great importance, and pushing the others aside, bustled forwards, declaring that having once before seen her mistress in hysterics, and knowing by the manner of her cries that she was suffering under an attack of the same nature, she had run for the Hungary water, than which nothing was more efficacious in cases of fits or swoons. "You may be certain this is the genuine," said the Abigail, showing the bottle to her master, "by the picture of the Queen of Hungary labelled on the outside, and to be sure it is quite wonderful what cures it has performed! There was a cousin of my own, Nancy Larkins—"

“Sdeath! wench,” cried the Squire, sharply, “none of your nonsense about Nancy Larkins, but support your mistress while I pour some of your nostrum down her throat, though for my own part I should think a drop of Dick’s cordial a much better thing.”

“O dear no, Sir, there’s nothing like Hungary water; the Duchess of Portsmouth always used it, and so does Mistress Sedley, the King’s Madam, that has now been made Countess of Dorchester, and the Queen herself whenever she—but see, Sir, my mistress opens her eyes, she is recovering—you had better leave her to us; Miss Chervil and Betty the housemaid will help me to get her into her own room. Don’t be alarmed, Sir, it’s nothing but hysterics; mistress is coming about, and I dare say will be as well as ever in half an hour.”

“Poor thing, poor thing! take care of her,” said the Squire; “and send for Mr. Vervain if she don’t get better,”—and then returning towards the parlour he continued, “though it was very thoughtless and unfeeling of her, I must say, to startle me in that manner, and

wake me out of such a nice nap, and such pleasant dreams. For my part I can't think how people can be so selfish. Very extraordinary what can have occasioned her fainting by the church-yard, or what can have taken her thither at all; but I suppose I shall hear it all explained in good time." Yawning and stretching himself, he took two or three turns up and down the dim parlour, and then opening the window, whistled to some of his dogs, who, being accustomed to this unceremonious mode of entrance, leaped into the room, regardless of the dirty footmarks which had often afforded a subject of complaint to the tidy mistress of the mansion. With these four-footed favourites he continued playing for some time, when having heard nothing farther about Mrs. Colyton, he strolled up-stairs to Mapletoft's library to communicate to him the strange occurrence in the hall, and the mysterious statement of Teddy Chubb.

On entering the apartment he found its inmate standing on a stool, holding a candle in his hand, which, however, he had forgotten to light, and groping with the aid of his spectacles

for some volume of which he was in need. "Body o' me! Paul," exclaimed his visitant, laughing at the grotesque figure before him, "take care you don't set fire to your wig."

"What! how! hey!" cried the student, starting, and looking at the candle, "Good-now! I protest you must be joking, for lo! the candle has gone out."

"Kept out you mean, for I can see that it has never been lighted."

"No more it has, as I hope to be saved! Of a surety I must have quite forgotten it. I had been reading Sir Isaac Newton's lately published treatise upon the Theory of Light—"

"Until you thought you could do without it, and that accounts for my finding you in the dark. But prythee descend from your stool, and tell me whether you, or your friend and correspondent Sir Isaac, can throw any light upon the story I have to tell you. You heard the screaming, I presume."

"Screaming! when? where? Truly now, brother, I do not recollect to have noticed any thing of the sort."

“And truly, Paul, I am not surprised at it, for when you are buried among your books I don't believe you would hear a volley of musquetry any more than the dead soldier over whose grave it is sometimes fired.”

“Verily now, I cannot think it. It is recorded indeed of Archimedes, that when Syracuse was taken by storm—”

“A fico for Archimedes! he has no more to do with our present purpose than roan Rupert, or Ponto the spaniel; so sit ye down, good Paul, sit ye down and listen.” The Squire having first adjusted himself comfortably in the easy chair, and left the student to seat himself where he could, proceeded to disburthen himself of the tale he had to communicate, which in its relation affected the auditor much more sensibly than the narrator. Beneath the apparent coldness of Mapletoft's disposition, and the occasional wandering and abstraction of his manner, there was much sensibility of temperament, great kindness towards all his fellow creatures, and an especial affection for

his sister. It was difficult to fix his attention, but when once his feelings were touched, his heart presently chased away those reveries of the head in which he was so often lost, and his genuine character displayed itself, if not in a complete self-possession, at least in a considerate tenderness, of which he would at other times appear to be utterly incapable. Learning, in answer to his anxious enquiry, that Mr. Vervain the apothecary had not been sent for, he hastily put on his hat, declaring that he would himself run to bring him, and that after his sister had received such professional assistance as might be required, and her mind had become a little tranquillized, they would question her as to the occurrence by which she had been so alarmingly agitated and overcome.

“I myself told them to send for Vervain if he were required,” said the squire; “but you may as well step over to him, and don’t forget to take Keeper with you, for it is now dark, and you are but a buzzard, you know, even in the day-time.”

Keeper, with whom our readers may hereafter become better acquainted, was a most intelligent old spaniel, who had received his name from his generally acting as a companion and guardian to Mapletoft in his solitary rambles about the neighbourhood. The Squire was going in search of this canine superintendant, and Paul was about to hurry down-stairs, when Harper the maid presented herself at the door of the library, stating that her mistress, who was now much more composed, thanks to the Hungary water, though still very low and hippish, requested to see them immediately in her own room. Proceeding thither accordingly, they found Mrs. Colyton reclining in an arm chair, her limbs trembling, her countenance pale with exhaustion, and still wearing an expression of great mental perturbation. "You may leave the room, Harper," she said in a faint voice, which the inquisitive maid thought she might well pretend not to hear, and stealing on tip-toe to another part of the chamber, where she expected to be unobserved, began to busy her-

self silently about the drawers. Her mistress, however, who had followed her with her eye, repeated the injunction in a louder tone, at the same time pointing to the door, so that Mrs. Harper was fain to quit the apartment, a disappointment of her curiosity to which she would have submitted with a much worse grace, but that she had resolved beforehand to peep through the keyhole, and listen outside to every thing that might pass within the chamber.

“Hetty, my dear,” said Mrs. Colyton when her other visitants were seated, “I hope poor Edith has not been disturbed by my outcries.”

“She had just composed herself to sleep,” replied Hetty, “when I last ventured into her room, and if she had heard you, I take it for granted that she would have rung the bell to enquire the cause.”

“Jaspar! brother! Hetty!” resumed Mrs. Colyton with a marked earnestness of manner. “I must entreat beforehand that not a word of what I am about to utter be divulged to Edith, in the present state of whose mind so frightful

a communication as I am about to make, especially as it bears relation to our dear deceased Richard, might produce the most disastrous and appalling effects. Give me another minute to collect myself, for I hardly feel strength and courage enough to recite the tale.”—After a pause, followed by a deep sigh, or rather groan, that betokened much agony of spirit, Mrs. Colyton resumed in a tone and manner that were rendered exceedingly solemn by the palpable intensity and agitation of her feelings.—“ My dear friends! I am sorry that I have thus alarmed you, I shall be still more so should I shock you by what I am going to relate, but I believe that I am shortly about to die, for I have seen a sight which is seldom revealed to mortals, except when they are shortly to be removed to another and a better world. You are amazed—you gaze upon me with enquiring looks, and I will not keep you any longer in suspense. I have seen the ghost of our poor departed Richard !”

“ Richard’s ghost !” simultaneously exclaimed

her three companions, “where — when — how?”

“Sick in body, and depressed in spirits,” continued Mrs. Colyton, “probably from my long confinement in the house, I walked out this evening, and finding myself, I scarcely know how, at the entrance of the church-yard, I passed in, and turned towards the spot where our poor boy was buried. As I approached I heard the voice of some one moaning and weeping, and looking towards the grave I saw a figure seated upon it. Startled, and even somewhat dismayed as I was, I drew nearer—nearer still, when suddenly my heart smote against my bosom with a great throb of terror, and I felt the whole mass of my blood curdle in my veins as I recognized the figure, and could even distinguish the habiliments of our poor son! The apparition lifted up its head, and I saw the well-known features of my deceased Richard—saw them distinctly, and heard him at the same time sob and weep. I could behold no more; bewildered and aghast I staggered into the road, and know not what subsequently occurred, until

I found myself surrounded by the family in our own hall."

Overcome by the recollection of the horror she had experienced, and exhausted by the effort she had made in reciting her adventure, Mrs. Colyton fell back in the chair as she finished her relation, burst into an hysterical passion of tears, and as her agitation subsided appeared to be again upon the point of fainting away. Hetty fanned her, and held salts to her nose; Mapletoft took her hand, and pressed it between his own exclaiming—"Goodnow, sister! I beseech you to be comforted—dearest sister, I cannot bear to see you weep! I protest she is fainting." He let go her hand, walked two or three times hastily up and down the room in profound tribulation, and then suddenly bethinking himself of the apothecary, he bolted out of the chamber, and ran to Weston without either waiting for his hat or for the four-footed companion that usually took charge of him whenever he quitted the house.

"Becky, my dear," said the Squire, seeing

that his wife was recovering from her momentary stupor—"why do you give way to such needless terrors, and make us all uncomfortable by your fits and frustrations. Body o' me! I'll lay a hundred golden Jacobuses to a Parliament farthing that this is all a delusion of your own mind, and I can tell you how it happened. You confess that you were ill in health and depressed in spirits; you had been thinking of nothing but your son, and when you reached his grave in the dusk of evening, your overwrought feelings, and excited imagination might easily embody him forth to your mind's eye. I have heard of such things fifty times, but as to real ghosts I don't believe in them."

"Jaspar! Jaspar!" said the wife shaking her head reproachfully—"you have little faith in any thing; you never believed in Dr. Oates, nor the popish plots, nor the dark designs of the present Roman Government. You are in a reprobate, unregenerate state, or you would surely recollect how often such visions are mentioned in the Bible, and could not have for-

gotten how the witch of Endor conjured up the apparition of Samuel. In our own times did not the Duke of Buckingham's father appear more than once after his death, and does not Glanvil record ——”

“Tush, Becky! in all these cases, whether true or false, there has always been some good reason assigned for the restlessness of the deceased, but why shouldn't our poor boy remain quietly in his grave? and why should he weep and sob? He was regularly attended till he died by Mr. Vervain; Doctor Brown came over to see him twice a-week from Bridgwater, at no small expense; he had every word of the usual service read over him by parson Hewlett; he can have no sins to answer for in the other world, no secrets to reveal in this, and I am quite sure therefore that he wouldn't do any thing so unhandsome as to come and worry and frighten all his friends that were so kind to him, especially just at this moment when we are beginning to get comfortable again, and going to have our great brewing and all. I'm

sure I should consider it very undutiful of him were he to attempt any thing of the sort. Why, if he were to haunt Orchard Place, it would drive us all out of it, and we should neither be able to sell nor to let it; I'm confident the kind-hearted youth wouldn't do us such an injury, and therefore I say once more, your senses have been deceived, and that which you fancied you saw was only the coinage of your imagination."

"Jaspar, I saw him twice—I heard him twice—two senses assured me that his figure was actually sitting upon the grave; and no power on earth shall convince me that I was mistaken. I had my faculties about me, for I remember that I dropped my scarf in my hasty retreat, and I desire that some one may be sent to search for it, if neither Chubb nor Coomb found it and brought it back. It cost me twenty-two shillings and was nearly new. I should not wonder if I lost it, for misfortunes never come single. Heigho! Heaven grant that the vision be not sent to punish you for

your impenitence, as well as to warn me to set my face Zionward, and prepare for joining the company of the elect in the great world of spirits. Ah, Jaspar! when I am laid beside our poor boy!"

"Tush, Becky! it will be many a year, I hope, before that happens; but when you are, I hope you will keep him by your side, and not suffer him to break prison, as you imagine him to have now done, and frighten folks out of their wits."

"When I am gone, Jaspar, you will find what it is to have lost a good manager; and talking of losses again reminds me of my scarf, pray enquire about it. Every thing, I fear, will then go to sixes and sevens at Orchard Place. You must keep a sharp eye upon Walter, for young men in the army are apt to be prodigal."

"But Captain Colyton is not like other young men," interposed Hetty, speaking for the first time; "he was always remarkably prudent; indifferent, perhaps, about money, but not at all given to extravagance."

“O, Hetty, are you there? Have you seen any thing of my scarf? No;—then I charge you to send in search of it, for as you were with me when I bought it at Bridgwater; you cannot have forgotten that it cost me twenty-two shillings. And, my dear Jaspar, don't let Christopher go down into the cellar, but give out the wine with your own hands; and prythee be tender and forbearing with our poor Edith, for I am very unhappy about the state of her mind;—and suffer not Will to give the skim milk to the dogs, for bran and pollard with a little dripping will answer the purpose, and the milk is excellent for fattening pigs; and always keep my dear brother Paul in the house, taking special care never to quarrel with him, for I have good reason to believe that he has left the whole of his fortune to our children. Heigho! it would comfort me much to have the prayers of the Reverend Jedediah Holdworthy, for, albeit that I am not with him on the subject of predestination, and indeed clearly confuted him in our last argument together, though he would not

confess it, yet do I hold him to be a sound divine, and one of the inheritors of grace and election. And, harkee, Jaspas, keep the key of the granary yourself, and measure out the oats for the horses with your own hand, for if you attend not to this, I'm sure I shall never sleep in my grave."

"Od's heart, Becky! sooner than that I'll count out every grain, for there's nothing I hate worse myself than to be disturbed in my sleep. When you woke me so thoughtlessly this afternoon it's a mercy I hadn't done some mischief to Teddy Chubb with my rapier. But what has possessed you with this strange notion of dying when you are as well as ever you were in all your life? I hate talking upon such subjects, it makes a fellow so low."

"The vision was a warning!—the vision was a warning! I accept it as such: but my lamp is trimmed, and I have kept my light burning; and I hope you will imitate my example, and recollect, before it is too late, that the wages of sin is death.—And, talking of wages, you pay

Christopher a great deal too much ; he is too great a merry-andrew to be a good servant, though I know you like him for that foolery ; and, moreover, he is wasteful and a scatterling, and I hope you will discharge him. Harper, my maid, you will of course dismiss ; it was my intention to have sent her away shortly, for I have latterly had reason to believe that she is a gigleting hussey, and little better than she should be."

That listeners seldom hear any good of themselves was abundantly confirmed in the present instance, for the abigail in question, whose ear was at the key-hole, caught every word of the latter remark, and immediately flung away from her post in prodigious dudgeon, more incensed at the disparaging observations she had heard, because she felt conscious that she deserved them. Mr. and Mrs. Colyton continued their conversation pretty much in the strain we have already recorded until the arrival of Mr. Vervain, the apothecary, when the former left the chamber, after having been strictly charged by

his spouse to make immediate and strict inquiries respecting the missing scarf. Instead of obeying this injunction, however, he invited Mapletoft to accompany him to the parlour, declaring himself to have been so much hurried, and flurried, and worried, that he must recruit his spirits by a snack and a bottle of claret.

“Paul,” said the squire, as he tossed off the first glass and smacked his lips relishingly, “do you not agree with me as to the probable cause of this imaginary vision? I have no faith, not I, in ghosts, spectres, and apparitions; or else why should we say that a fellow gives up the ghost as soon as ever he dies?”

“Goodnow, brother, the existence of disembodied spirits is a *vexata questio* that has been agitated in every age and never decided; for however it may appear to have been disproved, it has never been disbelieved. The reality of the spectre that appeared to Brutus at Philippi was doubted by none at the time of its occurrence; and in our own days have we not numerous staunch believers in the twenty-six modern

ghost-stories adduced by Glanvil, in his *Sadducismus Triumphans*? whereof I have the new edition in my library, with an appendix on the Nature of a Spirit, translated from the two last chapters of More's *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*. The ancients had no doubts upon the subject, for though I am not aware that they had any Owen Glendower who could 'call spirits from the vasty deep,' there were many, as you probably well know, who like the Mœris, mentioned in Virgil's eighth eclogue, had the power *imis animas excire sepulcris*,—to conjure up ghosts from the tomb."

"By the flasks and flagons, Paul, I know nothing of the sort, for my Latin scarcely reaches beyond the burthen of a drinking-song; and as to Mœris, I never heard the gentleman's name mentioned before in the whole course of my life; but, nevertheless, as it's a dry subject, and you seem to have known something of him, we can't do better than drink his health." He filled a bumper and pushed the bottle to his companion.

“ You are, however, doubtless aware,” resumed Mapletoft, “ that the ancients had three different sorts of ghosts ; the *Manes*, which, after death, they imagined to descend to the infernal region ; the *Spiritus*, which ascended to the skies ; and the *Umbra*, which hovered about the tomb, as if unwilling to quit the body.”

“ All this is Greek to me ; but I remember that they had a dog with three heads, though I have forgotten his name. I wonder what breed it was ?”

“ *Sequar atris ignibus absens*,” cried Paul, drawing himself bolt upright, and rubbing his hands together in a sort of sudden ecstacy, as he continued—

“ ‘ Et cum frigida mors animâ seduxerit artus,
Omnibus umbra locis adero :’

“ It is the speech of Dido to *Æneas*, threatening to haunt him after her death, and adding that her manes below shall rejoice in the knowledge of his sufferings. You will find the passage in the fourth book of the *Æneid*.”

“ Shall I, Paul ? then it must be without looking for it.”

“ Goodnow, brother, I dare say, it must have often occurred to you as something remarkable in the notions of the heathen, that before the Manes had passed the Styx ——”

“ ’Sdeath, Paul! the very mention of the word has made me as dry as two sticks; so, if you will not moisten your clay, prythee push back the bottle. Zooks, man! I want not to know the opinions of the Greeks and Romans upon the subject, but what you imagine to be the real state of the case, as it affects your sister’s story, and in this our present anno domini of 1688. Now, for my own part, I will tell you why I have little faith in ghosts. There is no place where so many dead are collected as a field of battle, all suddenly sent to their account, without being much prepared for it. Their bodies are stripped, treated with every indignity, left where they fell, or buried without any funeral service; and yet the only military ghost of any sort that I ever heard or read of, was the ghost of a drum, that beat the Devil’s march every night in the house of some fellow at Tedworth, in Wiltshire.”

“ Goodnow ! you mean John Mumpesson. It occurred in the year sixty-three, and I have Glanvil’s quarto Treatise on the subject. He is a great stickler for witches and witchcraft ; others have answered him, but I know not where we shall find the truth.”

“ Why, in the bottle, to be sure,” said the Squire, again filling his glass—“ *in vino veritas*, that’s the best piece of Latin ever was written, and I would not give a fico either for Greek or Roman, or believe a word that he uttered, unless he was a staunch toper. There again I hold with honest Frank.

‘ Let the gout and the cholic pine ’em,
That offer to shrink
In taking their drink,
Seu Græcum, sive Latinum.’ ”

Seeing that his companion was rapidly advancing into a mood that admitted of no other arguments than cantation, and potation, for neither of which he himself had any genius, Mapletoft, who had by this time entirely forgotten his sister’s misadventure, proceeded to

his library that he might turn to Virgil's eighth eclogue; whilst the squire finished his bottle to the accompaniment of sundry snatches of old Bacchanalian songs, all recommending deep draughts, an advice of which few men stood less in need than the jovial singer.

CHAPTER IV.

But in the porch did evermore abide,
A hideous giant, dreadful to behold,
That stopt the entrance with his spacious stride,
And with the terror of his countenance bold
Full many did affray.

SPENSER.

WHILE the family at Orchard Place were thus occupied, it can hardly be supposed that the servants, always deeply interested in any marvellous or mysterious tale, failed to discuss, with all due profundity, the strange occurrence by which their mistress had been so alarmingly affected. Teddy Chubb and Will Coomb had not been suffered to depart until they had revealed all that they knew of the affair, each

having been coaxed to confession by a copious mug of ale. "Fegs! I think I ha' yarned a drap o' yale," said the former; "I'd rather lug a sack o' corn than Madam Colyton any day in tha year, vor she be desperd heavy-some. She woodn' carry vair, ye zee, but when we came a nigh her huom, she began ta wamble and wallup about like a girt porpus in a net."

"A b'leeve she did indeed," added Will Coomb, "and without ever crying Ware-whing! Zuggers! she vetched me such a whister-twister on the veace that it made my teeth rattle agin."

Teddy, having nearly emptied his mug at a draught, drew in a long breath, wiped his mouth with the sleeve of his jacket, fixed his vacant eyes straight before him, and then, in answer to the eager interrogatories of the servants, as to the probable cause of their mistress's terror, replied with a most stolid and decisive look—"Why, I certainly think, she must ha' zeen a zummat or uither; that's my verdit o' tha matter, and therevore I zay 't!"

“ But what *did* she see ? what was it ? ” enquired several of the servants at once, half disposed to regret that they had bartered a mug of ale for such unsatisfactory intelligence.

“ Drat it, ‘Teddy !’ ” cried Will Coomb, whose greater fears had rendered him less doubtful upon the subject, “ what *should* she zee in tha church-yord but a gwust ? I ’oodn’ mind taking my woth avore a Justice that she look’d vor all the wordle as if she had zeen a gwust ; and I smelt a zummat, but whether it were brimstone or burnt peat I ’on’t zay ; and I heard a stronge wheckering noise, but whether it were a scritch-owl, or only a horse neighing, I bain’t certain shower.”

Inconclusive as it was, Will’s information proved much more satisfactory to his auditors than that of his companion. Both parties were closely cross-questioned, but as nothing farther could be elicited from either of the deponents they were at length dismissed, and their interrogators, drawing themselves in a semicircle around the kitchen fire, sate in solemn conclave,

offering various and most sagacious conjectures upon the communication they had received, but all, with the general leaning of ignorant people towards the terrible and the supernatural, adopting Will Coomb's version of the affair. Some, however, were willing to defer to the opinion of Christopher, the man servant, who had received a better education than themselves, and being moreover a Londoner, and one who had travelled abroad, was presumed competent to decide so knotty a point. Comical Kit, for such was the appellation usually bestowed upon this personage by his fellow servants, was a short plump figure, with a laughing leering eye, that imparted a mingled look of merriment and impudence to his sleek face. He had filled various situations in life, from a stable boy to the buffoon of a strolling company; had been in France and Flanders, in which latter country he had assisted his present master, then Captain Colyton, to escape from a prison wherein both had been confined for a drunken brawl; and in reward of this favour had been taken into his

service, when the Captain, subsequently to his marriage, accidentally encountered him in Somersetshire. Having a special talent for brewing good ale, and knowing a little of every sort of domestic duty, in or out of the house, Kit was by no means ill qualified to fill the post of factotum to an indolent person like the Squire, though his want of thrift, and the number of his tipping and trencher acquaintance gave sore dissatisfaction to Mrs. Colyton. That which most recommended him to his master and his fellow-servants was his invariable good-humour, but above all, the habit of buffoonery which he had acquired as a strolling zany, and which not only manifested itself in mimicry and practical jokes, but in larding his ordinary discourse with absurd and fantastical adjurations, and in stringing together the most incongruous words and images that the low humour of a merry-andrew could suggest. These were seldom any thing better than stark nonsense, and yet they so far adapted themselves to the taste of his kitchen auditors, heightened as they were by the drollery

of his look and manner, that not an individual of the establishment was disposed to withhold from their author his honorary title of "Comical Kit."

"To be sure, if I may judge by mistress's flustration," said Betty the housemaid, "there must have been some good cause for it; she was quite gashly in the face, and so far I agree with Will Coomb, that she look'd exactly as if she had seen a ghost. But whose ghost could it be? nobody has died lately but Mr. Richard, and it couldn't be his'n, for there can be no doubt that he is by this time in a better place."

"Then let'n keep it, vor good places dwon't goo a begging in theese times," said Dolly the cook, a fat hard-featured Somersetshire woman, who had only caught the conclusion of Betty's remark; "There be vew better than ourn, though the vails bain't so good here at Orchit Place as if we were to housen at Bedgwater all the year round."

"If parson Hewlett han't done Mr. Richard's berrying job cliver and shiver," said Will the

helper, "he oughtn't to have a varden o' wages. When he puts a body under groun', it's his business to keep'n there, that is, put case he's a good workman, and han't buried a witch. Well, after what I ha' heard I 'oodn't goo throw the church-yard avore the cock do crow vor a gallon o' beer, that's what I 'oodn't."

"I wonder," said Patty the laundrymaid, "how these poor spiritous creatures that are always dabbling about in the puddles and wet grass of the church-yard, keep their winding-sheet always so white and clean as they say it is, for I don't see how they can wash'n. Mercy on us! it's a shocking thing to think of. I declare my blood begins to cruddle only with talking about such horrid gashly subjicks."

"I have been told," said Betty, "that if these poor wandering ghosts be properly exercised they are no longer troublesome."

"I shouldn't wonder," observed Will, "for when I do properly exercise roan Rupert, or any of the other horses, they soon become quiet, however rusty they might have been avore."

“What zay, Kit?” cried the cook, “what zay? we ha’ ax’d your opinion vour or vive times, bin ye ought to know better than zome volk, but ye ’on’t drap a word neither one way nor t’uither.”

“I ’m dumb as a dishclout, mute as a mopstick, silent as a saucepan,” replied Kit, “and for the self-same reason.—because I think the more. What rubbish and rigmarole have ye been talking! There isn’t a man of ye, including the women—no, that’s a blunder; I mean there isn’t a woman of ye, including the men, (one or other must be right,) that may not fairly be accounted as inconsistent as a wooden tombstone, a glass inkhorn, or an iron copper. Slid! ’twould make a white blackberry red in the face to listen to ye! What! because our mistress comes home frightened out of her wits, which means that the wits were frightened out of her, is there no way of accounting for it but by supposing that she had seen a ghost, and that too the ghost of master Richard, who is the last person likely to walk after death, because, poor

fellow ! he was so weak that he couldn't walk before he died ? O dumplings and daffodils ! shall we by such uncharitable constructions do an indignity both to the living and the dead ? Forbid it all ye fiddle-faddle fates ! No—I have a suspicion of my own—I think I know the real truth, but I say nothing ; and for fear of giving offence I am determined to be as secret and mysterious as a slop-pail.”

“ Lockadaisy, Kit ! ” exclaimed the cook, “ nobody 'on't be avronted wi' ye, zo tell truth, and shame the devil.”

“ I will, I will, so help me Jove and Jacky ! well then, you remember, Dolly, how the chestnut mare plunged and started last week when she turned round and looked you in the face. You have been to Weston this afternoon to order yeast for the brewing : mistress perhaps met you in the dusk, and fixing her eyes unguardedly upon those peerless features, may have mistaken you for a witch, if not for old Nick's wife.”

This joke upon Dolly's forbidding counte-

nance was received with a hearty laugh from all but the party assailed, who muttered something about "saucy hang-gallise fellows that could talk nothing but blather and nonsense;" and immediately began to stir the fire with a noise and clatter that were apparently intended to drown the sound of the obnoxious merriment.

"Patches, powder, petticoats, and pincushions!" exclaimed Kit, "here comes Mrs. Harper, who I dare say will tell us the whole truth of the matter in the twinkling of an eye. Oh thou gracious goddess of gowns! what means that frown upon thy face that makes thee look as black and as warm as a copper stew-pan just taken from the fire?"

Indignant at the terms she had heard applied to herself while listening at the key-hole, Mrs. Harper had, indeed, tossed into the kitchen with an air of high dudgeon; but, as it did not suit her to reveal the cause, she replied with an assumed composure—"I never look black, Mr. Christopher, indeed it's impossible with so fair a complexion as mine; but warm I may be, and

so would you, if you had to wait upon mistress in her tantrums.”

“ But what has put her into these tantrums ? is it a fat spectre or a lean one ? has she seen Dolly, or old Nick ? ”

“ Seen ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Harper, determined to recriminate upon her mistress—“ if people will take a drop too much of Sydenham’s cordial before they go out, which is little better than so much right Nantz, they may well see double.”

“ Drams and dragons ! then it is just as I said, and she did see Dolly after all, for she is double the size of any other woman.”

“ ’On’t ye hold your twattle, ye chattering whizbird ? ” cried the cook—“ Ise not zuch a gallibagger as to vrighten mistress or any uthier Christian soul.”

“ Except the chesnut mare,” said Kit.

“ No indeed,” resumed Harper—“ it was nothing so solid and comfortable that she met ; for she solemnly declares, and nothing will un-

persuade her of the fact, that she saw Mr. Richard's ghost sitting upon his grave."

"Mr. Richard's ghost!" simultaneously exclaimed the whole assemblage, as they drew their chairs closer with various exclamations and interjections, accompanied by appropriate looks of terror and amazement.

"There! didn't I say it must be Mr. Richard's ghost?" asked Betty the housemaid, who had, however, affirmed exactly the reverse.

"Well to be zure, we know not what may happen a'ter death," observed the cook with a horrified look—"vor all flesh is grass."

"In that case we do know what will happen to you," said Kit—"you will become a decent sized haystack."

"Gif I be, saucebox, I shan't zuffer sich jackasses as you to nibble at me."

At another moment this retort might have turned the laugh against Kit, but just now there were no risible propensities in the kitchen, all parties gathering eagerly round Harper to

learn the full particulars of what she knew. These she communicated without reserve, for believing that she would be soon dismissed from her place, she thought it unnecessary to stand upon any ceremony, and therefore repeated her own convictions, at the conclusion of her narrative, that her mistress had been making too free with the cordial, and scarcely knew what she saw, or understood what she subsequently related.

Various were the conjectures and observations elicited by Harper's statement. Whatever might be their private opinions, all appeared to coincide with the last speaker, expressing their disbelief that any real spirit had been seen, unless indeed, as Kit suggested, it was spirit of Nantz or Usquebaugh; yet all wearing very serious faces, and every now and then casting a timid mistrustful glance over the shoulder.

“Mumps and mummary!” cried Kit, making his companions start by a sudden smack of his hands—“you look all of ye as down in the

mouth as the root of my tongue, and as pale as a meal-tub. Well, if you've a fancy for ghost stories, I can tell you one; not a cock and a bull tale like this, beginning in Sydenham's cordial, and ending in hysterics and a fainting-fit, but a real downright apparition that I and a score more saw with our own eyes."

All earnestly implored that he would relate the occurrence to which he had alluded, and Kit, looking as grave as his features would allow, made semblance of beginning, when he slyly tapped his nail against the back of his chair, exclaiming — "Hist! hark! silence! "there's the death watch again; I heard it just before Mr. Richard's death, and now it comes a second time. Save us all! I hope nothing's going to happen in the kitchen. If Dolly should drop, however we ourselves might grieve, the tallow chandlers would rejoice, for there would be a great fall in fat. Death and dripping! it looks like it, for see what a monstrous winding sheet there is the candle!"

"A murrain take the northering fool!" cried

the cook—"goo on wi' your story, casn't, and dwon't be running your rigs upon me."

"I heard the death-watch tick, I'll be upon my woth!" said the scullion, looking aghast.

"Begin your story," cried two or three of the others, none of them liking a silence that was liable to be so ominously disturbed, and Kit, in compliance with their wishes, commenced his narrative in a tone and with a look of deep solemnity well adapted to the subject. Scarcely, however, had he completed his exordium, when he drew back his chair ejaculating—"Mercy on us! what is that flapping against the window?" and then mimicking the wailful cry of a bird—he added "It's a screech owl, as I'm alive!"

While all eyes were turned toward the window, where, however, there was nothing whatever to be seen, Kit covertly took a handful of salt from the box, and threw it into the fire. A bright blue flame instantly irradiated the kitchen, and if the party were previously appalled, they were still more so when, upon turning round, they beheld each other's terrified coun-

tenances rendered hideously ghastly and livid by the glare of the coloured light. Their tormentor, however, so far from being disposed to allow them any respite, drew away with his foot his neighbour's chair, just as he was about to re-seat himself. Down tumbled Will, floundering upon the floor, and at the same moment Kit, flopping down upon his marrowbones, and pointing to the wall cried out with a voice and look of profound consternation—"Ghosts and gallipots! goblins and gridirons! visions and veal-cutlets! murder and mouse-traps! look! look! look!"

All eyes were instantly riveted to the wall, amid shrieks and shudderings, and a thrilling agony of terror that made some of the party cling to each other for protection, when Kit, after this paroxysm had continued for some little time, assuming a sheepish, simpering look, exclaimed, "La! la! la! I see what it is now that frightened me so. Snouts and snoring! It's nothing in the world but the shadow of Mrs. Harper's nose!"

This feature in the face of the aforesaid Abigail was of decidedly Slawkenbergian proportions, and being prodigiously magnified by the position of the candle, threw a nasal outline against the wall of rather alarming dimensions. "Lors love ye, Dolly!" said Kit, "move away the pepper pot; it's right under the nose, and if a shadow of that size were to sneeze, it would blow us all to atoms."

Instead of enjoying his foolery, the whole company, as soon as they had recovered from their panic, commenced an angry attack upon the unfortunate wag, protesting they would not submit to be frightened in such a scandalous manner, and that if he would not finish his ghost story, (in which they confessed themselves to be deeply interested,) without any more pranks and buffoonery, they would leave him to play the merry-andrew by himself, and retire to their beds.

"Snobs and snapdragons!" cried Kit, "if Harper will only keep her nose within reasonable compass, so as not to frighten a body out

of his seven senses, I will tell you the rest of my tale in the flitting of an apparition." This he accordingly did, making out his apparition to be after all an imaginary spectre, professing his disbelief in ghosts of any sort, and giving such a comic termination to his tale as restored the courage and the good-humour of his auditors, the more especially as he proposed that they should wind up the sitting by participating in a general jorum of lambs-wool. A clamorous consent being given to this proposition, tongues began to wax freely and jocosely in ridicule of the past panic; all parties gladly assisted in spreading out the supper table; Dolly laid the apples down to roast, while Will drew the ale for the lambs-wool; and Kit, proceeding to the pantry cupboard, whence he had purposely forgotten to remove his master's bottle of Usquebaugh, poured out a dram for each of his companions, and then took two for himself; a factorage which was considered perfectly just and reasonable by all the servants, though the thrifty Mrs. Colyton would by no means have

been equally acquiescent, had she been aware of the present jovial proceedings in the kitchen. As the meal proceeded, and the lambs-wool disappeared, the participants waxed loud and merry, as if determined to chase away their recent apprehensions, which, however, were rather allayed than altogether dissipated by the expedient. A pot-lid accidentally thrown down by a cat beneath the dresser, occasioned a start of agitation, and brought a look of dismay upon every countenance; while a single moment of silence occasioned the party to cast anxious and sinister glances at one another. Amid such casual interruptions and misgivings the supper was concluded, and the assemblage was about to separate for the night, when their fears were again more forcibly awakened than ever by a knock at the hall-door. As no earthly visitant could reasonably be expected at so late an hour, and in so regular a family, most of the party, concluding there was something ominous in the occurrence, gazed at their neighbours with manifest doubt and disquietude. It was Kit's bu-

siness to answer the door, who, being no believer in spectres and phantoms, and scorning, moreover, to betray the smallest hesitation or timidity before his fellow-servants, took a candle in one hand, seized the poker with the other, and proceeded into the hall, declaring that if it were the apothecary's boy with medicines, as he anticipated, he would trim his jacket for coming so late, and that if it were a goblin he would make him acquainted with the earth, however unearthly might be his nature, by knocking him down with his iron cudgel.

Not a syllable was uttered in the kitchen during Kit's absence upon this most perilous enterprise, for such it was considered. All stood in the attitudes in which he had left them, transfixed with suspense, rivetting their eyes to the door, and scarcely venturing to breathe. The hall-door was heard to open—in a moment afterwards their ears were startled by an exclamation of horror, and Kit staggered back into the kitchen, supporting himself by the wall, and exclaiming in a shuddering whisper, "The ghost ! the ghost ! Mr. Richard's ghost !"

Evidently real as was his agony, for he trembled all over, his fellow-servants were so suspicious of his habitual waggery, that some of them were inclined to think this might be only another practical joke, similar to those with which he had already been scaring them. Under this impression, Harper, Dolly, and Patty, agreeing to stand by and support one another, made their way to the hall to investigate the cause of the real or affected consternation. Their loud screams, their terrified rush back, and their faltering exclamations of "The ghost—Mr. Richard's ghost!" quickly assuring their companions that they had seen something supernatural and horrific, the kitchen was instantly converted into a scene of indescribable confusion and dismay.

Meanwhile the figure that had occasioned all this horror, taking up the candle that Kit had left upon the hall-table, proceeded up-stairs, and reached the passage above just as Mapletoft was crossing it in his way from his study to his bed-room. "Richard, my dear lad!" he exclaimed, forgetting all recent transactions in the

temporary abstraction of the moment, and imagining himself to be addressing his living nephew, "how come you out of bed at such an hour as this? It is late, and the nights—"

The violent ringing of bells, and the sound of Mrs. Colyton's voice, who had been alarmed by the outcries of the servants, suddenly bringing him to his recollection, he recoiled with a thrill of amazement, brought his spectacles down from his forehead to his eyes, and gazing open-mouthed after the figure until it turned out of the passage, ejaculated in a tone of simple wonderment, for he was impassible to fear of any sort, "Goodnow! I protest I had forgotten; Richard is dead and buried, and verily this must be the identical apparition which my sister saw sitting upon his grave. Angels and ministers of Grace defend us! *O Dii et Domini!* 'This is indeed one of the *Umbrae nocte volantes*, and we may truly exclaim with Virgil in the eleventh of the *Æneid*,

'Nunc etiam horibili visu portenta sequuntur.'

Amazing! amazing! Defend us all good

angels !” So saying he walked back to his study, ensconced himself in his arm-chair, took down Glanvil’s book, and presently became so deeply absorbed in the subject of ghosts, witches, and spectres, as to be utterly deaf to the uproar of the servants, the furious ringing of bells, the cry of various voices, and the shouts of the Squire, who, not having yet retired to rest, was storming and bawling for Christopher, that he might learn the cause of the general confusion and hubbub.

CHAPTER V.

It always has been thought discreet
To know the company you meet ;
And sure there may be 'secret danger
In talking much before a stranger.
Agreed : what then ?—Then drink your ale ;
I 'll pledge you, and repeat my tale.

PRIOR.

LEAVING the inhabitants of Orchard Place in this state of confusion and dismay, we must retrograde for a short time, in order that we may accompany to London, Walter Colyton, the squire's son, who had been dispatched thither on the discovery of his amour with Hetty Chervil, in a state of mind that wavered between regret at the separation from his mistress, and the keen excitement of curiosity and expectation that must naturally agitate the bosom of a sanguine youth quitting home for the first time

in his life, and about to visit the metropolis in the novel character of a Captain of dragoons.

That he might well inure himself to the saddle before he should commence his military exercises, it had been arranged that he should ride up to London, for which purpose the squire gave him one of his own horses, having no particular occasion for it himself, and purchased another for a stout Somersetshire lad, a nephew of Dolly the cook, who was to accompany him as groom. A pair of silver-mounted pistols, which the father had himself used upon service, and the sum of money that was to complete Walter's outfit in London, constituted the whole amount of the paternal contribution. A world of good advice, particularly upon the score of economy, a prayer of no very moderate dimensions, an affectionate benediction, a godly book of hymns, a wardrobe of linen, and a bottle of *Rosa Solis*, of sovereign efficacy against half the ills that flesh is heir to, were furnished by the careful mother, who with her own hands assisted in packing the latter valuables in a

portmanteau, which with her own eyes she saw strapped to the back of the stout nag ridden by Joe Stokes the groom. The last-mentioned personage carried pistols in his saddle-holsters, so did his master, who moreover wore a sword, an indispensable appendage in those days' to every gentleman; and thus equipped and attended he was considered quite competent, young and inexperienced in travelling as he was, to make his way to the metropolis in perfect safety. For better security, however, the provident Mrs. Colyton sewed the gold with which he was charged into the stuffing of his saddle, leaving in his pocket only a sufficient sum to pay his expenses to London. It was not likely, she observed, that any highwayman would venture to attack a traveller so well armed and accompanied, especially as she had strictly charged her son never to ride late at night; but the times were threatening and unsettled; precaution was the most essential part of worldly wisdom; there would be little satisfaction, she sagaciously added, in shutting the stable door

after the steed was stolen; and she concluded with various compliments to her own prudence, forethought, and good-management, meaning not only to flatter herself by these praises, but to convey so many innuendoes against the thoughtlessness and careless improvidence of her husband. The squire had too much good-humour, or rather *nonchalance*, to trouble his head about the direct rebukes, much less the side-wind attacks of his spouse; and being equally unruffled by the departure of his son, and by the insinuations against himself to which it had given rise, he returned to the stables, as soon as Walter had quitted the house, caressing his dogs and his horses, projecting his day's amusement, and singing as unconcernedly as if nothing had occurred.

A neighbour of the Colyton's at Bridgwater had lent Walter some of Madame de Scuderi's romances, which, in spite of his mother's denouncement of all such unprofitable and idle reading, had been eagerly devoured by himself, his sister, and Hetty. The high-flown and

hyperbolic delineations of life which these books presented having fostered the seeds of romance implanted by Nature in his bosom, and persuaded him that an unalterable fidelity in love was the primary duty of a loyal knight, he prosecuted his journey for some time with an appropriate dejection of mind, consoling himself for his compulsory separation from his mistress by mentally renewing his vows of constancy, and by anticipating the moment when his professional success, of which he entertained not a doubt, should enable him to make her his own and support her becomingly. It was, moreover, no small trial to his feelings to be separated for the first time in his life from his family, to whom he was tenderly attached, and whom he might not again behold for a considerable period, a reflection which occasioned his first morning's journey to be accomplished under a heavy depression of spirits, and with no other interruptions of silence than were now and then afforded by the inquiries and remarks of his uneducated follower. At this early age, however,

the heart is buoyant and elastic, easily excited, prone to receive cheerful impressions; the weather was fine, the country was on every side arrayed in all the green luxuriance of spring just ripening into summer; he was passing through a new and continually varying scene; dreams of pleasure, of military success, and gratified love flattered his imagination; and these impressions, exhilarating him in spite of himself, gradually dissipated the melancholy which had at first oppressed him.

It was on a remarkably fine evening that our traveller, in a mood of still increasing complacency, approached the town of Westbury in Wiltshire, where it was his purpose to pass the night. Hitherto he had taken little notice of the wayfarers whom he had encountered, and indeed they had been mostly carriers with strings of heavy pack-horses laden with wool for Trowbridge Fair, which arrested his momentary attention by the incessant, though not unmusical, jingling of their bells. On his mounting a little eminence, however, that

brought him within sight of Westbury he was not less struck by the singular beauty of a black blood horse which he overtook, than by the starch and puritanical appearance of its rider, a Quaker, whose habiliments exhibited even more than the customary primness and finical precision of his sect. Walter, who inherited all his father's love of horses, could not help checking his steed as he reached the stranger, and exclaiming, "What a noble animal! I have scarcely ever seen a finer."

"Truly, friend, thou mayst well say so," drawled the Quaker in a formal articulate voice, "seeing that the beast is altogether as good as he seemeth. He was given unto me by a dear brother in the faith, Aminadab Trustworthy, of Bristol, who is now with the Lord, but of whom thou mayst peradventure have heard."

Walter, declaring that the fame of the deceased had never reached him, continued to jog on by the side of the stranger, being not a little amused by the quaintness of his appearance, and the measured solemnity of his voice. "As for

the merits and beauty of my beast," resumed the Quaker, patting the animal on the neck, "it is not out of any worldly pride which would little beseem me, that I am mounted upon so valuable a steed, but seeing that we are forbidden to wield the weapons of the ungodly, even in our own defence, and that I am, as you may observe, utterly unarmed, I have nought to trust to but the fleetness of my horse, should I perchance fall into evil company upon the road. Thou art more carefully armed, friend, than becomes a man of peace, and so is thy follower." The speaker cast a distrustful look at his companion's holsters and sword, and drew off a little to one side of the road, though without mending his pace.

"Let not these alarm you," said Walter, smiling at the Quaker's groundless apprehensions; "I wear these arms for defence, since my journey must extend to London, but I shall travel no farther at present than to yonder town of Westbury, where I mean to bestow myself for the night."

“ I am bound thither also ; and verily I am not less glad to see it than will be the brethren to welcome me back, for I have been to Bristol, Bridgwater, and other towns to collect contributions for rebuilding our house of prayer, which was burnt down on the fourth day of the first month of our present year.”

“ Which contributions, I presume, you are carrying back with you.”

“ Nay, friend, this was not my saying, nor do I know why thou should'st presume me to be thus laden,” said the Quaker with a look of increased distrust.

“ I see that you suspect me of a disposition to ease you of your contributions,” said Walter, laughing at the idea of his being mistaken for a highwayman, “ and it may be therefore right to inform you that I am the son of Jaspas Colyton of Bridgwater, and that my mother was one of the Mapletofts of Stowey, some of whom are in connexion with your Society.”

“ Aha ! say'st thou so, young man ? a godly family, a godly family ! I knew them well, and

thou may'st perchance have heard some of them mention Nehemiah Goodchild of Westbury. Forgive my doubts and apprehensions, which were the more excusable inasmuch as my horse, on whom alone I rely for safety, is somewhat jaded." He drew nearer on receiving this explanation, confessing at the same time, with a frank and confiding air, that Walter's conjectures as to his being the bearer of the contributions were perfectly correct, and that he had concealed them in the stuffing of his saddle. After having made several enquiries touching the Mapletofts, for whom he professed a profound respect, he casually demanded of his companion the reason of his quitting his family, and undertaking so long a journey. Upon receiving the solicited information he shook his head with a grave look, exclaiming, "A bad profession! a wicked calling! for wars and fightings are utterly repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel; wherefore our Society abjureth them utterly. Read St. Matthew, young man, read St. Matthew. And is it in Lord Dover's regiment of

dragoons that thou art to begin the trade of blood? Art thou aware that it is one of the most expensive in the service? Truly thine outfit may exceed thine expectations, and perhaps thy means, unless thy purse be well lined. And if it be, thou shouldst take heed to it, for there be spoilers and plunderers upon the road."

"My father has been kind enough to make the necessary provision for my equipment, and by a curious co-incidence I have secured it, as you have done your collections for the Meeting-house, in the lining of my saddle."

"Verily thou hast done well, seeing thou hast the perils of so long a journey before thee, but for myself my wayfaring will cease, as I told thee, at Westbury, where for the present I have set up my tabernacle. Thou may'st see the town yonder, and my dwelling, a humble one, for I am but a poor trader, is to the east thereof, towards the hill of Bratton Castle. Truly it would have gladdened me to have met one of the godly family of the Mapletofts of Stowey, however short may be our fellowship

together, but that it vexeth me to know, yea, mine inward man is sore grieved to learn, that thou art about to enter into the service of the papistical King James."

"Why so? May I not be a good Protestant though I obey a Catholic monarch? St. Paul himself did not object to sail in a heathen vessel. The first Christians made no difficulty of submitting to a pagan governor, and I understood that your own society had waited upon the king with an address of congratulation, on his accession to the throne."

"We did so, telling him we hoped he would grant us the same liberty that he allowed himself in differing from the church of England, in which case we wished him all manner of happiness. But hath he done this? Hitherto indeed he hath not openly molested us, but as his actions already show that he regardeth not the laws, and abideth not by his promise, we may well walk in the fear of his ultimate measures."

"Should our liberty and religion," said

Walter, be more directly assailed, I would cheerfully lay down my life in their defence, but until then we are not warranted in forgetting our duty as subjects, not even in our speech, and still less in our actions."

"Thy pardon, friend: I had forgotten that thou wert now a servant of King James. Peradventure I may have offended thee in my remarks, but if so, I pray thee forget it, and attribute it to my zeal for the good cause and the pure faith, of which thy mother's family have ever been staunch upholders. For myself I am a man of peace, yet would I restrain the king when he departs from the legal measures of government. War and the makers thereof I do utterly abominate — (once more I crave thy pardon, but read St. Matthew, young man, read St. Matthew) — nevertheless I do still more detest the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and the unconditional submission of subjects, holding upon this point with Rumbold, who declared that he would not believe in any such monstrous and slavish tenets until he saw that

the greater part of mankind came into the world with saddles on their backs and bridles in their mouths, and some few ready booted and spurred to ride the rest."

"Methinks that one-eyed Rumbold, the Rye-House conspirator, is but a blind guide for a man of peace, such as you profess yourself to be."

"I acknowledge no earthly guide. I see that you understand not the principles of the Friends. Read St. Matthew, young man, read St. Matthew. But behold! here we are at the Silver Lamb, an honest and well conducted inn, where I must tarry a short while to bait my horse, and where, if the dusty roads have given thee any relish for a cup of home-brewed ale and a Salisbury bun, thou wouldst do well to alight for a few minutes."

As Westbury was still at three or four miles distance, and Walter fatigued with his long ride, stood in need of some little refreshment, he acceded willingly to this proposition, alighted from his horse, of which his groom took charge, and entering the public-house, was soon

supplied with the foaming beverage, which well merited the encomium that had been bestowed upon it. The Quaker emptied his own little tankard, and demolished his bun with a hearty good-will, when he proposed that they should resume their journey, as the evening was drawing in apace, and it would not suit him, he said, to be benighted, although his companions, being so well armed, would secure him from all danger. After retiring for a short while that he might liquidate a small unsettled score with the landlord, for he stated himself to be in the habit of frequently calling at the Lamb, he re-appeared, and hurrying Walter to his horse, they remounted and pursued their way, at a quicker pace, discoursing upon the same subjects as before, which the Quaker handled with a freedom that showed him to be no very staunch adherent of King James, though he vindicated himself by asserting his zeal for the Protestant religion, and urging the necessity of upholding it at all risks against the machinations of an apostate and bigoted ruler.

Thus conversing together, they reached a

short but steep hill, through which, to facilitate the ascent, the road had been deeply cut towards its summit, leaving high precipitous banks on either side, thickly tufted with bushes. There shrubs, intercepting the light of the setting sun, added to the gloom of the hollow beneath, while the steepness of the way, and the loose stones, which had been detached from the bank, compelled the horsemen to proceed with caution. Our young traveller had just been inquiring the distance from Westbury, when his companion blowing sharply upon a whistle, which he took from his pocket, suddenly leaped to the ground, seized the bridle of Walter's horse, drew a pistol from his bosom, presented it at him, and exclaimed, with a hoarse chuckling laugh, though he still preserved the Quaker phraseology — "Young man, I told thee I had a great zeal for religion. I have taken a fancy to thy saddle in aid of my contributions, and as I am moreover averse to war, my conscience will not allow thee to retain the gold which thou hast destined to purchase military trap-

pings and other unholy vanities, wherefore dismount quickly and give it to me, or, verily, thou art a dead man."

Although for a moment Walter had imagined him to be in jest, he presently saw by the altered tone and look, as well as by the hostile action of the pretended Quaker, that he had fallen into the hands of a disguised highwayman, and being naturally brave and choleric, he let go the reins, called aloud to his groom to ride up, seized the arm of his assailant with one hand, snatched a pistol from the holster with the other, and said in a voice that was rendered hoarse by sudden passion—"Villain! you are in my power, and, I swear by heaven, that I will shoot you instantly if you do not surrender your weapon!"

"Swear not at all," cried the robber, with a calm sarcastic smile—"Read St. Matthew, young man—read St. Matthew." At the same time, by a sudden jerk, for he was a powerful man, he disengaged his arm, and roughly collared his adversary, who instantly fired off his

pistol. The muzzle was close to its object, but he remained untouched, and grappling with Walter, succeeded by superior force in wrenching him from his horse, though not until he had plucked his remaining pistol from the holster, which he presented and fired a second time. There was not a yard's distance between them, and yet the highwayman, to the utter amazement of Walter, was still perfectly unscathed. "Your servant has two more barkers, let him come up and try his luck," said the fellow, who, little as he was entitled to the character in other respects, possessed at all events the imperturbable phlegm of a true Quaker. Joe Stokes, however, was not in a situation to afford any assistance to his master; for his horse, taking fright at the report of the first pistol, had galloped down the hill, in spite of all his rider's efforts to restrain him.—"Scoundrel!" exclaimed Walter, in a transport of rage—"I wear a sword, and we will soon see whether you are impenetrable to steel as well as bullet."—He strove to tear the weapon from its scabbard,

but his utmost efforts were ineffectual ; and on casting a hasty glance to discover the cause, he found that it was fastened to the sheath by a stout and carefully twisted wire.—“ There ! you have done your worst, my bully huff,” said the highwayman, speaking at length with his natural voice, and in the robber’s slang—“ so keep your famblers quiet, my young cove, or I shall be apt to scuttle your nob with my popper. I don’t want to prig your prancer, but I shall take leave to nab your saddle for the rhino you have whipped into the stuffing.”—He proceeded to unloose the girth, with perfect *sang froid* and composure, when two armed ruffians, who were evidently his comrades, and had been summoned by his whistle, burst from the bushes on one of the banks, calling out with loud execrations to their leader to riddle the carcass of the young huffing cove, who had dared to fire at him.

Although Walter, after having twice attempted the life of his assailant, stood now defenceless and completely in his power, the

man had shown no disposition whatever to use his arms, or to retaliate in any way, neither uttering execrations, like his partners, nor even wearing any ferocity of look, but busying himself very collectedly in ungirthing the saddle. But when Walter caught the fierce denunciations, and saw the menacing looks of the ruffians, who were scrambling down the bank, he began to think that his life was in immediate danger, and acting from an instantaneous impulse of self-preservation, he vaulted upon the robber's horse, which was standing before him, clapped spurs to its sides, and almost, before the highwaymen were aware of his escape, had gained the summit of the hill, and was galloping full speed down the descent that led to Westbury. Not a minute elapsed before a pistol was discharged after him, of which the bullet whizzed close to his ear, and in another minute he caught the sound of horses' hoofs, following him in hot pursuit. Upon looking behind he recognised his own horse, with the pretended Quaker upon its back, urging it eagerly forward. Walter knew himself to be

now much better mounted than the robber ; but as the latter might have another pistol in store, and was probably reserving his fire until it could be delivered with effect, he was anxious to interpose as much distance between them as possible ; for which purpose, he kept his steed at the utmost stretch of its powers. He was, however, presently relieved from all apprehensions, for, on again looking behind him, he saw that his pursuer, who, in the haste of mounting, had not refastened the girths, had been thrown heavily to the ground by the twisting of the saddle, and was apparently too much injured to renew the chase. Walter, however, rendered distrustful by so unexpected an assault and robbery, did not think it prudent to relax his speed until he reached Westbury, when he rode up to the first inn that he saw, dismounted, and walked into a little parlour, for the purpose of collecting himself, and considering what would be the most prudent course to adopt in so singular and unforeseen a predicament.

Provoking as it was to have been robbed of

the money destined to so important an object as that of his outfit, he could have submitted with some patience to the loss had it not been aggravated by the reflection that it was partly attributable to his own indiscreet conduct in suffering himself, by the finesse of the sham Quaker, to be decoyed into a confession of the spot in which he had concealed his cash. He regretted that he had not taken his father's advice, who had recommended him to carry it about his person, exclaiming, "*Mort de ma vie!* Walter, when I was a wielder of Bilboa, and enacted the Cavaliero, I always secreted my yellowboys about my body, resolving beforehand not to part with them except with my life, and shrewdly suspecting that if I were laid to sleep in the bed of honour I should have little occasion for them." This had appeared valid reasoning to Walter, who was of a somewhat fool-hardy character, but the mother's counsels, pronounced by herself to be infinitely more safe and sagacious, had ultimately prevailed, and the consequence was the loss of the whole sum, a circum-

stance which it was now too late to regret. Any chance of recovering it by procuring assistance, and pursuing the robbers, he believed to be hopeless, for the night was setting in, and before they could scour the country the thieves, favoured by the darkness, would have doubtless retired to their hiding places, or have concealed the property beyond all possibility of discovery. But however urgently considerations of this nature might claim his attention, they were presently absorbed by the paramount feeling of amazement at his having missed the robber, though he had loaded the pistols with his own hand, putting two bullets in each, and had fired so close to his body that unless he bore "a charmed life," and was absolutely pistol proof, it was impossible to account for his escape. As the belief in witchcraft was so far from being extinct at this period that both men and women were still occasionally executed for this imaginary offence, it will be no impeachment of Walter's understanding that he supposed his assailant to be a wizard, who, by some unhallowed

art or infernal compact had rendered himself invulnerable to fire-arms, and had employed some imp to tie up his sword in the scabbard, though he knew not how this could have been accomplished without his own cognizance.

While he was losing himself in vain conjectures to account for this mysterious occurrence, which for some time predominated in his mind, even over the consideration of his loss, a waiter entered the room, inquiring whether it was his intention to take supper and pass the night there, to both of which interrogatories he gave an affirmative answer. Another servant of the inn soon afterwards presented himself, making some frivolous excuse for his intrusion, and casting several most scrutinizing and suspicious glances at the guest before he retreated. Walter resumed his lucubrations, which, however, were repeatedly interrupted, first by various persons peeping at him through the window with an impertinent curiosity, for which he was utterly at a loss to account; and secondly by the eager whispering and scuffling feet of others who

seemed to be collecting in the passage outside his door. As the annoyance of busy-bodies and eaves-droppers at a public inn was too common an occurrence to excite more than a passing attention, he relapsed into a desultory reverie, which successively engaged his thoughts, upon the inexplicable circumstances of his robbery, on the probability that his father would replace his loss, on his chance of revisiting Hetty Chervil, and even upon so unsentimental a subject as his supper, of which he began to feel the want, when his meditations were effectually dispersed by the sudden opening of the door, and the irruption of a whole posse of armed townspeople and ructics, who with loud cries called upon him to surrender himself a prisoner. Spades, pitchforks, clubs, and the whole range of kitchen spits formed the weapons of this motley assemblage, which was headed by a little panic-stricken constable, who lifted up his staff as an evidence of legal authority, eyed Walter's sword with manifest horror, and stammered as well as his chattering teeth would allow him, "In the

King's name! In the King's name! If you surrender you're a dead man, and if you don't we shall kill you upon the spot!"

As is usually the case in all such tumultuary assemblages they who were safe in the rear were by far the most fierce and truculent, shouting out to their companions in front, to knock the villain down, to seize his sword, to search him for concealed fire arms, to gag him, pinion him, and drag him off to prison. For a few seconds, Walter was actually bewildered with astonishment. However courageous he might be he was not so desperate as to offer any resistance to such a formidable mob, especially as his only weapon was imprisoned in its scabbard; but as he held it derogatory to surrender without some sort of parley, he retreated into a corner of the room, demanding with a loud voice the meaning of this beleaguerment. A momentary silence having been obtained, the landlord of the inn, who in right of his wielding a fowling-piece, and standing upon his own premises, thought himself entitled to take the command of the party,

signified to Walter that they came to apprehend him for a highway robbery, and that if he surrendered his sword, consented to be searched, and agreed to accompany them to the mayor's house, he should receive no harm.

Notwithstanding the vexation of being thus publicly arrested upon so humiliating a charge, our young traveller could not help smiling at the ludicrous nature of their mistake, and as he entertained not a doubt of his immediate liberation, after he should have disabused the party of their error, he readily consented to become their prisoner, stipulating for nothing but civil treatment. This was more readily promised than observed, for when he had been effectually secured, and his sword had been taken from him, he was not only saluted with the most opprobrious epithets, but rather roughly handled by some of the boors as they dragged him towards the residence of the mayor, before whom he was to undergo an immediate examination.

This functionary was the principal brewer

of the town, and as he happened, on the evening when his magisterial talents were thus put in requisition, to have been entertaining a jovial party of friends, he was in much fitter plight for another bottle and a Bacchanalian song, than for performing, with a becoming decorum, the grave duties of Themis. Now that the prisoner's sword had been secured, and that he was found to have no concealed fire-arms about his person, the constable, taking a conspicuous place at the head of the party, and assuming all the blustering and bravado of a true craven, stated to the mayor that he had succeeded in arresting, principally by his own personal valour and exertions, and in spite of the ruffian's formidable sword, one of the accomplices of the famous galloping Mask. This, as Walter subsequently learnt, was the name bestowed upon the highwayman by whom he had been stopped, who under the various disguises of a Quaker, a clergyman, or a miller, sometimes concealing his features in a frightful mask, had been levying contributions in various parts of the county,

and had hitherto escaped apprehension, either by the superior fleetness of his horse, or by the indisposition to pursue him evinced by many of those he had plundered, who had been won to this forbearance by the courtesy of his manner, his avoidance of violence, and the not unamusing ingenuity with which he supported his assumed characters. In confirmation of the constable's statement, he deposed, that there were two persons then present who could swear to the black blood horse as the identical beast ridden by the galloping Mask when he had robbed them on the highway about a fortnight before; there were two others who would testify that they had seen the prisoner riding cheek by jole with the Quaker highwayman, not above two or three hours before; it was manifest that the robbers had changed horses for some sinister purpose; and finally, to put the guilt and the profession of the prisoner beyond all doubt, they had, on examining a leathern pouch attached to the saddle, discovered property of various sorts, a part of which had been recognised by some ladies

then in Westbury as having been stolen from them on the previous night.

“A clear case! a clear case!” stammered the Mayor, who, however, being too far gone to see or understand any thing very clearly, had been hiccoughing during this statement, while he endeavoured to keep himself upright in his chair, and fixed his fuddled eyes upon vacancy with a most stolid stare.

“And now that he hasn’t got his black horse to ride, which I believe to be a witch,” resumed the constable, “I shouldn’t mind pursuing the galloping Mask himself, that is to say, if so be, that I and Joe Gibbons had one or two more as brave fellows as ourselves to back us.”

“Bacchus! god of flowing glasses,” said the Mayor, taking up the last word, and singing the line of a drinking catch as well as his thickened voice would allow him.—“Fellow! fellow! it’s all proved against you; it’s quite clear, very clear indeed, so you needn’t look at your glass. Clerk! draw out his—Hick!—why don’t you do as I bid you? Draw his

cork, I tell you, and drink off his mittimus directly, without any heel-taps. Constables and tipstaves! have you cleared out his pockets? Very well, then take away this empty prisoner, and bring me another bottle—another bottle, d'ye hear—why don't you attend to me when I say—Hick!”

Some of the bystanders could not refrain from laughing at these betrayals of magisterial tipsiness; but the Mayor, indignant at such an open contempt of court, angrily exclaimed—“What are you laughing at, ye saucy knaves? there's nothing to laugh at, and I'll fine the first man that flinches; I'll fine him a bumper.—‘Fill me a bumper of generous wine’—that's a capital song, 'tis by—Hick!”

“If your Worship will listen to me for a few minutes,” said Walter, “and can understand what I say, I will prove to you that I am perfectly innocent, and that you are all labouring under a grievous mistake. My father is Jaspar Colyton, Esquire, of Bridgwater and Orchard Place, a man whom ——”

“ Stop there ! stop there ! ” interposed the Mayor—“ Clerk ! take down his words ; he swears that his father is a man ! We shall catch him in some more lies presently. Lord ! Lord ! what a brazen young—Hick !—it is !—His face is all over gallows, quite gibbety, every feature’s got a hanging look—I smoked him directly. Waiter ! bring me a pipe. I should like to smoke a pipe of tobacco, drink a pipe of port, and then—Hick ! ”

“ Will your Worship listen to my defence ? ”

“ No—I won’t hear a word till you drink off your heel-taps, fill a bumper, and push round the bottle. It’s no use saying any thing ; you must be hung, you know ; so, take him to prison ! take him to prison ! for I’m getting a little bit boozy and sleepy. La ! you comical dog, I knew your father, a worthy fellow as ever—but you shouldn’t say he was a man. What’s the toast ?—not a drop more—fill your glasses—Hick !—Good night, Tom ! I’m off—I’m just going to ——.” The Mayor’s dull grapy eyes, which had for some time past been

gradually disappearing, at length closed; his whole figure relaxed; he sunk slowly back in his arm-chair; his head dropped on one side; he gave a loud snore, and was so fast asleep in a single moment, as to remain undisturbed by the laughter and jeering of the noisy assemblage that surrounded him.

The landlord of the inn, acting as spokesman for the party, now proposed that they should conduct their prisoner to the gaol, that he might be secured until his examination could be resumed on the following morning, when the Mayor would be in fitter plight for the purpose, and the ladies, who had identified some of the stolen property, might be summoned to attend. This proposition being seconded by the constable, was carried unanimously, and Walter, in spite of his indignant protestations of innocence, and his earnest entreaties that he might be secured for the night in a room of the inn, instead of being consigned to the public prison, was rudely dragged away, hurried to the gaol, and committed to a strong cell, furnished with

a miserable pallet, where, after having indulged his solitary and supperless meditations, sometimes disposed to be prodigiously angry and indignant, and sometimes rather prone to laugh at the oddity of his adventure, he made a virtue of necessity, threw himself upon his sorry bed, and, being not a little fatigued by his long journey, soon slept as soundly as any individual in the town of Westbury, not even excepting the worshipful and wine-full Mayor.

CHAPTER VI.

And how do you hold her wit, Sir? I hold her wit ! The strength of all the Guard cannot hold it, if they were tied to it ; she would blow them out of the kingdom. They talk of Jupiter ; he is but a squib-cracker to her.

PHILASTER.

ON the following morning, Walter, experiencing much more civility from the gaoler than had been evinced by the constable and his coadjutors the night before, was not only provided with a comfortable breakfast, but allowed the attendance of the prison barber, by whose assistance he made his toilet in the best manner that circumstances would permit, knowing how much might depend on his personal

appearance in the expected examination. This was not long delayed. The officers, attended by a rabblement of boys and idle townspeople, came at an early hour to take him again before the Mayor, who, having slept off the effects of his intemperance, now assumed a most grave, burly, and consequential air, as if determined to repair his overnight's deficiencies, by being doubly magisterial in the morning. If a most swaggering peruke could have atoned for an empty head, and a solemn pomposity have made amends for the absence of every judicial attribute, our functionary might have passed muster as a competent Justice. The spectacles which he now wore redeemed, in some degree, the character of his coarse face, by concealing the piggish expression of his small leaden eyes; but when he opened his mouth nothing could disguise the fact of his being a vulgar block-head.

Of these particulars, however, the prisoner took little notice, his attention being arrested by the unexpected appearance of two ladies,

seated beside the table, at the head of which the Mayor was installed in an elevated arm-chair. One of these strangers, a respectable-looking elderly personage, presented nothing very remarkable in her exterior ; but her young companion, although she had but slender pretensions to beauty, except in the brightness of her eyes, was calculated so strike the most unobservant spectator by the voluptuous symmetry of her figure, the stylishness of her appearance, the fashionable confidence, not to say boldness of her deportment ; but, above all, by the arch, merry, and piquant expression of her countenance. While chatting and whispering to her friend, she occasionally laughed aloud, either for the purpose of displaying a brilliant set of teeth, or from genuine enjoyment of her novel situation, which, however, to a female of a less vivacious temperament, might have proved rather embarrassing than productive of pleasurable sensations.

“ Aha ! here comes the young highwayman, and you shall see, ladies, how I will trounce

him," said the Mayor, apparently wishing to show off before his auditresses, and rightly conjecturing one of them to be a person of distinction.—“ I was a little fresh and flush last night when he was had up before me, but you shall now find, ladies, and so shall the culprit, for the matter o' that, that I have got all my senses about me.”

“ Your Worship does quite right to mention this fact,” said the younger of the ladies, with a deferential inclination of the head ; “ but I do not quite understand what you mean by being fresh and flush last night.”

“ Why, madam, I was half-seas over, a little disguised in liquor, but I'm told I talked vastly sensible, notwithstanding.”

“ Indeed ! your Worship must have been effectually disguised,” said the same speaker, with a look of perfect gravity, while her companion whispered in her ear—“ For heaven's sake, Catherine, forbear ! cease this incorrigible bantering, or I will positively run away from you.”

“Bring up the prisoner! bring up the prisoner!” cried the Mayor—“I protest I never saw such a gaol-bird-looking rogue in my life, and, I remember, that was the first reflection that struck me last night.”

“It must have been the reflection of his own face,” whispered the sprightly fair to her companion. “May I die if I ever saw a prettier fellow than the prisoner, and I like him the better because he wears his own hair instead of a periwig. Poor young man!”

“*Poor* indeed!” cried the mayor who had overheard the last exclamation,—“he will look poorer still when he comes to be hung. For my part I have no feeling for these dangerous freebooters, nor indeed for any fellow who lives by his wits.”

“No *fellow* feeling, at all events,” whispered the bright-eyed stranger, who was again rebuked by her companion for her ill-timed and incurable levity.

“Now, Sirrah!” resumed the Mayor, endeavouring to impart a stern expression to his un-

meaning features, “ what have you got to say for yourself, before I order your mittimus to be made out, and send you back to prison to await your trial at the assizes? Here’s a clear case of highway robbery made out against you; here are witnesses who will swear that they saw you in company with the galloping Mask who has so long infested Wiltshire; there are others who can identify the black blood horse on which you had the impudence to ride into the town of Westbury, forgetting, I suppose, that I, Balaam Hickman, was the Mayor of it. The horse is forfeited by the law, and I have therefore ordered it to my own stables, claiming it as a deodand, which you are to understand, ladies, is compounded of two Latin words signifying,—*deo*, to give—*dando*—to the Mayor for the time being, which is the law of the land, seeing whereby this here is a case of felony without benefit of clergy. For what constitutes a robbery? why, a taking away; and this aforesaid horse has often taken away his rider when pursued, which is a robbery of justice,—ay, and

on the King's highway—ergo, the horse is a felon, and shall stand committed to my stable till I have an opportunity of trying him myself. Hem !”

“ A second Daniel come to judgment !” ejaculated the younger female in a tone of pretended admiration.

“ My name is Balaam, not Daniel,” observed the Mayor.

“ He talks, certainly, more like the ass than the prophet,” whispered the fair one, whose exuberant spirits seemed to hurry her upon all occasions into an unbecoming flippancy or an occasional smartness, which her companion dignified with the name of wit. “ Dearest Catherine !” she whispered, “ don't be such a madcap—your wit is so irresistible, your drolery so provocative of merriment, that I should laugh if I were dying ; but this is surely no fit occasion for your frolics, so prythee be serious.”

“ And now, having satisfactorily disposed of the horse,” continued the Mayor, “ we come to the saddle, which is a much more serious affair

Constable ! produce the saddle—Aha ! here it is, with a leathern pouch attached to it ; in which were found a watch—hand it up to me,—a beautiful watch, I protest ; made by Tompion, I perceive ; set round with pearls at the back, and in the centre the cypher of A. S. As I am a magistrate and a Mayor, I wish I could claim it as my own.”

“ There is only one S, your worship will observe,” said Catherine gravely, “ or I would not question your right to it. As it is, I am ready to swear to that watch as my property, and I am the better pleased to recover it since it belonged to my mother.”

“ Do you hear, Sirrah, do you hear ?” cried the magistrate, addressing the prisoner ; “ this declaration alone is a halter round your neck. What have we next ? A purse of shot silk, and a heavy one too, with the cypher of C. S. worked in seed pearls.”

“ I claim that also as my property,” said Catherine.

“ Aha, my young scapegrace, was I not right when I said that you had a hangdog look ?

The next article I find in the bag is a wrought gold ring."

"Which was taken from me at the same time as the other articles, and by the same highwayman," said the fair claimant.

"Well, sirrah, we need not go any farther, I believe; here is quite enough to commit you, ay, and to give the hangman a sure job; but as I make it a rule to be impartial, I have no objection to hear you if you have any thing to urge in your defence. What say you to the watch, the purse, and the ring?"

"That I never saw any of them before; that I have borne no watch or purse except those found upon my person when I was apprehended, and that as to a gold ring I should feel much more pleasure in putting one upon that young lady's finger than in taking it off."

"Gallantly turned, and a pretty-spoken fellow, as I live!" whispered Catherine to her friend; "I'll be sworn he is no robber, or at least that he has never stolen any thing but a silly damsel's heart."

“ I have heard your charges patiently,” continued Walter—“ and to defend myself against them, I need only ask one question—Will either of these ladies swear that I am the person who robbed them ?”

“ Both the parties then appealed to, immediately replied in the negative, declaring that the highwayman by whom they had been plundered was a stout elderly man, attired as a Quaker, and riding a handsome black horse.”

“ Aha ! that makes very little difference in the case,” pursued the Justice, “ for we have direct evidence as to the stolen property as well as to the black horse, both of which were found in your possession ; so that if you are not hanged as a principal, sirrah, you shall be gibbeted as a confederate. Whether you ran away with the horse, or the horse ran away with you, I neither know nor care, but we have evidence to prove that you changed steeds with the galloping Mask, for which there was doubtless a good reason. Ay, ay, we shall discover the plot by and by, but at present I confess there are

many things in this affair that I don't understand."

"There are more *out* of it," whispered the incorrigible Catherine.

"Will you be silent, you dear, droll, foolish, facetious, inconsiderate creature?" exclaimed the confidant in a tone of pretended displeasure.

The constable here observed, that there was some hard substance concealed in the wadding of the saddle, suggesting that if it were ripped open, they might perhaps ferret out more stolen property; a proposition which was vociferously advocated by half a dozen of the clownish bystanders.—"Hold your tongues, saucy fellows!" cried the Mayor—"and don't all clamour at once, for I can't hear more than one blockhead at a time."

"Pray then let his worship speak," said Catherine, courteously appealing to the rustics.

The Justice gave orders that the saddle should be cut open and examined, which being done accordingly, the constable drew forth a

flask, and declared it, upon inspection, to be filled with gunpowder.

“With gunpowder! with gunpowder! The Lord have mercy upon us all!” ejaculated the Mayor, utterly aghast with horror—“Then there *is* a Popish plot after all; I said there was, and Oates and Dangerfield have been convicted and punished for nothing. Heaven grant that this young fellow be not a Jesuit in disguise! Take away the flask, constable; away with it, or we shall be all blown into the air. Now, prisoner, this is an overt act; you are caught *ipso facto*; you have committed *felo de se*; so you may as well confess the truth before I order your mittimus to be made out. Gunpowder! Oh, you papistical young cut-throat!”

“If you have done with your evidence, your charges, and your vulgar abuse,” said Walter—“I presume that I may now enter upon my defence, and prove to you that I am, as I informed you last night, the son of Jaspas Colyton of Bridgwater, and an officer in Lord Dover’s troop of Guards, to support which statements

I desire that every article taken from my pockets may be produced.”—They were deposited upon the table, agreeably to his request, when the prisoner proceeded:—“ In the first place you will observe, that I have a purse and a watch of my own, so that I had as little need as inclination to plunder any one ; secondly, here is my Captain’s commission ; and thirdly, here is a letter of introduction written by my father to Lord Sunderland, his Majesty’s Secretary of State, which will sufficiently attest that I am no impostor. I admit the suspicious appearance of my riding into your town on a highwayman’s horse, having stolen property concealed about it ; but to establish the fact of my perfect innocence, I have only to state the circumstances that occasioned it, exactly as they occurred.”

Walter then related his encounter with the pretended Quaker, the contrivance by which he had been decoyed into a confession of his having secreted a sum of money in his saddle, and their stopping a short while at the Silver Lamb, at which part of his narrative the Mayor inter-

rupted him to inquire his opinion of the strong beer he had drunk.

“ I thought it as pleasant a beverage as I had ever tasted,” said Walter.

“ Aha ! say you so, young man ! ” cried the Mayor, taking off his spectacles with an air of great complacency ; “ you are right, you are right ; it is of my own brewing ; and as I am a Magistrate and a Mayor, and what is more, a brewer of the best strong beer in all Wiltshire, I begin to suspect that you are a person of taste and a speaker of the truth. Ladies ! you will perhaps allow me to present you a card of my brewery—Balaam Hickman, High Street. You have heard of Hickman’s beer, I dare say : should any of your friends be in want of a hogs-head I can supply them at any time.”

“ Of that there can be no doubt,—his piggish eyes will vouch for his assertion,” said Catherine *sotto voce* to her companion, who frowned, shook her finger rebukingly, and then thrust her handkerchief to her mouth, as if to smother an almost uncontrollable disposition to laugh.

Walter, at the request of the Justice, continued his narrative, drawing the attention of his auditors to the fact, that instead of being an accomplice of the Quaker, he had lost a valuable horse and a round sum of money by him, and expressing a hope in conclusion, that he had satisfactorily explained every circumstance, except the apparent invulnerability of the highwayman, for which he was himself utterly unable to account.

“Aha! but I am not!” cried the Mayor; “the fellow is known to have occasional meetings with old Martha Dagley, the witch of Clayfield Bottom; she was tried some years ago, and ought to have been burnt then. I told Chief Justice North that we should all have to rue his acquitting her, and I can now understand why no one has ever been able to touch or overtake the galloping Mask. Ah! things have never gone right in this country since we left off burning every one charged with witchcraft, whether innocent or guilty, as they used to do in the good old times. I don’t see

why we should be wiser than our fathers and mothers."

"So it seems, and his own must have been idiots," whispered Catherine; "and yet they evinced some foresight by giving this asinine son the name of Balaam."

At this juncture there was a considerable bustle and commotion in the room, occasioned by the sudden irruption of a youth attired as a servant, and exhibiting a face crimsoned with alarm and perspiration. Hustling the spectators aside, without the smallest ceremony, he won, or rather fought his way to the table, when Walter recognized Joe Stokes his groom, who having made a detour of some miles to avoid the highwayman, at length found his way to Westbury, and learning his master's misadventure in the morning, had hurried to the Mayor's house in a prodigious pucker to assist in establishing his identity. "Oh, maester! maester!" exclaimed the lad, clasping his hands together, while the tears started into his eyes in the joy of again beholding Walter, mingled

with grief and indignation at seeing him so unworthily treated; "Who'd a thuft o' zeeing Maester Walter, Squoire Colyton's only son, an' a Captain of the King's Dragons, standing avore tha judge to be tried vor's life, like a common hang-gallise trabagully? Zuggers! it do make tha blood bwile in ma body ta think on't!"

"Why, truly, Joe," said his master, "if the Mayor had decided upon first impressions and appearances, I might have stood a bad chance."

"He a mayor!" exclaimed Joe, indignantly, "that he bain't, nor a horse, neither; he yunt no better nor a jackass. Let me come at 'n, let me come at 'n, an' if I dwon't vetch 'n a touse on the snob I was never kirsen'd Joe!"

He was winning his way with menacing gestures towards the magistrate's elevated chair, and would probably have soon executed his threat, but that he was arrested in his progress by the constable, when he contented himself with doubling his fist at the Mayor, muttering between his clenched teeth, "Dang thee,

scrawvlin tuad ! if thee 'dst ha' hung my maester I 'd ha' knocked out thy brains wi' a stwon, that 's what I 'ood !”

“ Joe ! Joe ! you must have put them in first,” said Catherine, in the same subdued voice as before, when her companion burst into a laugh which she attempted to turn into a cough.

“ My good lad !” cried Walter, “ though I am obliged by your zeal in my behalf, I cannot allow this disrespectful language to be applied to his worship the Mayor. If you wish to render me a real service you will command your passion, and state all the particulars of our encounter with the Quaker, that you may confirm the truth of what I have myself related, and perfect my exculpation from this most unfounded charge.”

Thus called upon, Joe bowed respectfully to his master, but not to the Mayor, hemmed two or three times, smoothed down his hair twice as often, while he was considering where he should begin, and then in his own broad Somersetshire

dialect related every occurrence up to the moment of his master being dragged from his horse, when his own animal, taking fright at the report of the pistol, had run away with him, and continued unmanageable until it had borne its rider three or four miles from the scene of action.

It being now impossible to entertain a doubt that the prisoner, instead of being a robber, was the party robbed, the Mayor, who was rather pleased than otherwise at the turn the affair had taken, since it promised to leave the unclaimed horse in his possession, informed Walter, whom he now addressed with much respect as Captain Colyton, that he now stood acquitted of every charge and was free to depart whithersoever it listed him, expressing a hope at the same time that he was perfectly satisfied.

“Not altogether,” replied Walter, dryly; “your worship may have observed among the property which you have ordered to be restored to me, a certain article yclept a sword; at present it is secured to its scabbard, but I may

have very early occasion to remedy this defect, and draw it from its sheath unless you apologize before the present company for certain injurious terms which you have thought proper to apply to me both last night and this morning."

"Certainly, certainly, you are entitled to it, and I have not the smallest hesitation in complying with your request ; I recall them all with the greatest pleasure," said the Mayor, as abject now as he had previously been rude and overbearing. "You must yourself confess that appearances were suspicious, but had I known your real quality, you can hardly suppose, my good friend, that—"

"Stop him, Sir, stop him," cried Catherine aside to Walter, "he is offering you a greater insult than ever by calling you his good friend."

"As I must take leave to decline the honour of your friendship," said Walter, "I beg you will not thus address me. I am satisfied with your public retraction, which I hope will prove a salutary lesson, and teach you not to be so foul-mouthed in future."

"How can he help it, poor fellow ! when he

is evidently in the habit of eating his own words?" inquired Catherine of her friend.

"And I would further caution you," resumed Walter, "never to draw harsh and unfavourable conclusions from a man's looks.

"Unless when he looks in the glass," added Catherine.

"You wild and witty creature!" exclaimed her friend, "you are really quite incorrigible—your amazing spirits run away with you. You must check this overflowing raillery and *badinage*, or I must positively forswear your society."

"And now to conclude this disagreeable affair," said Walter; "as the only compensation I require for my night's unjust confinement, and the imputations that have been momentarily cast upon me, I claim the privilege of returning to these fair ladies, with my own hands, the property which I have been the lucky, though unintentional means of recovering for them." Taking the various articles from the table, he presented them accordingly, politely declaring that he was reconciled to his own loss, since he

was thus enabled to restore to them every thing of which they had been plundered.

Both ladies were profuse in their acknowledgments, while Catherine, holding out her hand, exclaimed with a coquettish look, "Nay, Captain Colyton, as you were gallant enough to declare that you would rather put a ring upon my finger than take it off, I must bring you to the proof." She held out her finger, Walter restored the ring to its place, touched the hand slightly with his lips, bowed courteously and withdrew, followed by Joe, who could not help casting a scowl of defiance and snapping his fingers at the crest-fallen Mayor, as he passed him and quitted the apartment.

"*Par tous les amours !*" exclaimed Catherine to her friend as they returned to their inn, "This young Somersetshire Captain is the prettiest fellow I have seen since I left St. James's. Tell me, Morlay, you who never admire any male creature except him whom you have sworn exclusively to love, honour, and obey, (what a horrible oath !) tell me, is not

this youngster *un homme fait à peindre*, as Portsmouth said of Churchill? True, he wants the finishing polish which our courtiers exhibit, but then he has none of their impudence or affectation; and notwithstanding that little touch of rusticity about him, which in my opinion is a charm, it is quite impossible to doubt that he is a gallant and accomplished gentleman."

"Truly, Catherine, the man is not amiss for a young Squire, and by the time he has been six months in Lord Dover's Regiment, he may pass muster with the best of our gallants, but for the present I can see nothing so bewitching about him. The fact is, that your fascinations inspired him for the moment; you have evidently won the poor fellow's heart: Heaven grant that he may not have robbed you of yours in return. This, you know, would be *Leze Majesté*, so prythee be upon your guard."

"Deuce take you, Morlay, you are always reminding me of my splendid slavery."

"A strange sort of slavery that consists in having royalty at your feet, a Countess's coro-

net upon your head, and the whole Court at your disposal.”

“Hush, hush! you forget that I am no Countess while we are travelling *incog*: heigho! I sometimes wish that I could forget it altogether.”

“A sigh from you, Catherine! A symptom of lassitude, I presume, produced by your own exuberant and irrepressible spirits.”

“May not these high flown spirits, which you and others have so often envied me, be nothing more than a vehement effort to drive away dejection and melancholy? *N'importe— vive la bagatelle!* let me sing and be merry while I can, for when I get into my gilded cage, I shall have little heart for piping—I often think of the French chansonette that I heard Cifaccio sing to the late King a week before his death—

‘Un jour Iris mit dans sa cage,
 Un Rossignol qu'elle avoit pris;
 Mais sitôt que l'oiseau se vit dans l'esclavage,
 Il perdit son tendre ramage.
 Quel chagrin—quel chagrin
 Pour la jeune Iris!—’

“ I forget the second verse, but I recollect the poor bird promised to sing as cheerfully as ever if he might fly from his fine cage and be restored to liberty. *Basta, mia cara!* here we are at our inn, and we must now keep our tongues within our teeth, if we wish to remain *incog*. I won't say—be silent!—for that were a useless command to a female; but let us at all events talk so as not to betray ourselves.”

Walter in the mean time had returned to his humble public-house, for it deserved no better name, where the landlord finding that his inmate was not only an honest man, but that he had preserved from the highwayman a tolerably well-filled purse, became as importunate in his attentions and apologies to his guest as he had previously been forward in procuring his apprehension. Recoiling from his impertinent civilities, and requesting that he would not intrude into his apartment unless the bell rang, Walter immediately set himself to work in endeavouring to elucidate the mystery of his not having wounded the highwayman, though his

pistols had been held within a yard of his body. As it was not unlikely that the state of his groom's weapons might throw some light upon this subject, he ordered them to be brought to him, when it appeared upon inspection that the bullets had been carefully withdrawn. That so honest and simple-hearted a lad should be in collusion with the robber he did not for a moment suspect, but upon being closely cross-questioned, Joe confessed that the pretended Quaker, on his quitting the parlour, had joined him in the stable, and had treated him with a pint of ale, sending him to the tap to procure it, during which temporary absence he had doubtless employed himself in drawing the bullets from the four pistols. Upon strictly charging his own memory too, Walter now recollected that he had deposited his sword upon the parlour table while he leaned out of window to chat with the pretty landlady, who was bargaining with a market-woman in the road ; an interval of which the highwayman must have adroitly availed himself to secure

his sword to the scabbard, and had afterwards hurried him away to prevent any discovery of the manœuvre. As he considered himself to have been quite as culpable as his servant, he dismissed the latter with a gentle reprimand for his disobedience of orders in quitting the horses, resolving for his own part to convert his present experience into a lesson, and never thenceforward to chat too earnestly with pretty landladies, but above all not to give his confidence to strangers and fellow travellers, lest he should be again deceived and plundered by a wolf in sheep's clothing.

It was much easier, however, to form sage resolutions for the future, than to settle how he should relieve himself from the embarrassment which his past indiscretion had entailed upon him. Of recovering his horse and money he had abandoned all hope, for the sharp-witted robber, when deprived of his own steed, would not neglect the means of escape offered by Walter's, which had probably been recovered and secured for that purpose, either by the pseudo Quaker

himself, or by one of his colleagues. "How then shall I act, how pursue my journey?" soliloquised our bewildered traveller as he walked up and down the room. "As I have not sufficient money in my purse to buy another horse, shall I take possession of Joe's, send the lad back, and pursue my way unattended, which I may do with the less apprehension as I have now but little to lose? Shall I return at once to Orchard Place to petition for a fresh equipment?—or shall I write home with an account of my misadventure, and remain here until I receive fresh instructions? I hate delays—I should not like to present myself at home *in formú pauperis*, and with such a self-condemning story in my mouth—there will be little use in proceeding to London without the means of procuring my outfit when I arrive, and it will be intolerably tedious and annoying to remain at this unlucky town. I cannot therefore devise any satisfactory course of proceeding, or anticipate aught but vexation from this most inauspicious commencement of my

career. Heaven defend me from all Quakers! The founder of their sect could not have been so sly a fox as he whom I yesterday encountered. Shame upon me, in thus blaming the innocent for the guilty! There has been but one fool—only one culpable person in the whole transaction, and his name is Walter Colyton.”

This self-examination was interrupted by the re-appearance of the landlord, whom he was about to order out of the room in no very complacent mood, when the man stated that there were two ladies below, who desired to have speech of him.—“To speak with me!” exclaimed Walter in no small surprise—“who are they—I know not a soul in this neighbourhood—what are their names?”

“They declined giving them,” replied the landlord.

“Very extraordinary! but let them be introduced.” This was done accordingly, when he recognized the two females who had been present during his examination before the Mayor. “I know not whether we are deviat-

ing from etiquette and established usages," said Catherine, throwing herself into a chair so as to assume an attitude at once graceful and voluptuous—"but considering the awkward predicament in which our mutual friend, the worthy Quaker, has placed you, I thought we might stand excused in disregarding all form and ceremony, for which, to tell you the truth, I have never any very profound respect. It occurred to us that you might be seriously embarrassed by the loss of your horse, and the golden freightage which was to purchase your outfit, and as you have been the means of recovering for us the whole of our property, which luckily exceeds our present and probable need, we have thought it our duty, to call and offer you *tout franchement* whatever portion you may deem necessary to carry you comfortably to London."

"Don't say *we*, my dear Catherine!" exclaimed her companion—"it is all your own kind and considerate proposition—nay, don't blush, though really it does make you look

quite handsome, but this is ever the case with you. You are always more ashamed of your good actions than others are of their misdeeds. Oh, Captain Colyton! if you did but know half the noble and generous things that this dear creature is in the constant habit of performing."

"I can easily believe it," said Walter—"not only from the cheerful benignity of the lady's countenance, but from the munificence of the proposal with which I am now honoured. I will frankly confess to you Madam," he continued, addressing Catherine—"that at the very moment of your arrival I was pondering upon my difficulties in a somewhat disconsolate mood, but they are only of a temporary nature, they cannot extend beyond the period when I may expect to hear from my father, to whom I shall immediately write, and grateful as I am for your kindness, I should be hardly willing to accept a loan without knowing to whom I was indebted, and where I might call to discharge the obligation."

“ We are on our return from the Bath,” said Catherine,—“ I have made a little *detour* with my friend for the purpose of calling on one of her relations who lives at Luggershall, and I have particular reasons for wishing to remain unknown, until we arrive in London, where I reside. You look as if you would confer a favour frankly and willingly; why should you not accept one in the same spirit? Come, come, I will take no denial. You are young, and must therefore submit to be taught, especially when a lady is your instructress, how you should comport yourself in this affair. Here is my purse—the purse which you recovered for me. Take from it at least as many Jacobuses as may suffice to purchase another horse, and if you are too proud to remain under what you may conceive to be an obligation, call, whenever it suits your convenience, at the first house in St. James’s Square, next to the Mall; enquire for Catherine, and I will in my own name allow you to cancel your debt.”

“ All objections are vain,” said the compa-

nion—"when my noble-minded friend has once set her heart upon any liberal or beneficent action her obstinacy is inconceivable. This is her besetting sin; she is sadly stubborn and intractable—so I often tell her, for frankness is my motto—I am quite a plain-spoken body, and never scruple to remind her of her faults. Not that I object to her conduct in the present instance—quite the reverse, and I have only mentioned her failing that you may cease any fruitless opposition to her wishes."

Walter would still have hesitated, but finding himself unable to resist the cordial and urgent manner in which the proffered accommodation was pressed upon his acceptance; and feeling assured that his father would quickly enable him to repay it, he at length took from the purse a sufficient sum to purchase another horse, making at the same time the most fervent acknowledgments for the favour, and declaring that he should never forget the kindness evinced by a stranger who had first become acquainted with him under circumstances

so little calculated to entitle him to her kindness.

“And whenever you hear a long-eared animal braying by the road-side, I hope you won’t forget the Worshipful Balaam Hickman, Mayor of Westbury,” cried Catherine. “Tush! tush! no more of acknowledgments!—I hate them!” She pursued the conversation for some little time in the same bantering and jocose strain, which she maintained with unabated smartness and vivacity, occasionally interrupted by her friend’s exclamations of amazement at her high spirits and prodigious conversational powers, when she suddenly started up, declaring that she must immediately renew her journey. Walter bade both the ladies adieu, pledged himself to call upon them as soon as he should arrive in London, and after having mused for some time upon the strange nature of his adventure, the generosity of the lively Catherine, and the probable motives that could impel a being apparently so volatile to such a strict concealment

of her name and quality, he walked to a dealer's in the town to purchase a horse, in order that he might follow his fair friends, and clear up the mystery with as little delay as possible.

CHAPTER VII.

To move, to raise, to ravish every heart,
With Shakspeare's nature, or with Jonson's art,
Let others aim;—'tis yours to raise the soul
With thunder rumbling from the mustard bowl.
While horns and trumpets now to madness swell,
Now sink in sorrows with a tolling bell.

POPE.

OUR traveller, whose thoughts were almost exclusively occupied during the remainder of his journey by his strange adventure at Westbury, arrived in London without having encountered any fresh mischance, and not a little anxious to redeem his pledge by calling upon his anonymous friends in Pall Mall. In the first instance, he betook himself to a sufficiently humble lodging in Holborn, kept by an old maid-servant of his family who had married and

settled in this quarter, and had been prepared to receive him by a letter from his provident mother. On taking possession of his apartments, however, and examining the state of his finances, a fresh dilemma awaited him, for as the managing Mrs. Colyton had persuaded him not to bear about his person much more than was sufficient, upon her own economical calculations, to carry him to London; and as mothers and sons seldom arrive at the same arithmetical conclusion in their estimate of travelling expenses, he found that the surplus she had anticipated was reduced to little more than a single guinea. This embarrassing discovery occasioned him to regret more than ever the loss of the saddle and its contents, especially as, in the contemplation of a new military outfit in London, he had brought with him no more than a single suit of clothes, which not only betrayed evidence of service and travel, but were too rustic in fashion, and too homely in material, to be worn in visits of ceremony at a time when the gentility, or at least the gentle-

manly rank of the wearer, was invariably attested by a certain degree of costliness in the garments. Upon the Earl of Sunderland, to whom he had a letter of introduction from his father, and who was at this moment prime minister, it was of the utmost importance to make a favourable impression in their first interview—an advantage he could hardly expect in his present mean habiliments, which, indeed, were likely to exclude him from all approach to that distinguished nobleman, who was known to be somewhat difficult of access. Had not the same considerations withheld him from immediately redeeming his pledge to the fair incognita of Pall-mall, he would have been deterred by a still more delicate feeling. Impatient of obligations from a stranger, especially of a pecuniary nature, he was unwilling to call until he was able to repay the loan which had been so handsomely pressed upon his acceptance. A statement of his actual situation, and her knowledge of the loss he had sustained, would doubtless afford a valid excuse for a little delay; but

it might excite distrust that he should have no friends in London capable of supplying him, and he was too grateful for the timely assistance he had received, as well as too anxious to conciliate the good opinion of his vivacious friend, to run the risk of forfeiting it, even for a single day. Unused to emergencies of any sort, and little accustomed to think for himself as to the common concerns of life, Walter, concluding there was no other alternative, had made up his mind to wait patiently for instructions, or fresh supplies from home, when it occurred to him that, by mentioning all the circumstances to the landlady, she might be induced to make him a present advance of money.

Upon his trying this experiment, Mrs. Skinner, for that was the name of the individual in question, after having listened to his statement with great attention, but with a gathering look of ominous suspicion, exclaimed — “ Truly, Captain Colyton, this seems to me but a strange sort of a cock-and-a-bull story ; and indeed for the matter o’ that, how do I know that you be

Captain Colyton? I remember to have seen Master Walter indeed, when a boy of five years old; but I can't say you remind me of him, not in the least, for you are a whole heap taller and bigger, and many a good year older than he was when I was in Somersetshire. Then you haven't the least look of good Mrs. Colyton, though I can't deny that you have a cast, more or less, of the worthy Squire, only you're younger like. I ask your pardon, Sir, if I'm too free-spoken, but there are so many plots, and so many Papishes going about in disguise, ever since they murdered Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey, (God rest his soul!) that there's no knowing who's who, nor what's what."

"That I am taller and bigger, and older than I was when a boy, I will not attempt to deny," said Walter smiling; "but if you have no other objection than your doubts as to my identity, I believe I can soon satisfy you upon that point."

"By my fackins! I'm not so sure of that,

Captain, if so be you be a captain, for it's scarce a twelvemonth since a stranger came to take my lodgings, in a handsome drugget suit and a puff wig, who passed himself off for a gentleman usher, and such I could have sworn he was, for he had quite a court look about him. Ah! he was a handsome man, with as pretty a leg as you shall see in a thousand, and knew how to behave to a lady too, that is to say, when she struck his fancy, (the speaker bridled up, and cast a side-glance at a little mirror over the fire-place;) for he took the ribbons out of his shirt-sleeves, put them into my shoes, and paid me the prettiest compliments I ever heard. Alack! it was the only thing he ever paid me; for, would you believe it, Sir, the good-looking, but good-for-nothing shabberoon decamped in the night, and carried off with him our chocolate-pot, thinking it was silver, I suppose, though it was only plated."

"But if I convince you, my good friend, that I am really and truly Captain Colyton."

"Welladay! that will not put money in my

pocket, and how should a poor woman, and a letter of lodgings, like me, have golden guineas in her purse? We are generally in arrears for rent, and I was in hopes you would have paid me a something in advance."

"That I will cheerfully do when I receive a remittance from home, for which, I presume, I must now wait with patience."

"Why so; what has become of your two horses? Cannot you sell them?"

"Truly, I had forgotten that source of supply, and I thank you for reminding me of it. My groom, for whom I have no farther occasion, is to return upon one of them, as soon as I can find money for his expenses on the road."

"Which you can easily procure, as well as a month's lodgings in advance, by the sale of the other beast: he would presently eat his head off in the stable, and I can recommend you to a horse-dealer in the Strand, a friend of my own, whom, I believe, to be the honestest man in the whole trade."

Walter, however uninitiated he might be,

knew that this character conveyed no very exalted eulogy; but as the urgency of his need would not allow him to be fastidious in the choice of a chapman, he took the dealer's address, inquired the way to the Strand, and set off for the purpose of bringing him back to the stables, and showing him the animal he was to purchase. Following the directions he had received, he soon found himself in Covent Garden, a spot of which he had so often read, and the scene of so many romantic incidents and adventures, that he would have paused to gaze around him, even if he had not been struck by its noble arcade, and the magnificent architecture of Inigo Jones. At this period, its piazza afforded no access to a theatre; the centre was not vilified by a market, and the fine structures that surrounded it, instead of being vulgarised, as in the present day, by the occupancy of vintners, tradesmen, and shopkeepers, were tenanted by noblemen, or people of fashion, so that the handsomest square in London lost no portion of its grandeur by disparaging asso-

ciations. Indeed, it was still farther elevated by its connexion with those literary subjects to which we have alluded, and as it exercised the memory and the imagination of its present admirer, not less than it gratified his senses, he remained for some time gazing eagerly around him, until he was interrupted by a sudden exclamation of—"Hilts and daggers! unless my peepers are turned tattmongers, and play me false, this should be Walter Colyton, the son of my brother Cavalero of Bridgwater. Hey, my young Squire! what brings you to the great Babel, and the pleasant purlieus of Covent Garden? If you seek a Bona Roba—I am your man;—or a dicing-house, where there are no Fullams, again am I your man;—or a tavern, where there are civil drawers, good measure, and bright Burgundy, once more am I your man; but if you are looking out for a Popish meeting-house, or a Presbyterian conventicle, I shall say with Mercutio—'a plague of both your houses!' and so leave you to be your own pilot."

By the time the speaker had finished this strange address, which he tossed off his tongue with a voluble familiarity, or rather impudence of manner, Walter had recognised him as Captain Seagrave, who, on his being quartered at Bridgwater about a year before, had renewed his campaigning acquaintance with his father. Upon this occasion, availing himself of his temporary intimacy in the family, he had presumed to make an offer of his hand to Edith ; but as his motive was clearly seen to be the small fortune to which, by the will of a godmother, she was entitled upon her marriage, and as he possessed not a single qualification to atone for his palpable venality, his suit had been rejected without much ceremony, he quitted the town with his troop shortly after, and the family had never heard of him since.

In answer to his string of interrogatories, Walter, not thinking it necessary to promulgate his robbery, contented himself with stating that he came to London to join Lord Dover's regiment, and that his present object was the dis-

posal of a horse, for which purpose he was proceeding to a dealer's in the Strand, whose name he mentioned.

“What! apply to old Joel Bates of the Strand!” exclaimed Seagrave, “the greatest rogue in all Christendom as I'm an honest man and a soldier. If he finds you bubbleable, you're robbed; if not, he declines dealing with you. I once bought of him a flea-bitten grey gelding—gave him thirty guineas—by the same token—and the beast proved the arrantest Rozinante!—A fico for the biting rogue! I know another of the trade, here in St. Martin's-fields, a fellow with a clean conscience although he lives upon horse flesh. I will take you to him, and if he do not bleed to the full value for your beast, he shall at least come within a few pieces of the mark. To the right about therefore, and march! By my rapier, Signor Gualtero, it is fortunate that I encountered you.”

As Walter, who was by no means prepossessed in favour of his landlady, was ready enough to

distrust her recommendation, and naturally concluded that Seagrave, as a soldier and a man of experience about town, would be likely to know the most trust-worthy dealers, he thanked him for his offer, and turning about, prepared to accompany him towards St. Martin's-fields. They had not proceeded many paces, however, when his associate suddenly stopping, exclaimed, "Gadso! I had forgotten. I have a visit to make at Whitehall that must not be delayed, for 'tis to a Hidalgo, one of our first magnificos; but give me your address; I will call upon you with the dealer in less than an hour, and we can proceed together to the stables." Walter complied with his request, when his new acquaintance, exclaiming, "*Au revoir camarade!*" stalked away in the direction of the Strand, whistling a tune, and swaggering as if he would engross the whole foot path to himself.

Captain Seagrave whose once handsome countenance was now disfigured by the effects of intemperance and dissipation, called himself a soldier of fortune, having served in one army or

another, at home or abroad, from the time he was a boy. In mere courage he was not deficient, but he was too dissolute, drunken, and unprincipled to have ever obtained any farther promotion. What he earned, or won, or plundered, he instantly wasted in some riotous excess, and having no scruples of conscience he little cared by what violence or trickery he recruited his finances. In all the gambler's arts he was a perfect adept, and although he might urge in extenuation that he was not much worse than many of his contemporaries among the self-styled soldiers of fortune, he could not be pronounced, in point of fact, any thing better than a dissolute, impudent, vulgar, military sharper. His boisterous cheerfulness, however, recommended him to some of his coarser comrades, who tolerated even his brazen insolence because it was not without a touch of occasional drollery.

But though he could be good-humoured he was by no means good-natured, becoming implacable and revengeful the moment he was

thwarted in any of his designs. Ever since his rejection by Edith he had hated the Colytons, and as it occurred to him that by plundering Walter he might at once gratify this feeling, and replenish his purse which was always empty, he had marked him for his prey the moment he learnt his present intentions, and the object of his visit to London. In pursuance of this determination he betook himself to a dealer whom he knew to be as great a knave as himself, and having bargained with him beforehand for a full share of the spoil, the two worthies proceeded to Walter's lodgings, and accompanied him to the stables. They found their intended dupe too good a judge to be bamboozled out of his senses by any disparagement of his horse, and they were obliged therefore to betake themselves to objections of a general nature, both vehemently asserting that hackneys of this description were utterly unsaleable in London, and consequently worth little or nothing to a dealer. "*Bloet ende stryd!* Signor Gualtero," cried the captain, "if he were a managed horse

and fit for a charger, I would give you your own price, for I am in want of such an article, and they are scarce; but as to this mere roadster—by the by, one of his eyes seems about to desert, in which case the other will not be long in decamping;—as to this hackney, I say, may I never draw sword! if I do not think you are offered the full London price.” In support of this assertion, the dealer solemnly averred that he would not have bidden so much but that the gentleman was a friend of Captain Scgrave, one of his best customers; and thus between the two the owner was ultimately fleeced of his animal for less than half its value. The money was paid down, the dealer rode away with his purchase, and the captain who had cast a wistful eye upon the guineas as Walter slipped them into his purse, invited him to spend the afternoon with him at his lodgings in Bowstreet, charitably intending to decoy him into play of some sort, and to win, or if necessary, to cheat him of the whole sum.

Having regained his lodgings, Walter, anxi-

ous to disabuse his landlady of any suspicions she might entertain, paid her a trifle in advance, and as he was almost ashamed of making his appearance in his travelling dress, enquired where he might most speedily be equipped with a fashionable suit. At that time there were shops that supplied new and ready-made clothes of every description, nor was it uncustomary, especially for persons arriving from the country, to avail themselves of such convenient stores. From one of these he procured a handsome suit that fitted him perfectly, and having dined at his lodgings, betook himself in the afternoon to his appointment with Seagrave. “*Benvenuto, Signor Gaultero!*” exclaimed that worthy, who had picked up a few foreign phrases in his different services. “*Donder ende zwaarten!*” as Hans Mundungus says, I hardly knew you again in your new togs and tassels, which become you well. May I be drilled through the midriff with an iron Bilboa if I thought you half so pretty a fellow! You only want a peruque to make you complete. Nevertheless,

baisez moi, mon cher, as a prelude to our better acquaintance. You find me but indifferently bestowed here; but what should an old Soldado care for his quarters, and for so short a time too? Sometimes I am in camp at Hounslow, sometimes in barracks with my regiment, and when it likes me to visit any of my court friends in London, what quarter so fashionable as Covent Garden?"

"I was indeed admiring it when we first encountered this morning," said Walter; "your lodgings are moreover convenient in one essential point, for I see a coffee house just opposite to you."

"That is Will's, of which you may perchance have heard as the great resort of the wits and wags. Lookee, Signor Gaultero, do you see a fat, florid, sleepy-eyed man, sitting close to the open window, with his feet stretched out into the balcony. Confound those whiffing fellows behind him, they have puffed so lustily that we can hardly distinguish him for the smoke."

“ You mean that elderly gentleman who has twice taken snuff within the last minute.”

“ The same : observe him well, for this is no other than my Lord Rochester’s ‘ Poet Squab,’ the ‘ Mr. Bayes’ of Buckingham’s Rehearsal, the Laureat Jack of the mobile, or in propriâ personâ, John Dryden the Poet Laureat, a good writer till the rogue turned Papist, and took to scribbling musty polemics, and translating lying lives of Roman Catholic Saints. *Tonnerre de Dieu!* I can’t understand how the scoundrel could forsake his faith. For my own part, I pique myself upon being a religious man and a staunch Protestant, and if I had my will I would prove it upon this turncoat by letting out some of his renegado blood, at or least bestowing upon his shoulders a second Rose-Alley salutation. Since he has become apostate he has lost his supremacy at Will’s ; few speak to him, none ask for a pinch out of his box ; he can get no listeners to his solemn decisions, which used once to be re-

ceived as oracles, but sits as you see, alone, glum, and gloomy.”

“ He may have been unfortunate in his subsequent choice of subjects,” said Walter, “ as Poets must be when they embroil themselves with politics ; but I am not sorry that he has forsaken the Drama, for his rhiming heroical plays always appeared to me too stiff and bombastic, while his more familiar ones are generally too licentious.”

“ *Helle ende den Duivel!* too licentious? Heaven grant that you be not a Puritan or a Presbyterian ! They always appeared to me perfectly modest ; and as to his heroics they are my delight, for, in spite of Hamlet, I do love to see a ‘ robustious periwig-pated fellow,’ tearing a passion to tatters. Give me the stamping and staring, the ranting and swearing, the powder flying from the peruke, and the dust from the russet boot, trumpets braying, thunder roaring, lightning flashing, galleries shouting, all battling and rattling, ranting and panting, thunder and wonder, flustering and

blustering, as if the day of judgment were at hand, and heaven and earth coming together at every word."

"You describe with enthusiasm," said Walter; for his companion mouthed and gesticulated like a moon-struck tragedian.

"*Sacre! mon cher*, shall I tell you the truth? I have been a player myself; but take me rightly—as an amateur. Sink me! only for amusement when we have been idling in quarters or our winter barracks. But the play I liked the best was the *Œdipus*, which Laureat Jack wrote in conjunction with poor Nat Lee who is now in Bedlam, and I could for ever listen to the fine speech that concludes the fourth act—

' Fall darkness then and everlasting night
Shadow the globe ; may the sun never dawn,
The silver moon be blotted from her orb,
And for an universal rout of nature,
Through all the inmost chambers of the sky,
May there not be a glimpse, one starry spark,
But gods meet gods and jostle in the dark,
That jars may rise, and wrath divine be hurl'd,
Which may to atoms shake the solid world.'

Walter could hardly help imagining that the specimen of amateur acting upon which he gazed with amazement was an intentional burlesque, for the vulgar vehemence with which the Captain delivered this furious fustian, and the dust that clouded up from beneath his feet as he stamped out its accumulations from an old shaggy carpet, gave him the appearance of a mimic purposely out-heroding Herod, in mockery of some histrionic madman. “Nay, Signor Gualtero,” said Seagrave, puffing away the dust—“I had the trick of the stage once, and knew something of chaste acting; but I am out of practice now, and getting villainous short-breathed and tame. Ah! you need not peer any more at the old Popish Laureat, over the way, for I see he has brought his spectacles down upon his nose, has taken up a paper, which by the size of it I suspect to be Sir Roger L’Estrange’s Observator, and I know beforehand that he will not leave it this half hour, since it is sure to tickle his fancy by attacking the Whigs, and still more so because

he writes in it himself, and is probably at this very moment admiring one of his own productions. They say Sir Roger's daughter has followed the example of old Nell Gwyn, Joe Haines, the comedian, and some more worthies of the same stamp, by turning Catholic. *Sacre! mon ami!* we can spare them as many converts of this sort as they will take. Lookee, Mynheer Wouter! I'm a soldier and know the duty of obedience, but if the King were to closet me as he has done several others, and to seek to convert me to Popery, I should give my right mustachio a twirl—it's a way I've got,—and stop him thus:—Your Majesty, says I, having purchased this poor body of mine, may command it to march to the cannon's mouth—I will do it with a willing heart and cry, '*Vive le Roi*' after I am blown up into the air, even as the shipwrecked crew of the Gloucester frigate cheered your escape with three huzzas when they were themselves sinking. But my soul does not wear your Majesty's epaulette—my conscience is in no man's pay—I know nothing

about dogmas, doctrines and distinctions,—my father was a Protestant—that's enough for me, his faith is mine, and damme! please your Majesty, I'll fight for it blindfold, as a good son and a good Christian ought to do, up to my knees in blood.”

“ There might be more zeal than discretion in such a declaration,” said Walter, “ though it is not very likely that you will be thus put to the test.”

“ 'Uds Sacraments! I believe not—the King has had enough of that game with my friend Colonel Kirke, whose answer was *een donderkloot*, as Mynheer says.—Redcoats are no turncoats; a fellow that would desert his church, would desert his colours. *Sacre!* I wish my rapier were down the throat of every such scoundrel, and that I felt the hilt rattling against his teeth.”

Seagrave cared no more than the sword he wore, either about religion or the cause that he affected to espouse, but as he was a creature of Lord Sunderland's, sometimes acting as a

bully, and sometimes as a spy, he would often in the latter capacity use the most intemperate language as a decoy for entrapping those with whom he associated into a betrayal of their secret sentiments. Walter, not knowing that he had a *carte blanche* for whatever he might choose to utter, reminded him that his last expressions were of a somewhat hazardous nature, considering that the King himself had changed his religion.

“*Merci, mon cher,*” cried Seagrave, “I thank you for the hint—you are right—‘*Hooren, zien en zwiggen*’ is best, as Mynheer says. That’s the worst of me, I always say what comes uppermost, and one of these days my tongue perhaps will run my head into a hempen noose. But this talking is dry work; come, *mon cher camarade*, sit ye down, sit ye down, I have a snack of cold meat-pie in my cupboard, and a bottle of French wine better than any you ever tiddled at Chatolin’s or Le Frond’s, Long’s or Locket’s.”

“Houses which I only know by name,” said

Walter; “ you forget that I am quite new to London.”

“ But not new to French wine, if my old Camerado Jaspar Colyton be what he was, and you are indeed his son. See! it sparkles like a ruby! There was a club of us, I remember, in the Low Countries, that always sang a song in chorus at the drawing of the first cork

‘ Kom, laat ons dan drinken, drinken, drinken,
Kom laat ons dan drinken terwyl wy leven—’

I only remember the burthen, and that I cannot well forget, for I never draw a cork without thinking of it. Nay, if you like it better, I can give you a snatch of a French *chanson à boire*; I picked it up at Dunkirk before ’twas sold—

‘ Bon Vin, liqueur admirable,
Lorsqu’à table
Tu repans ton odeur aimable,
Des Dieux le Nectar moins potable
N’est que fable—Voilà, mon cher.’

That will do for a start, but when we come to the second cork, it shall be a bumper fine to him who trolls any thing but English. So fill

away, drink and fear not, for I have bottles galore in the closet."

There was something in this man's cheerfulness, and his practice of singing snatches of songs, that for a moment reminded Walter of his father; and, indeed, to a certain extent, the same modes of early life, for both had been soldiers of fortune, had impressed habits upon each of a somewhat similar nature. And yet the difference between them was sufficiently wide. Although the Squire's jovial and hilarious temperament led him to indulge too often in deep potations, the prevalent vice of the age, he generally stopped short of actual intoxication, and never failed to preserve the manners, the look, the good-humour, and even the voice of a gentleman. Seagrave, even when he was sober, wore the appearance of a vulgar drunkard; his tones were loud and dissonant; his language and demeanour equally coarse; his merriment boisterous, while in his cups, which were often pushed to ebriety, he was apt to become a choleric and dangerous brawler.

When he saw that Walter, who, in spite of his father's tipping propensities, was temperate, firmly declined his invitations to replenish his glass, Seagrave exclaimed, with a careless air—
“ Well, then, my sober Signor—what say you ? We have a long evening before us ; I am no wag to entertain you with comical stories and smutty jokes, like old Wharton : shall we have a quiet game together ? It's a thing I seldom do, having little luck, and being but a sorry player, though I know a trifle of most of the current games. What shall it be—cards or dice ? Picquet, gluck, ombre, tick-tack doublets, size-ace, bone-ace, passage, hazard, or humble cribbage ? ”

“ To tell you the truth,” said Walter, “ having heard that the King was going to the play to-night, I had intended to ask the favour of your accompanying me thither, and as, by the advice of my landlady, I put only a single piece in my purse, for fear of pickpockets at the doors, it is not in my power to accept your challenge to-night, though it is still in yours to

gratify my wishes, by going with me to the play."

"Curse the suspicious old Jezebel! does she think that your purse ran any risks in my company? *Helle ende de Dood!* I would have taken as much care of it as if it had been my own. She is a crusty, musty, rusty, dusty, fusty *Vrouw*, and deserves to be nailed to a barn-door, like a weasel or a pole-cat. *N'importe, mon cher*, we can have our game another evening, and if you are for the play—*Allons, mon enfant!* I will be your usher, and, may I never smell powder, if you could have hit upon a better in all London, for I know the whole generation of play-goers, nobles and mobile, civil and military, ay, even down to the scribbling and scratching dogs of authors, who are ready to tear one another to pieces for an old bone. What's the play? Not the Spanish Fryar, for a ducat; for the King, since he turned Catholic, has expressly forbidden it to be acted, and its author, who is in the same predicament, is, I dare say, well pleased at the

prohibition. *N'importe!* It is time for us to start. I see Will's is empty—Laureat Jack has waddled off, and the smokers having finished their pipes, have all hurried to Drury Lane, to secure good places in the pit, for since they have shut up Dorset Gardens, the house fills well."

"As you are so familiar with the frequenters of the theatre, I presume you have yourself been an habitual play-goer."

"You forget that I am an amateur, and went whenever I could to take a lesson from Betterton or Smith. Egad, Sir! as Jack Laureat says—I hope we shall not be fobbed off with half a play, as I was when I went to see Albion and Albanus. All the world was there—the Whigs, who were the party attacked by the author—the Tories, to enjoy their triumph—the Frenchified friends of Louis Grabut, the composer, to support his music—the partisans of Purcell to run it down—the house, in short, was crowded. Well, *mon cher*, we had seen the rainbow, and the peacock, and the triumphal

arches, and the poetical hell, with its great arch of fire, when, in the midst of the dancing, a confused murmur began to run through the house—it grew louder and more eager—the people stood up in knots, turning their backs upon the stage, and talking anxiously and confusedly together—some ran out with looks of alarm—the curtain dropped in the midst of a scene—the news spread like wildfire through the house, that the Duke of Monmouth had landed in the West, and the audience suddenly dispersed in all directions to circulate the important tidings. Next day I was ordered into Somersetshire, and it was during my subsequent stay at Bridgwater that I renewed my acquaintance with my jovial Camerado, Don Gaspar, your worthy father.—Here we are at the doors—you have a piece in your pocket, you say—pay for both, and I will refund at my lodgings, whither you must positively return to finish another bottle, or else you are no true Burgundian.”

As the King had not yet arrived, the play

had not begun when they took their stations in the pit ; so that Walter, who had never been in any other than a provincial theatre, had time to look about him, to admire the house, and to observe the habits of the fashionable loungers and others as they successively presented themselves. “ Yonder perfumed fops,” said his Cicerone, “ with their flowing peruques, richly-laced cravats and ruffles, fluttering ribbons, and silken chapeau-bras, are the fashionables, the cutters of the day, or men in vogue, who never sit still when they can help it, but dive like ducks at one end of the pit, rise at the other, smirk, smicker, and congee to their friends, take snuff to display their white hands and diamond rings, lounge into the upper boxes among the Bona Robas, then whisk behind the scenes to talk nonsense to the actresses, and finally return to the pit to toy and take liberties with the orange-women. — *Sacre !* Master Walter, since all the disaffected look to the P. of O.— (for let me tell you in your ear, that in these critical times no one speaks of the Prince of

Orange except in initials,) — these namesakes of his in the pit have been so patronized by the Whigs and the true-blue Protestants, that they can afford to pay forty pounds a-year for the privilege of selling their oranges. *Volg mijnen raad*, as Mynheer says, — take my advice — have nothing to say to them; wear not a ribbon of that colour about your person; carry not even a piece of peel in the hand, for trifles such as these may occasion a man to be marked.”

“And yet,” said Walter, “yonder elderly but elegantly dressed personage, who stands up combing his peruque while he converses so courteously with a handsome lady in the boxes, displays both these badges of suspicion.”

“That is Sir Charles Sedley, of whom you have doubtless heard, and some of whose comedies you may perhaps have seen; and the lady with whom he is chatting is the beautiful Lady Cutts. Both may well wear the disloyal colour, for Sir Charles, since his daughter has become the King’s mistress, and been created Countess of Dorchester, is at open hostility

with the court; while General Cutts, unless fame belies him, is even now in Holland intriguing with the P. of O.”

“I see a knot of strange-looking gentlemen near the orchestra,” said Walter, “surrounding a corpulent coarse-featured man, and laughing very heartily at what he says.—Do you know him?”

“*Sacre! mon cher.* I supped with him last week at the Rhenish Wine House. It is honest Tom Shadwell, Laureat Jack’s Mac Fleckno, his great rival and opponent, but as fat and jolly a toper and tavern-haunter as his master Ben Jonson, whom he loves to imitate. A merry wag is Tom, and a worthy companion was he for Lord Rochester—not my friend Larry Hyde, the present Lord, but the late one, Devil Wilmot as he was sometimes called. Ha! ha! when fat Tom is sometimes nabbed by the bailiffs, he lays himself on the ground, and desires them to carry him to prison, which no dozen of them could accomplish, and thus has he more than once foiled the sorry rogues of their prey. The thin red-faced man on his

right hand is Tom D'Urfey, who in singing a song or telling a merry story shall bear the palm from the pleasantest fellow in all England ; and so the late King thought, for I have more than once seen him leaning on Tom's shoulder and humming over a tune with him. He on the bench beneath in the black wig, holding a snuff-box in his hand, is the facetious Tom Brown, a pestilent good fellow for drollery and buffoonery, but a caustic knave, nevertheless, who would at any time rather lose his friend than his joke. *Voilà* Signor Gualtero, there are three laughter-provoking Toms such as you could not match in all Christendom ; and you need therefore little wonder that the minor wits and wags who surround them, most of whom are, I dare say, just come from Will's, are in such a chirping and risible mood, especially as it is likely that they are ridiculing and mauling poor Mr. Bayes."

"But where is the Laureat in the mean while ? Will he not come to see his new play graced by the presence of the King."

"Devil doubt him ! *Zoo waar als ik leef*, as

the Dutchman says, I shall soon ferret him out.—But stay—mark these two lounging down the pit alley arm-in-arm. The stout man in the dress wig and handsome cinnamon-coloured-suit with silver buttons, is Mr. Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty, and his companion is Godfrey Kneller, the German painter, who beat Sir Peter Lely, when the late King sat to them both at the same time. I would wager a ducat to a dump that they are going behind the scenes to make love to the actresses; for Monsieur Pepys, although indefatigable in his office, will seldom be found absent from the green-room, an actress's dressing-closet, or wherever there is a theatrical merry-making—*Voyez donc!* They descend the stage-stairs. *Hemel ende Aarde!* did not I tell you I knew them all as well as my own rapier knows its scabbard? But what are Shadwell and his merry companions staring and laughing at so egregiously? Aha! I see! I see! I told you we should soon ferret out the Laureat and his brother dramatists of the Tory party, though there are not

many left since Otway died, and Nat Lee went mad. Follow the direction of my eyes and you will see a private box—it is Lord Godolphin's, the Queen's Chamberlain, and one of the ministers; and yonder tall awkward man with short black hair, accoutred in regimentals which he knows not how to put on, is no other than the renowned Elkanah Settle, once a furious Whig, and now so violent a Tory that he has actually entered himself as a Trooper in the army at Hounslow Heath—*Sacre, mon cher!* I don't wonder that they laugh at his grotesque figure. Beside him sits Poet Squab, alias Jack Laureat, taking snuff as he looks down upon Shadwell and the others with an air of defiance; and the third in the box, the old man in the fair periwig, is Sir Roger L'Estrange, whom Dryden assists in writing his *Observator*. You will not see Lord Godolphin, I am sure, for he is a stern, shy, proud man, and would not appear in such company, although he may lend them his box."

"I am singularly gratified," said Walter,

“in thus making a sort of personal acquaintance with writers of whom I have heard and read so much ; and perhaps you can also tell the name of that tall, thin, eager-looking young man in the box above us, who appears to be not less amused with Settle’s appearance than Shadwell and his merry crew.”

“ I have good reason to know his name, for I have paid him many a claret score when he sat in the bar of his uncle’s tavern, the Rummer, near Charing Cross. It is Matt Prior, now dubbed a poet instead of a tapster ; and the young man to whom he is talking is Charley Montague, in conjunction with whom he wrote the *City Mouse* and the *Country Mouse*, in ridicule of Laureat Jack’s *Hind and Panther*. You have read their burlesque, of course, for the world talks of nothing else. The corpulent nobleman with a star, to whom they bow so respectfully as they converse with him, is Lord Dorset, whom Rochester, you know, has characterised as “ The best good man with the worst-natured muse.” He patronizes these two

young scribblers, and I dare say will make Matt's fortune. You are lucky, Signor Gualtero, in seeing so many of the wits, and of such different factions, assembled together — Poet Squabb and Mac Flecknoe, the two mice, as Prior and Montague are called — the three Toms — Elkanah the trooper, who by the bye has cast off his black satin scull-cap since he became a soldier, and old Sir Roger, who, in allusion to his former republican principles, and in spite of his present Toryism, still bears the nick-name of Cromwell's fiddler. Ah! they are none of them equal to my friend Nat Lee, who is now, poor fellow! in Bedlam."

While Seagrave had been furnishing this information, he had broken off several times to address some of the passers to and fro in the pit, several of whom appeared to be persons of consequence, and although Walter was surprised at the extent and respectability of his acquaintance, he could not help remarking that none of them honoured him with more than a passing salutation, while not a few, evincing

considerable coldness in their mode of recognition, seemed anxious to get out of his way as soon as possible. "Ah, Mr. Pepys," said the Captain to that individual as he again passed him on his return from the stage, "you are a courtier, and can doubtless tell me why the King is so much after his time to-day."

"You are probably not aware," replied the Secretary, "that the performance begins half an hour later than usual, of which public notice was given in the morning. His Majesty is never a minute beyond his time."

"*Sacre, mon cher!* I thought there must be a reason for it, since I always knew the King to be a man of business."

"Or rather a busy man, which is a very different thing," whispered Pepys to his friend as they passed on; "he might have sitten for Sir Positive Atall in Shadwell's merry play, quite as well as Sir Robert Howard, though I should be sorry to say as much in the hearing of yonder worthy Captain."

"I have known the late King," resumed

Seagrave, "though he loved a Play better than any thing else, keep an audience kicking their heels for three quarters of an hour. Aha! by the shouting without, and the bustle within, his Majesty must be coming—Egad, Sir! to use Bayes's oath, he is punctual to the minute."

Looking towards the richly decorated box destined for the reception of the royal party, Walter's eyes first encountered the Queen, an attractive object, which for some time prevented his paying attention to any other.

At this period the theatre formed a turbulent arena; wherein the contending factions delighted to show their mutual strength and fury, although upon the present occasion considerable pains had been taken to fill it with Tories and well affected persons. It was the fatality of the wrong-headed and bigoted James, however, that so far from courting popularity, he appeared to take a pleasure in incurring the odium of his subjects, an object that could hardly have been more effectually attained than by his commanding

the Play of the Duke of Guise, which having been notoriously levelled by Dryden against the popular party and the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth, seemed now to have been chosen as a sort of royal triumph over his execution, and could not fail to revive the recollection of those savage butcheries by Jeffreys and Kirke, which any compassionate or prudent monarch would have rather sought to bury in eternal oblivion. As if this measure were not in itself sufficiently impolitic, he had been careful still farther to offend the feelings and prejudices of his subjects by surrounding himself on this public occasion with none but known Catholics. The Queen's female attendants were of the same communion, and the Protestant portion of the audience might have vainly sought in the royal box a single individual of their own faith.

At a time when the religious opinions of every eminent person were a matter of notoriety, this circumstance could not fail to be observed and condemned: so that, in spite of the pains that had been taken to pack the

house, the King's reception was far from being an enthusiastic one. None, indeed, ventured to hiss, but, in the midst of the partial plaudits, many preserved a moody silence, while James, who had the most exalted notions of divine right and unlimited prerogative, only condescended to notice the auditory, by gazing around him with a stern air of haughty indifference. As the performance proceeded, the different factions seized every opportunity, notwithstanding the royal presence, of trying their respective strength, whenever the speeches of the actors could be wrested into a political allusion; but the Tories prevailed, making the house shake with their vociferous acclamations, when Betterton, who enacted the part of the King in the play, and whose voice, we are told, could enforce universal attention, even from fops and orange-girls, exclaimed in the fifth act —

“ 'Tis time to push my slacken'd vengeance home,
To be a king, or not to be at all.—
The vow that manacled my rage is loosed ;

Even heaven is wearied with repeated crimes,
Till lightning flashes round to guard the throne,
And the curb'd thunder grumbles to be gone."

These applauses were repeated and prolonged with a stentorian energy that was absolutely deafening, when the same actor pronounced, with an appropriate grandiloquence of menace, the concluding lines of the play—

————— "Disperse, and think upon it.
Beware my sword, which, if I once unsheath,
By all the reverence due to thrones and crowns,
Nought shall atone the vows of speedy justice,
Till fate to ruin every traitor brings,
That dares the vengeance of indulgent kings!"

Sentiments so much in unison with his own, and so apposite to the present posture of public affairs, did not appeal in vain to the royal bosom, and James was, moreover, so far propitiated by the uproarious loyalty with which those speeches were received, that he deigned to honour the retiring actors with a gracious inclination of his head, while an expression of complacency softened, for a moment, his sa-

turnine features. But, as if he considered this condescension a compromise of his dignity, his countenance immediately resumed its sternness, and without farther noticing the applauses of the loyalists, or the ominous looks and silence of the adverse party, he withdrew with his Queen and their attendants from the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

Au travers de son masque on voit à plein le traître
Par-tout il est connu pour tout ce qu'il peut être ;
Et ses roulemens d'yeux et son ton radouci,
N'imposent qu'à des gens qui ne sont point d'ici.

LE MISANTHROPE.

SEAGRAVE, whose thoughts, in spite of his admiration of Betterton and heroic tragedy, had been more occupied in considering how he might best bubble his new acquaintance, than in attending to the performance, insisted upon his returning to his lodgings to finish another bottle of French wine, hoping that he might induce him to play upon credit, and thus ultimately secure to himself the purchase-money of the horse. With this view he resumed his

usual boisterous merriment, sang snatches of vulgar drinking songs in French, Dutch, and English, pushing the bottle about briskly, and pressing his guest to pledge him in repeated toasts, so that the latter who was really fatigued and thirsty with his long confinement in the pit, and who moreover, like most other novices, found it difficult to resist importunities under the garb of a hospitable friendship, might have been tempted to become too free in his cups, and when under the influence of wine might have been easily plundered of his little stock of money, but that he happened to mention his intention of calling upon Lord Sunderland on the following morning, to deliver the letter of introduction from his father—"Hilts and daggers! upon Lord Sunderland!" exclaimed Seagrave, suddenly replacing his uplifted glass—"have you a letter for my Lord Sunderland? Does your father know him? *Bloet ende Donder!* his Lordship is my especial patron and protector, and it is more than ever fortunate that you encountered me, for unless you know

how to deal with him, you would neither gain access to him in the first instance, nor understand how to ingratiate yourself afterwards. *Sacre, mon cher!* you are a made man if you hit his fancy, for at this moment he has not only all England, but the best part of Europe at his feet. Listen therefore to me, and if you become a great man through my means, forget not honest Bat. Seagrave, who is and ever will be *votre tres humble serviteur.*”

Walter was very willing to receive any instructions that might be likely to benefit him in his interview with the minister, although, when he recollected his companion's swaggering style of conversation upon all subjects, he was more than half inclined to doubt his boasted intimacy and influence with the nobleman in question. In this, however, he did him some injustice; Seagrave was in fact a creature of Lord Sunderland's, sometimes employed as a spy, sometimes as a bully, in consideration of which services he had been screened in one or two awkward affairs wherein his unprincipled habits

had involved him ; his Lordship had moreover extricated him from his pecuniary difficulties, and had promised him a majority in a dragoon regiment at no distant period. Too prudent to compromise these expectations by any misconduct towards an acquaintance of his patron, the Captain immediately forbore his designs upon Walter's purse, hoping to indemnify himself by rendering him subservient to his views in some other way. His brain indeed, which was quick, crafty, and fertile in expedients wherever his own interest was concerned, having already suggested to him a little plot for converting Walter to the joint purposes of himself and his patron, he began to caress him with increased cordiality, seemed to be in ecstasies at having so fortunately encountered him, and after paying him several fulsome compliments, which his companion partly attributed to the maudlin fondness inspired by wine, exclaimed with an apparent air of nonchalance, " Hey, Signor Gaultero ! you have not given me a single mistress for a toast, when every soldier ought

to have half a dozen. *Zwaarten ende Ponjaarten!* as we used to say in the Low Countries, you are not married, I hope?"

Walter replied in the negative.

"*Sacre, mon cher!* I am so glad to hear it that I must give my right moustache a twirl. Were I as young and as handsome a fellow as you are, I might have made my fortune by marriage half a dozen times over. With Lord Sunderland's introduction, if you do but play your cards well, you may have your choice of a handsome and wealthy young wife; and take the word of an old soldier that this is a much pleasanter and more expeditious mode of promotion than slaving in the army, where your head may be knocked from your shoulders before you can put a couple of epaulettes upon them."

Walter declared that he had no present intention of marrying, and as his thoughts reverted to Hetty Chervil and Orchard Place, his heart softened and beat with a quicker pulsation, for he felt his attachment strengthened by absence, and recoiled even from the bare imagination of bestowing his affections upon another.

“ No *present* intention, I grant you, Mynheer Wouter,” said Seagrave ; “ but who shall answer for you when some soft-hearted black-eyed Donzella, with a few thousands for her portion, holds out her white hand, and with the most bewitching look and voice in the world, sings,

‘ Plus je vous vois, plus je vous aime,
Rien n’est égal à mon ardeur.’

Peste! I forget the rest on’t. Hey, Signor Gaultero, in such a case I would not give a fico for your present intentions.”

Seagrave then declaring that he would endeavour to see his Lordship on the morrow, and prepare him to give a favourable reception to the new applicant for his countenance and patronage, premonished Walter that it would be necessary to fee the Porter if he expected to gain admittance, and that if he wished to ingratiate himself with the Prime Minister, he must above all things praise him for his frankness and straight-forward sincerity.

“ I am but a poor flatterer,” said Walter, “ but if his Lordship appears to me to possess

those qualities, I shall not hesitate to give him credit for them.”

“ *Sacre, mon cher !* you are a poor flatterer indeed, or you would be aware that no one thanks you for praising that which he really possesses. No, no, if you would win a man’s heart, compliment him the most fulsomely upon those qualities in which he is most deficient. Once more, I warn you not to balance whether Lord Sunderland be entitled to the praise, but eulogise him at all events for his frankness and sincerity.”

Walter thanked his friend for his good advice, and promising with a smile to avail himself of it, as opportunity might occur, and his own feelings dictate, took his departure; nor did Seagrave now offer to detain him, either to engage him at cards, or to refund the admission money to the theatre, which it is hardly necessary to state was never subsequently repaid.

At this period Lord Sunderland resided in Clarendon House, a splendid mansion facing

the upper end of St. James's Street, erected by the celebrated Earl whose name it bore, with the stone intended for the rebuilding of St. Paul's. It was sold to the Duke of Albemarle, an occupant whose name is preserved in an adjoining street, as that of the original proprietor survives in the Clarendon Hotel, built on a portion of the gardens, which extended at the back as far as Bruton Street. Notwithstanding the great dimensions of the edifice, which closely resembled Montague House, it could hardly accommodate the princely establishment of its present occupant; while his shameless venality and corruption, although they were utterly unchecked by one single restraint of honour or common honesty, barely enabled him to support the boundless profusion of his expenditure. Clear-headed, quick, decisive, subtle, it would be impossible to place Lord Sunderland's great talents in a higher point of view, than by saying that he was not less able than unprincipled; while he was at the same time so consummately plausible and

insinuating, that he became successively the favourite of Charles, James, and William, three princes of the most opposite characters. He encouraged Monmouth's invasion, promised to join him when he landed, and while he kept up this intelligence, secretly informed James of his proceedings, thus hoping to retain his employments if either the Duke or the King triumphed, and to preserve his own stake whoever won the game. Having privately adopted King James's religion, he had acquired his unlimited confidence, while he had managed by a succession of the most artful intrigues, to get the whole foreign correspondence committed exclusively to himself. By suppressing altogether the information transmitted to him from abroad, or colouring it to suit his own views, he contrived to keep the master who had heaped all sorts of honours and favours upon him, completely in the dark, more especially on the all-important subject of the Prince of Orange's meditated invasion; urging the King forward in all his violent and impolitic measures, in the

hope of continuing the absolute minister of an absolute monarch if the nation became enslaved, or of assuming merit with the Prince of Orange, from having pushed James to his ruin, if the people should rise up against him. With this view he had no sooner counselled any arbitrary or illegal act than, in an underhand way, he encouraged the parties against whom it was more especially levelled, to resist it to the uttermost. While thus luring on his benefactor to the brink of a frightful precipice, waiting the moment when it might be his interest to push him over, he not only received through Barillon, the French Ambassador, a regular pension of twenty-four thousand crowns from Louis XIV. for betraying the high trust reposed in him, and “removing every engagement which can be contrary to my interest,” to use the exact words of the French king’s instructions; but extorted from time to time a considerable additional bribe whenever the Cabinet secret he had to divulge appeared important enough to warrant a fresh exaction. That his Lordship

may leave Judas and all the traitors ever recorded far behind him, we have only to add that there is the strongest presumption for believing him to have been also bribed by the Prince of Orange, and that he fomented the differences between his three paymasters, by occasionally betraying each to the other, in order that he might find a better and more lasting market for his own shameless venality.

Lady Sunderland was almost as great a political intriguer as her husband, whom she resembled in mind, though she totally differed from him in her manners. The minister, concealing his art with such exquisiteness as to deceive the most penetrating observer, wore an appearance of open-hearted candour and frankness, affecting in all things, and in the midst of the most Machiavelian schemes, a straight-forward integrity of purpose. Her Ladyship, not having attained this excellence, sometimes betrayed her duplicity by the fulsomeness and fawning beneath which she strove to disguise it, though her endearing and artful ways would

occasionally make dupes of the unsuspecting. "She cares not at what rate she lives, but never pays anybody," says the Princess Anne writing of this Lady to the Princess of Orange.* "She will cheat though it be for a little. Then she has had her gallants, though maybe not so many as some ladies here. She plays the hypocrite more than ever, for she goes to St. Martin's morning and afternoon, (because there are not people enough to see her at Whitehall Chapel,) and is half an hour before other people come, and half an hour after everybody is gone, at her private devotions. She runs from church to church after the famousest preachers, and keeps such a clatter with her devotions, that it really turns one's stomach. Sure there never was a couple so well matched as she and her good husband; for as she is throughout in all her actions the greatest jade that ever was, so is he the subtillest workingest villain that is on the face of the earth."—Thus it will be seen that while the husband won the king's

* Dalrymple's Appendix, pp. 299, and 301.

whole heart by a pretended conversion to Popery, the wife kept up an interest with the Protestant party by a Pharisaical display of her devotions, and an affected zeal for the interests of the Church, in order that their joint hypocrisy and baseness might be rendered as extensively profitable to themselves as possible.

In an apartment of their gorgeous mansion called the Mercury Chamber, because the exploits of that Deity were painted by Verrio upon the ceiling, sate the noble pair we have been describing on the morning when Walter purposed calling at Clarendon House. The windows looked upon the back garden, which was laid out, as well as the house itself, upon the French plan, for from the Restoration to the Revolution, French taste prevailed in every thing. It was summer time, the birds were singing in the trees which overshadowed the windows, and a *jet d'eau*, throwing up a slender column of water from a small marble basin in the centre of a grass plot, diffused at once a refreshing coolness and a lulling murmur

through the air. The mansion was isolated, there were no noisy streets around it, and the hushed seclusion and tranquillity of the shady enclosure offered a complete contrast to the restless and perturbed bosoms of its proprietors, as they threw a careless glance upon it from the window, without enjoying or even perceiving its peaceful character. So suspicious and wary had they been rendered by the consciousness of their own perilous perfidy and double-dealing, that although every precaution had been taken against the possibility of their being overheard, Lord and Lady Sunderland had a free-masonry of their own, and never spoke of any eminent person, even when they were quite alone in their own house, except by feigned names, which however, as they might only create embarrassment, we shall take the liberty of dropping. "I have just seen Captain Seagrave crossing the front court," said her Ladyship, "and I understand he has had an interview with you. I am surprised that while you are so difficult of access to others, you should grant the

honour of a personal conference to such a ruffian as this. The frequency of your confabulations may be remarked."

"It is precisely on that account that I receive him so publicly and so often. Seagrave is a useful fellow; when sober as a spy, and when drunk as a bully. Every court should have a ruffian of this sort about it, to overawe refractory and turbulent individuals with the fear of private vengeance when they cannot be conveniently reached by any other mode. You cannot have forgotten that when the late King took offence at an expression of Sir John Coventry's, he employed O'Brian, Sir Thomas Sands, and some other Haymarket Hectors, to cut off Sir John's nose as he returned home at night. Was not our predecessor in this very house, the Duke of Ormonde, seized in the same way by Colonel Blood, who would infallibly have hung his prisoner, but that he escaped as they were dragging him to Tyburn? How would Lord Rochester have been able to revenge himself upon Dryden, but that he employed bravoës to

cudgel him in Rose Alley? or how could Count Coningsmarck have got rid of his rival Thynne, but that he hired worthies of the same stamp to dispose of him as he was riding along Pall Mall in his own carriage? Government was obliged to retain Colonel Blood, and to give him a pension of 500*l.* a-year, although he had attempted to assassinate Ormonde, had stolen the Regalia, and had deserved death half-a-dozen times over."

"Death has reached the bold villain at last, and I suppose your Lordship means Seagrave to succeed to his office."

"The fellow has made himself useful about the court more than once. When Sir James Hayes was dragged by the cravat the whole length of the King's antichamber, it was Seagrave who seized his audacious assailant and delivered him over to the Yeoman of the Guard; and he performed a similar service when Colonel Culpepper and the Duke of Devonshire fought together in the Lobby, close by the King's bed-chamber door."

“But how can you depend upon a man who is often drunk and never honest.”

“By maintaining a hold over both his hopes and fears: over the former by a promise of promotion and reward; over the latter by my power of arresting and keeping him in prison for monies lent, for which I have taken good care to exact his bond.”

“But as any known connection with such a character can be little to your credit, why do you receive him so publicly?”

“To intimidate some and to hood-wink others, who, while they see me thus openly allying myself with Seagrave, may accuse me, perhaps, of indiscretion, but will not suspect me of any more secret and less creditable intrigues.”

“I must confess, my little Machiavel, that you are seldom without a motive, even for actions that are seemingly the most incomprehensible.”

“If I could attribute the same character to your Ladyship, I should be disposed to conclude that you had some good reason for gazing so pensively upon the ceiling.”

“ I was thinking,” replied Lady Sunderland with a laugh, “ that as you now exercise in your own person nearly all the executive powers of the state, you bear some resemblance to yonder painted Mercury, who is represented as having robbed Apollo of his bow and arrows, Neptune of his trident, Mars of his sword, and Jupiter of his sceptre. I say nothing of your oratorical powers, for in that respect even your enemies admit you to be unrivalled.”

“ Your Ladyship is pleased to be complimentary in comparing me to the God of Eloquence,” said Sunderland, who felt really flattered by her remark, especially as he piqued himself more especially upon his powers of persuasion and delusion.

At this moment the Groom of the chambers came to announce that the Duchess of Portsmouth was below, and desired to know whether she might be admitted.

“ Show her Grace into the receiving-room,” said Sunderland, waving his hand at the attendant, who immediately withdrew. — “ Will

your Ladyship wait upon her?" he continued ;
" I expect visitants of more importance."

" Nay, my Lord, you have always professed yourself her particular friend, and, as you have now embraced her religion, you ought not to neglect a sister Romanist."

" I was always the good friend of the late King's favourite mistress, whoever she might be ; but as for the Duchess of Portsmouth, and she is now nothing more, I never had any very profound respect for her Grace. For her religion, indeed, I trust that I feel as I ought." His features were curled with a contemptuous ironical laugh, and her Ladyship's wore a responsive sneer as she exclaimed,

" Oh yes—of course, of course ! and therefore you don't wish to go near her. Had it been the Countess of Dorchester, indeed, you would doubtless have obeyed the summons ; but I cannot blame you for feeling the wide difference between the mistress of a dead and of a living King. Well, I will go down to her Grace, though I know well enough that the hungry French-

woman only calls to remind me of the money I lost to her at ombre last week. And, by the bye, I now recollect that I must positively have five hundred pounds from you this morning. Barillon was twice with you yesterday; you are generally rich after his visits, and I am actually in debt."

"Aha!" cried Sunderland, with a sardonic smile, "I suspected there was some good reason for your staring at the ceiling, and I now see why I was compared to the God of Eloquence, and made superior to Apollo, Mars, and Jupiter; or was I likened to him as the God of Thieves, that I might have no excuse for pleading poverty?"

"Pshaw! ridiculous!" exclaimed her Ladyship, in some confusion; "you imagine yourself always to be so acute and penetrating! I had no such stuff in my thoughts; and if I had, I might well stand excused for believing that you would do nothing without a bribe of some sort."

Sunderland smiled, for he felt not the re-

proach, and tossing across the table an order for the money, said, "There, Madam ; I ask nothing in return for this but that you should dismiss her Grace, and not play so often and so high."

Her Ladyship quitted the apartment, when the Peer, taking from a dispatch-box some letters written in cypher, began to unravel them by means of a key inscribed in his pocket-book. After he had been a little time thus occupied, the Groom of the chambers again presented himself to announce Father Petre, at the mention of whose name the Earl hastily returned the letters to the box, and locked it up in his cabinet.

This celebrated Jesuit, of small reputation either for learning or virtue, but a blind bold bigot in matters of religion, was not only the King's confessor, but one of the council of three, consisting of the Monarch, Sunderland, and himself, who were to manage all the affairs of the nation. He was a little, corpulent, consequential, ambitious, and presumptuous man,

over whom Sunderland obtained an easy and complete dominion, by flattering his vanity, and opening vast projects to his ambition. James had been prevailed upon to ask a Cardinal's Hat for him, and he now called upon the minister, understanding that dispatches had been received from Lord Castlemaine at Rome, to inquire their import. Sunderland fed him with hopes and flattery, declaring that a man of such illustrious family and distinguished learning, supported by the influence of the English and French monarchs, could hardly fail of success; and alluding to the ill-health of Pope Innocent, pointed out the probability that the person whom he had then the honour and the happiness of addressing, might eventually become his successor. Elated at the thought, the Jesuit swelled, and snorted, and strutted, as if he already grasped the keys of St. Peter, and his overweening vanity was still farther gratified when Sunderland, who knew every one of his weak points, acknowledged his own conversion to have been owing to the convincing eloquence

and irresistible cogency of the Father's arguments. More than once had the worthy Secretary paid the same compliment to the King, but the present enjoyer of the incense, seeming to entertain no doubt of his title, snuffed it up with all the credulity of implicit conceit. Such pleasure did this weak though violent and dangerous zealot find in Sunderland's glozing speeches, that he would not have been soon disposed to take his departure, but that he had an appointment at Whitehall to receive the King's confession.

“I have dismissed the cormorant,” said Lady Sunderland, re-entering the room shortly after the Jesuit had quitted it. “I persuaded the old Frenchwoman, whose face was a mass of rouge, that she looked younger and handsomer than ever; I protested that her son Charley, the young Duke of Richmond, was the handsomest fellow at Court last Friday; I fell in love with her lace cornets, doated upon her demi-Sultane, expressed a hope that she would always continue to set the fashions, to which we

poor English were utterly incompetent; and threw her into such ecstasies, that her Grace quite forgot to dun me for the money I owe her."

"While your Ladyship has been cramming the cormorant, I have had to dose the swallow.* I assured the pompous, busy, blustering little blockhead, that, owing to his unanswerable arguments, I now believed the truths of Popery as firmly as I had ever credited those of Protestantism. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Was it not dangerous to hazard so palpable an equivoque? did he not see it?"

"Had there been any possibility of that nature, I should never have ventured it. He sees nothing but himself, and it is my opinion that he only worships Catholicism, and wishes to force it upon the whole world, because it is the religion of that most orthodox Thaumaturge the Reverend Father Petre."

At this juncture, Walter having fee'd the por-

* Under which bird Father Petre was typified in Dryden's "Hind and Panther."

ter as he had been told, and passed through a suite of splendid rooms, and a succession of servants in gorgeous liveries, was ushered into the receiving-chamber, whence, after his name had been carried up to the great man, he was escorted to his presence. Sunderland, who was engaged to a party at Whitehall in the afternoon, was attired in a rich court-dress, with flowing peruque, diamond-hilted sword, and the Order of the Garter upon his knee, exhibiting altogether a magnificence and personal dignity, which being free from stiffness and hauteur, seemed to be only proper and becoming in the master of so princely a mansion. With these, however, his visitant was less impressed than with that winning courtesy and suavity of manner which being combined with a most ingratiating appearance of perfect frankness, rendered this nobleman almost irresistible, where he thought it worth while to conciliate regard. His first inquiry was as to the origin and duration of Walter's acquaintance with Seagrave, being satisfied upon which point, he chatted to

his visitant with great ease and familiarity, declaring that his knowledge of his father was extremely slight and of very distant date, but that he was not the less disposed to recognize it by showing favour to his son. Sunderland could always hit to an exact nicety the language and demeanour that carried with them a conviction of his candour; and his present auditor being really thus impressed, and feeling that he might with a safe conscience avail himself of the Captain's advice, ventured, in expressing his thanks, to add that he was the more gratified by his Lordship's declaration, as his look and voice were unquestionable pledges of his frankness and sincerity."

"I thank Seagrave for that compliment," said the Peer, who, being infinitely too acute to be hoodwinked, saw that his visitant had been tutored how to flatter him.

Walter had never felt so humiliated in his life; his finesse was detected, and fearing that he must appear as little in the Peer's eyes as he did in his own, he blushed, stammered, and er-

deavoured to turn the conversation. His Lordship helped him out of his embarrassment by exclaiming, "Did you not say your father has a house and estate at Weston? It was there, if I mistake not, that Lord Feversham's horse were quartered the day before the battle of Sedgemoor."

"It was, my Lord."

"If you are presented to His Majesty at the next Levee, which I should strongly recommend, can you say that your family afforded any assistance to the royal cause in Monmouth's affair?"

Upon the occasion in question, Mrs. Colyton, with her usual good management, had shut up Orchard Place to avoid requisitions for the army, and had gone with her family to Bridgewater, in consequence of which economy and forethought the troopers broke open the mansion, which they plundered and damaged to the value of three hundred pounds. Disclaiming a falsehood, Walter could only say, that at the unfortunate juncture alluded to, he was himself

absent from home, on a visit to a relation in Hampshire; and that his family had not, he believed, rendered any assistance to the King's forces.

“I did not ask you what they had done, but what you could say.”

“I do not exactly understand your Lordship,” said Walter, somewhat embarrassed.

“So I perceive, but it is of no consequence; only as his Majesty has a prejudice against the Somersetshire gentry, owing to their scandalous disaffection in Monmouth's business, I should have been glad if you could have removed it, so far as you are yourself concerned.”

“None of our name or connexion assumed the white badge in that unfortunate affair.”

“So far, so good; negative merit is better than none. If I mistake not, Seagrave intimated something to me of your being a Catholic, or at least disposed to embrace the Romish tenets?”

“If he did, my Lord, he must have spoken without a shadow of warrant from me. I have

been strictly educated in the Protestant faith, and no consideration could induce me to abandon my creed, or to make professions contrary to my conscience and my conviction."

"You are quite right, and I honour you for the sentiment," said the Peer, with a slight smile of irony—"I must have mistaken Seagrave, who, to say the truth, is but a blundering fellow at times."

Lady Sunderland, seeing instantly that her husband must have some motive for giving so favourable a reception to a stranger, now mingled in the conversation, for the purpose of aiding his views, endeavouring to wheedle and cajole Walter by fulsome compliments, pretending to be egregiously delighted at the story of the Quaker highwayman, which he related to them, (suppressing, however, all allusion to the fair incognita,) and praising highly the address and courage with which he had extricated himself from that dilemma. After having thus dutifully contributed to her Lord's secret object, whatever it might be, she bowed to her visitant

with one of her most winning smiles, expressed great delight at having made his acquaintance, and quitted the apartment.

“ I was glad to learn from Seagrave,” said the Earl, after a short pause, “ that you were a single man. We have very few pretty young fellows about the Court just now, while there are plenty of handsome spinsters, with either money, or good connexion, which is better still. In this way it may be in my power to push your fortune more rapidly than in any other ; for in peace-time there is but a poor prospect in the army, while all our civil appointments are bespoken long before they become vacant, and the King, moreover, is so strict an economist, that we are daily reducing the establishment in our public offices.”

Walter declared, with a low bow of acknowledgment, that he entertained no present thoughts of matrimony, an assertion that he might truly make, since his engagement with Hetty Chervil, of which, however, he stated nothing to the Earl, did not promise any very immediate ter-

mination. He could not but feel surprised that both Seagrave and his Lordship should interrogate him so early, and attach so much apparent importance to the fact of his being unmarried, a circumstance for which he could only account, by concluding that as an advantageous match was the most common mode of advancement in the London circles, it was the first that had occurred to them for his own promotion. Sunderland, now looking at his watch, intimated that an engagement at Whitehall would not allow him to prolong their conference at present, but asked his visitant to return and dine with him on the following Friday, when he would be quite alone, an invitation which was most gratefully accepted, when Walter took his leave, with a profusion of acknowledgments, and returned to his lodgings quite elated, not to say intoxicated, with the unexpected graciousness and cordiality of his reception.

“Who is this handsome youth to whom you have taken such a sudden liking?” inquired Lady Sunderland, re-entering the chamber.

“ Like other young men fresh from the country,” said the Peer, avoiding a direct answer to the inquiry,—“ his mind will require a deal of drilling to fit it for court service. He is bashful, awkward, honest, and a Protestant, four failings, of which it becomes him to get rid as quickly as possible, if he expects to push his way in London. I would sooner have to break in a wild young colt from the forest. Did you observe how he blushed and stammered at being detected in plagiarizing a compliment from Seagrave; with what rustic simplicity he winced at hazarding an untruth; and how the young fanatic bristled up about his religion? I probed his mind in the first ten minutes, and have ascertained its longitude and latitude as well as if I had known him for years.”

“ Notwithstanding which, you mean to make him useful, unaccommodating as he is, or I am quite sure that you would never have given him such a reception.”

“ I don't know; it is possible that some

such object may occur to me, for, in these critical times, we may find a use for honest uncompromising fools, as well as for supple interested knaves."

"Then at present you are merely securing him to yourself upon speculation?"

Sunderland nodded assent, and reverted to his dispatches, smiling inwardly at the thought, that in this instance he was even outwitting his wife, who, seeing that her Lord was not disposed for farther colloquy, and having gained her object by getting an order for 500*l.* was well content to quit the apartment, and leave the noble caballer to his own schemes and meditations.

CHAPTER IX.

For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after,
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve,
For daws to peck at:—I am not what I seem.

OTHELLO.

WALTER was of a sanguine temperament, and being not only proud of the kindness he had experienced from so powerful and distinguished a statesman as the Earl of Sunderland, but persuaded that his fortune was about to be rapidly made, he lost not a moment in giving his father a full account of every thing that had occurred at Clarendon House, urging the immediate transmission of the fresh supplies necessary to complete his outfit, without which

he could neither be presented to the King, nor avail himself of the brilliant prospects that were now opening upon him. As his constant and affectionate heart derived an additional gratification from the hope that his success might quickly enable him to complete his engagements with Hetty, he failed not to communicate to her that he was in high favour with the Prime Minister, engaged to dine with him on the following Friday, about to make his appearance at Court, and, in short, on the high road to preferment; assuring her in the tenderest terms, that as soon as he had achieved any sort of independence, however small, he should hail it as the happiest moment of his life, since it would enable him to come forward, and claim the hand of his affianced wife. This letter he enclosed to Christopher the servant, *alias* comical Kit, who was the medium of communication between the lovers.

It was quite consistent, however, with his unshaken allegiance to Hetty, that he should feel an undiminished curiosity respecting the

fair and witty incognita whom he had encountered at Westbury. Indeed, she had never been long absent from his thoughts since his departure from that place; and he had often laughed heartily in recalling his adventure with the drunken Mayor. With the excusable vanity of a young man just entering the world, he wished to present himself before her as a *protégé* of my Lord Sunderland, and a *debutant* in the circles of Whitehall; but as his inability to defray the trifling sum he had borrowed would be little compatible with such lofty claims, he resolved to adhere to his first resolution of deferring his visit until he should have received the expected remittance. Still, there could be no objection, he thought, to his reconnoitring her residence, and accordingly when he sallied forth to put his letters in the post, he made his way to St. James's Square, cautiously approaching the house, which he easily distinguished by the description she had given him. From its handsome appearance he inferred that its occupant must be a person of

distinction, and having placed himself in a recess at some little distance, he peered at every window, hoping that at one of them he might obtain a glimpse of the mysterious Catherine, or at least of her friend. In this expectation he was disappointed; he could not even get a sight of a servant, although two richly decorated sedan-chairs were in waiting. Curiosity, at least where a lady is concerned, is as deeply implanted in the male as in the female bosom, and Walter having made up his mind that his incognita was about to occupy one of the chairs, remained patiently ensconced in his hiding-place, waiting for her appearance.

Nearly half an hour had thus elapsed, and he was beginning to get weary of lying *perdu*, when the sedans were taken into the hall, whence they shortly afterwards emerged, carried by chairmen in rich liveries, and followed by servants similarly bedizened. As they passed him, Walter could distinctly recognize his incognita, splendidly attired, attended in the second sedan by the friend who had accom-

panied her at Westbury. Having allowed them to get a little way in advance, he left his place of concealment, and following at a trifling distance, saw the chairs quit Pall-mall, and cross the Park to the private door in the garden of Whitehall Palace, which was opened as they approached, when the gay, glittering little procession passed in, and the gate was again closed. It was evident, therefore, that his unknown was a person of high distinction attached to the Court, for none but the most favoured individuals had the privilege of this entrance, and his curiosity being now inflamed to the highest pitch, he returned towards Pall-mall, resolving to enquire who was the occupant of the house from which he had seen her take her departure. While proceeding to put this design in execution he met Seagrave, and not choosing to make him his confidant, nor indeed having any right to compromise the fair Catherine, who had doubtless good reasons for travelling incognita, he accepted his invitation to accompany him to the Cock-pit, where a

main was to be fought that morning by some celebrated birds belonging to Lord Churchill and Sir Cloudesly Shovell. The Captain lost no time in asking how he liked his reception at Clarendon House, adding that he had already been at his lodgings to make the same inquiry; and when Walter warmly expressed his sense of the manner in which he had been honoured by the Premier, his companion, as he twirled his moustache with a consequential air, exclaimed—“*Sacre, mon cher!* may I have a rapier under my ribs, or *een ponjaart in de darmen*, as Mynheer says, if it be not entirely owing to me. I dropped in upon Sunderland before you arrived, told him you were a pretty fellow, and that if his Lordship had a mind to oblige me, he would take you by the hand, and make a man of you.”

As Walter knew part of this statement to be true, he had no reason for distrusting the remainder, and expressed his thanks accordingly. This he did with the more fervour under the compunctious feeling that he had

previously done injustice to Seagrave by imagining him to have vaunted his influence with the peer rather too loftily. That he had good interest in that high quarter was now manifest, though he could not help being surprised at the fact when he considered his station, as well as his moderate attainments, vulgar appearance, and coarse swaggering manners, so utterly at variance with the refined and courteous urbanity of the prime minister. “But lookye, Signor Gualtero,” said the Captain—“I must give you one caution. Lord Sunderland, though the finest gentleman in England, is not only a stubborn, touchy, positive man, who will not be thwarted in any thing, but as implacable an enemy as he is a staunch friend. That he will make your fortune, after what has passed I have not the shadow of a doubt, but he will do it in his own way; so beware of opposing him in his wishes, unless you desire to have all your future prospects ruined. *Sacre, mon cher!* I have known Bob Spencer from the time he was a boy, and he never could bear, especially when

he was meditating a kindness towards a fellow, to have his plans opposed or rejected."

"As his Lordship can have no views for me," said Walter, "except such as are advantageous, and as I have no right to dictate the mode of his benefiting me, I cannot anticipate any difference between us."

"Bear it in mind, Mynheer Wouter, bear it in mind. Hilts and daggers! I should be sorry to see you kick down the ladder when it is placed all ready for you to rise."

They entered the Cockpit, where Seagrave, who seemed to know every body and every body's business, was as much at home among the breeders and feeders and their patrons, as he had been at the theatre among the beaux and literati. From this spot he escorted his companion to several other of the shows and sights at the Court end of the town, suffering him always to pay for their admission, and doing him the favour of dining with him afterwards at the Setting Dog and Partridge, a house which the Captain declared he could recommend, having

long frequented it himself, on account of the respectability of its company.

Up to the period of his engagement with the Prime Minister, Walter passed those hours which were not engrossed by the unremitting attentions of Seagrave in a dream of delicious anticipations, assuming it for granted that his ambition and his love would both be quickly gratified to the utmost extent of his wishes, and that his future career, unsaddened by a cloud or a reverse, was to present nothing but a path of thornless roses; fascinating reveries which we have all indulged in the sanguine days of our youth, and which, however they may deepen our subsequent disappointment, at all events afford us a present enjoyment of the most exquisite description.

Such was his frame of mind, when, in pursuance of his engagement, he betook himself to Clarendon House. In opposition to the then prevailing habits of society, the hour that had been fixed for dinner was an unusually late one, yet Walter, who on his arrival had been ushered

into a small apartment on the ground floor, found that his noble host was not ready to receive him. After a short delay, however, he made his appearance, politely apologizing for his impunctuality, which he attributed to the engrossing nature of his public duties. "My enemies reproach me with being the master of the nation," cried the Earl smiling; "they should rather say its slave, for I am not even master of my own time, or of my own comfort. Take the advice of one who is well qualified to give it, and never seek advancement as an official man, for he who is the servant of the public has a censorious and ungrateful master. Were my life to be acted over again, it should be a very different one, and if I were not so great I should at all events be happier and more independent. But this is idle talking, and I must not forget that in my present course, which like that of a comet is very brilliant and very restless, I have some compensating,—I should rather say some alleviating privileges. Among the most grateful of these is the power

of occasionally serving my friends, and among the friends whose interests I shall find the greatest pleasure in promoting, I hope I may be allowed to enroll the name of Captain Colyton."

To this flattering speech Walter expressed his gratitude in the most ardent terms. "I have invited you when I was quite alone, which is unfortunately a most rare occurrence," resumed the Earl, "because I wished to have a little unrestrained conversation with you upon your plans and prospects. The Countess is engaged with her friend Lady Churchill, and I have therefore ordered dinner in my private apartments, and have given directions that we must not be interrupted in our *tête-à-tête*, unless I should receive a summons from Whitehall."

Walter was again profuse in his acknowledgments for this additional mark of condescension and kindness; dinner was shortly afterwards announced, and the Earl, taking his guest's arm, led him into an adjoining apartment. It was impossible for Lord Sunderland in such a

splendid house, and with such a princely establishment, to withdraw from the grandeur that surrounded him, and be served even for a single afternoon, and in his own separate apartments, with the plainness and simplicity of a private gentleman. Whether by the speech he had just made to his guest he meditated some such surprise as that which Lucullus prepared for his friends Cicero and Pompey when they came to sup with him in a friendly way, we will not undertake to determine; but certain it is that Walter was astounded at the magnificence of the saloon into which he was ushered, not less than by the train of bowing and glittering servants through which he passed, the loads of massive plate that sparkled in its own gorgeous light as it was reflected by the large mirror behind the sideboard, and the superb apparatus of the dinner-table, which was at once elegant and costly in its decorations. To judge by the deference and reserve of the numerous domestics as they ministered with the promptitude and silence of attendant spirits, they were

a discreet set, not prone to babble of what they might hear at their master's table; but Walter observed, that while they were present the Earl cautiously abstained not only from subjects of a public nature, but even from those that bore reference to the private affairs of his visitant, confining himself to trivial matters, or to such discourse as was suggested by the truly Apician meal of which they were partaking. Even upon these unimportant topics he had a fund of pleasant anecdote, which being embellished by the unrivalled courtesy of his manners, his bland ingratiating smile, and the suavity of his tones, excited the highest admiration in his guest, and occasioned the time occupied by their banquet to fly swiftly and delightfully away.

“*Jucundè cœnam produximus illam,*” exclaimed the Earl, when the servants had all retired, “but we shall be ten times more pleasant now that we are alone. This is one of the heaviest taxes of greatness; the very menials that I pay are spies and eves-droppers; but

the varlets have withdrawn, and we may now discourse freely, indulging the while, according to the advice of the Laureat, in such moderate cups as may raise the conversation of the night, without unfitting us for the business of the morrow." Entering at once, and with the frankness of an old friend, into his visitant's affairs, Sunderland now enquired when he meant to join his regiment at Hounslow, which he urged him to do without delay, recommending that he should be presented at the levee in his military trappings, as the most likely method of conciliating the favour of the King, who on such occasions liked to see a full attendance of officers."

"I should be most happy to follow your Lordship's advice," said Walter, "but that I am unfortunately compelled to await fresh supplies from home, to replace the money which the Quaker highwayman made free with on my journey to London."

"They are lovers of peace," said the Earl, smiling, "and I dare say your broad-brimmed

friend felt himself conscientiously bound to relieve you of what was destined to military purposes. I had forgotten your mischance, but the sum cannot be more than a trifle ; make me your present banker for its amount, and repay me when you receive the expected remittance from your father, or whenever else it may suit you."

Quite overwhelmed at this fresh instance of generous consideration on the part of the great man, Walter was really at a loss to express his gratitude. He begged leave, however, though not without the most heartfelt acknowledgments, to decline the offer, alleging that he was in daily expectation of a letter from home, and that he need not therefore avail himself of his Lordship's kindness.

"Should you experience delay or disappointment, you will at least know where to apply," said the Peer ; "and I should feel affronted were you to stand upon ceremony, when you would be conferring instead of receiving an obligation by allowing me the preference in accommodating you."

Following up the impression he had made by this friendly proposal, Sunderland laid himself out to win the heart of his guest ; and how was it possible for him to fail, when, in addition to great talents, a lively wit, the polished accomplishments of a gentleman, and the most plausible and insinuating manners that can be imagined, he was the prime minister of the country? Walter was in ecstasies, felicitating himself upon his good fortune, and giving vent to his feelings with the more freedom as his restraint became gradually dissipated by the accelerated movement of the bottle. The wines were of course exquisite, his Lordship seemed half disposed to forget the prudent caution of the Laureat which he had himself quoted, the guest could not refuse the honour of pledging his illustrious host when solicited to do so, and Walter, though still sober, was in a high state of excitement, when the Peer, looking at his watch, said he had an appointment which it was time to keep, but that as it was only with a lady, a distant connection of his own, they need not part company, as

he would take his visitant with him to her residence. As they left the house together for this purpose, Sunderland exclaimed,—“ Right glad am I to escape, even for a few hours, from the pomp and parade which, however they may be required by my station, were never in accordance with my taste, and we will therefore proceed to our destination on foot, if you do not object to that humble mode of progression. Luckily it is a dark night, and there is no fear of being recognized, or I might perhaps be accused of affectation in trudging about as a pedestrian. To tell you the truth, I had another motive for walking ; for while we are proceeding to Great Ormonde-street, which is at some distance, I may be making to you a communication, without which I could not so well take you to visit the friend in question. Be it understood however, Captain Colyton, that it is an affair entirely *sub rosa*—*entre nous*— and that in this matter I am making you my confident.”

There was such magic in the very word that

it instantly produced an electrical effect upon Walter. To be walking arm-in-arm with the Premier at night, after having pledged him by the hour together in bumpers of Burgundy,—to be made the confidant of the illustrious statesman in whose bosom were locked up all the cabinet secrets of Europe, was so gratifying to his pride, and, at the same time, so stimulating to his curiosity, that it was not without confusion he could express his sense of the honour, and promise that any information with which he might be entrusted, should never be divulged to mortal man.

“This pledge will hardly answer my purpose,” said the Peer laughing; “it is at once more and less than I require, and like some of the prophecies of the ancient oracles, or those of the witches to Macbeth, only keeps ‘the word of promise to our ear to break it to our hope.’ I am myself like the Pythoness, you probably think, and am speaking in ænigmas; well then, to be explicit:—You may reveal what I am about to tell you to mortal man, if so you feel

inclined, but not to mortal woman, at least not to Lady Sunderland. To put you out of the misery of suspense and curiosity, understand that my friend Mrs. Audley, the lady to whom I am about to introduce you, although she has only a trifling fortune of two or three thousand pounds in actual possession, has good expectations, and is connected with my Lord Feversham, the Commander-in-chief, who ever since his victory at Sedgemoor, has the exclusive disposal of all preferments in the army. On this account Lady Sunderland wishes to secure Mrs. Audley for a distant relation of her own, a Major Ravenspur, of the Life Guards, and if she knew that I took so handsome a fellow as yourself to call upon the lady, and perhaps to supplant the Major, she might think I had acted an unhandsome part. I have no other earthly motive for binding you to secrecy, though I must confess I should be sorry to see so charming and accomplished a woman as Helen Audley throw herself away upon Ravenspur, who is, *entre nous*, a gamester and a profligate, every way unwor-

thy of her. With such a man she would never be happy, though common gratitude ought to make him a good husband, if she married him, for he would be sure of rapid promotion through her interest with Feversham. In the army I can do but little for my friends, since it has been agreed among the ministry that the civil and military appointments shall be restricted to their respective heads, and we never interfere with one another. Feversham has all the patronage to himself. — Ah, Captain Colyton, I dare not flatter you with any such glorious prospect, for Mrs. Audley is a prize that may not easily be won, but if she should happen to take a fancy to you, you would be a fortunate man indeed, and a most brilliant career would be instantly open to your ambition.”

“I am infinitely obliged to your Lordship,” said Walter, somewhat sobered and embarrassed at this unexpected peroration, “but as I mentioned before, I have no present thought of marriage — no wish to change — that is to say, I would rather——”

“Tut, man! you need not say a word more. I understand you—you would wish to remain unencumbered with a wife, unless you can get more by marriage than by continuing to be a bachelor. I cannot blame you; but if a beautiful and accomplished woman, a friend of mine, and a connexion of my Lord Feversham, which is a Colonel’s, and ultimately perhaps a General’s commission in your pocket, offers you her heart and hand, you do not mean to say, you are not surely insane enough to declare that you would reject such a mode of advancement, and such a tempting boon of fortune.”

The latter part of this speech being uttered in an altered and severe tone of voice immediately recalled to Walter’s mind Seagrave’s caution as to the obstinacy and wilfulness of Lord Sunderland’s character; and in the fear of giving offence he was not a little puzzled what reply to make, especially as his engagement with Hetty, recurring to his heart at the same moment, prompted him to assert his loyalty to his affianced mistress. As the most likely way to

succeed in his love was to retain the good will of his patron, he could not bring himself to a confession that might alienate him for ever. If any faith were to be given to Seagrave, the peer when estranged from his friends, and a trifle would turn him, became their most bitter enemy, an alteration which he could not bear to contemplate. The minister was entitled to his gratitude for the kind offers he had already made, and although he had plainly intimated his inability to push him forwards in the army except by this most objectionable mode, he would unquestionably have power to arrest his promotion, should he assume a hostile attitude. In this dilemma he thought it wisest to temporize, not committing himself either one way or the other until he should have had leisure to reflect. Making therefore a present compromise with his hopes and fears, he observed that he was not vain enough to believe he could render himself acceptable to a lady whose high pretensions gave her a right to be more fastidious than the generality of her sex in the choice of a husband.

“Nay, that may be likely enough,” said the Earl resuming his usual suavity; “I did not tell you that such a prize was to be achieved without suing and wooing, but faint heart never won fair lady: I may without flattery aver that you have better personal recommendations than most of your rivals, though they are neither few nor unaccomplished. I should be sorry to see her united to any of these dissipated town rakes; and since you have consented to make the attempt, I cheerfully promise you my good offices in hopes that you may win and bear away the prize from all competitors.”

“I beg to be understood, my Lord,—not for the world would I offend,—I am overwhelmed with gratitude, but, indeed, indeed, my Lord, I never consented to——.”

“Tillyvally, Sir! what squeamishness and indecision is this? You are a man of sense and a man of the world, and, if you wish to rise, must seize time by the forelock, and neglect no opportunity. How did Jack Churchill, who was t’other day only a Page, become a Major General, a Privy Councillor, and a Peer, but

by the all-powerful interest of the ladies? His sister, mistress to the present king when Duke York, first brought him to Court, and the Duchess of Cleveland, then mistress to the late king, was so captivated by the graces of his person that she effectually established him at Whitehall, and procured his rapid promotion in the army. You are as handsome as Churchill, why may you not be as successful?"

"Nay, my Lord, I do not pretend to any such qualifications, and if you will allow me to explain——"

"Quite unnecessary, quite unnecessary; you are too modest, young man, too diffident by half. Here we are at the lady's house, and I beg you to recollect not only that you are a Captain of the Guards, but that in endeavouring to win the good graces of Mrs. Audley you will have all my interest and influence in your favour."

CHAPTER X.

Oh Hero! what a hero hadst thou been
If half thy outward graces had been placed
About the thoughts and counsels of thy heart!
But fare thee well!

Which is the villain? let me see his eyes
That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him.

SHAKSPEARE.

BEFORE Walter could reply to the Earl's speech, he was ushered into the Lady's residence, which although it neither exhibited the dimensions nor the magnificence of the gorgeous saloons in Clarendon House, surprised him by the voluptuous and picturesque elegance of its decorations. It seemed to be the very temple of Love, nor had it been the abode of the

Paphian Queen herself, could it have been more expressly adapted to its object. A large marble group, representing the Judgment of Paris, was placed in the hall; an exquisite copy of "the bending statue that enchants the world," occupied a niche on the stairs, and paintings from Raphael's Fable of Psyche, presenting views of the female form in every bewitching variety, adorned the walls of the drawing-room, which being lighted by lamps enclosed within globes of amber-coloured crystal, was suffused on all sides by a golden effulgence, at once rich and mellow. Separated from the upper end of this apartment by hangings of rose-coloured muslin, drawn up to a point at top so as to resemble a tent, while the lower part bore the appearance of a pleached arbour, was the Boudoir, embowered round by odoriferous plants, and more especially by roses, tastefully arranged in the folds of the drapery, and supported upon invisible brackets. Every thing indeed within this delicious recess was roseate, for an illuminated crystal of that hue, suspended from the

pointed top, shed around a blooming radiance rendered still more soft and delicate from its contrast with the amber-coloured light of the outer apartment.

But the great object of attraction was the fair occupant of the Boudoir, who, when her visitants entered, was seen reclining upon a sofa with a book in her hand. She was not beautiful, it might be questioned even whether she were strictly handsome ; but that she was singularly attractive, and piquant as she reposed in the blushing light ; that her large soft Italian-looking black eyes wore a most fascinating expression, and that her figure was of the most voluptuous description, no one could deny who had once gazed upon her for half a minute. Her black locks, parted at the forehead, hung in clustering ringlets on either side, according to the then prevailing mode ; and if her personal charms were not heightened, they were at least displayed by her dress, or rather her undress, which was a rich *robe de chambre*, thrown open in front, so as to disclose the bosom, shadowed

rather than concealed by the broad laced edging of a loose under garment.

“ Oh my Lord !” exclaimed the lady, rising in apparent confusion, and hastily throwing a shawl over her shoulders ; “ I little expected any visitant at this late hour, and did not therefore take the trouble to change the dress in which, to oblige my friend Lord Feversham, I have been sitting to Sir Godfrey Kneller. It is right, perhaps, not to be painted in the Frenchified fashion of the day, but I wish this German artist would not compel one to wear a fancy dress of so very indecorous a description. I have no desire to be thought squeamish, and I believe it was only the foolish fear of being called an over scrupulous prude, that conquered my repugnance to this most objectionable costume ; but had I dreamt of a visit from your Lordship, and still more that you would bring a stranger with you, I should of course have discarded it, and indeed I believe I shall never have the confidence to wear it a second time.”

The Earl, after having introduced Walter as his particular friend, declared that no apology was necessary, as the shawl must satisfy the scruples of the most fastidious modesty, adding with a smile that, if it were not presumptuous to parody the speech of Alexander to Diogenes, he should be tempted to say, — were I not Lord Sunderland I should wish to be Sir Godfrey Kneller.

“Fie, my Lord, fie !” exclaimed the lady in some apparent embarrassment, “you should not rebuke me after I have confessed my error, and thrown myself on your mercy.”

The conversation now assumed a more general turn ; Mrs. Audley was exceedingly affable in her manners, and if not witty was at least cheerful and vivacious ; Lord Sunderland was courteously animated, bantering Walter on the probability of his losing his heart to the beautiful Helen, who was almost fascinating enough to realize the Laureat’s words, and “fire another Troy ;” while at other times, his Lordship made his fair friend the object of his raillery,

as he forewarned her that the handsome young Captain whom he had ventured to introduce to her, would prove himself sadly deficient in military subordination were he to supplant a certain Major Ravenspur. These allusions sometimes threw the lady into a momentary confusion, while at others she would attempt to parry them with a petulance, which like the bridling of the offended swan only served to heighten her attractions. Walter laughed at the Earl's *badinage*, for such he took care to call it, and as the wine had inspired him with confidence, he took his full share in the discourse, endeavouring to please those from whose society he derived such unusual pleasure.

Some time had thus rapidly elapsed, when Sunderland starting up, declared that as he was in the immediate vicinity of Powis House he must call there, but that he should not be more than half-an-hour absent, and requesting Walter to await his return, he hurried away. "Such an abrupt and unceremonious departure might hardly be deemed consistent with his Lordship's

character for politeness," observed Mrs. Audley, "but that I know he is compelled to economize his time, few men being so harassed by innumerable avocations, both of a public and private nature. He will not, I dare say, be long absent, and in the mean while, I will do my best to entertain you, though you must not expect from me the varied knowledge and high conversational powers that distinguish the Earl of Sunderland."

Walter politely declared that his companion was quite competent to the task of delighting and entertaining him ; and the lady, as if determined to confirm his assertion, put forth all her accomplishments with a witchery that must have enchanted any heart not steeled against such blandishments by a previous attachment. Fortified as he was by this security, Walter, who was still under the influence of wine, found it difficult at times to restrain his admiration, and to preserve his thoughts in their allegiance to Hetty. But his fealty was destined to be exposed to a still more perilous trial. To diver-

sify the amusement of the evening, Mrs. Audley took up a guitar, and prepared to sing. While arranging herself in a becoming attitude for this purpose, her shawl, whether by design or accident it becomes us not to decide, came unpinned, and as the lady, whose hands were engaged with the instrument, could not easily succeed in fastening it, her companion offered his services, which were accepted, though not without some confusion. He acquitted himself most circum-spectly of his office, but the agitation of his senses at once serving to soberize him from the effects of his potations, and to warn him of his danger, he retreated hastily to his chair, and began to look anxiously for the return of the Earl. Startled at the very thought of committing himself by any indiscreet word or action with a friend of Lord Sunderland, who might be considered as entrusted for the moment to his honour and guardianship, he endeavoured to shake off the remaining effects of the Burgundy, and resolved to observe the most guarded demeanour until his Lordship should re-appear.

A remorseful twinge at his momentary defection from Hetty coming in aid of this prudent determination, imparted a sudden distance and restraint to his manner which his companion failed not to observe, and which she attempted to dissipate by increased attentions. It occurred moreover to Walter at this instant, that if Lord Sunderland wished to marry him to Mrs. Audley, of which he had given very intelligible intimations, his only chance of escaping from this project without alienating his self-willed patron, was to make the objection to the alliance proceed from the lady. By endeavouring to ingratiate himself with his fair companion he had in fact been defeating his own object; and although he was sensible that the immediate attempt to repair his error would wear a rather ungracious appearance, he thought it wiser to run the risk of offending the lady by his coldness, than of winning her good opinion by continuing to make his court to her.

Whatever air of embarrassment this resolution might throw over his own demeanour, it

seemed not to affect his companion, who talked, and laughed, and sang, and put forth her fascinations with undiminished vivacity, rallying him on his impatience when he looked at his watch, and expressed his wonder at the prolonged absence of Lord Sunderland. Still the Peer did not present himself, and Mrs. Audley, affecting to be piqued at this instance of his impunctuality, petulantly declared that she would not any longer wait supper for him. It was served accordingly, tempting the palate by a small though exquisite display of delicacies, and gratifying the eye by the brilliancy of plate and cut glass. The wines, which seemed to be every way worthy of the viands, were pressed upon his acceptance, the ruby, sparkling to the crystal's lip, being presented to him by the fair hand of his entertainer, who gaily challenged him to a bumper; but Walter, contenting himself with sipping the insidious draught, observed the forms of politeness without endangering the self-possession which he felt to be of the last importance in this most delicate

conjuncture. No sooner was supper concluded, than declaring his conviction that the Earl, whose mind might well be harassed, must have forgotten his engagement, he arose to take his departure, observing that it was now considerably past midnight.

“ Past midnight !” exclaimed Mrs. Audley, with a look of surprise and chagrin—“ I had no idea it was so late, but the time flies swiftly when the society is pleasant. I will not offer to detain you upon any account ; it might occasion observations, to which I would not for the whole world be subjected. My Lord Sunderland’s conduct is really inexcusable, and I shall not easily forgive him ; but as I have no quarrel with Captain Colyton, and am indeed indebted to him for a most pleasant evening, I hope he will do me the favour of repeating his visit whenever he finds himself in this neighbourhood.”

An extended hand, and the most winning smile, accompanied this polite speech, which Walter acknowledged by some courteous com-

pliments that pledged him to nothing, and took his departure, not a little gratified at his escape, and flattering himself that he had steered most adroitly between the Scylla and Charybdis of the lady's regard and the Earl's displeasure. "A coldness so marked, and yet so respectful as mine," he said to himself, "could not give offence, although it could not fail to repel her. Yes, yes, I have escaped most admirably from the dilemma; I shall get rid of the intended wife, retain my all-powerful patron, and make him, as I trust, subservient to my union with Hetty. I have had enough of this most dangerous Mrs. Audley, and I hope I shall see no more of her. Let Sunderland ——"

"Let the villain defend himself!" cried an angry voice, that sounded close to his ear; and turning sharply round, Walter could indistinctly discern the glimmering of a drawn sword, and the figure of a man hurrying towards him. "Scoundrel!" continued the stranger, "your wish shall be gratified—you shall see no more of Helen Audley, but you

shall first expiate her wrongs !” With an instinctive promptitude, Walter had drawn his rapier, which was already crossed by that of his assailant, who pushed at him with more fury than skill, at the same time lavishing upon him the most abusive epithets, in a hoarse and passionate voice. The son of Jaspar Colyton could not fail to be an expert swordsman, but he was flurried by the suddenness of the attack, somewhat unnerved by the effects of wine, and confused by the darkness of the night, which did not allow him distinctly to see his enemy’s weapon ; so that it became a scuffle of chance, rather than a contest of skill. In this way several desperate lunges had been exchanged without injury on either side, when another voice was heard, at a little distance, shouting out—“ Aha ! have you secured the villain on that side ? Dispatch him ! dispatch him ! he deserves not gentleman’s usage at our hands, and even assassination stands excused when the wrong-doer is too high to be otherwise reached. Have at thy heart, lewd wretch ! have at thy

heart!" With these words, a second enraged antagonist made a fierce push at Walter, who, being thus attacked by two at once, retreated, still vigorously defending himself, towards a lone house, at a little distance; for, on quitting Ormonde-street, he had inadvertently turned towards the fields, instead of taking the direction of Holborn. Having succeeded in reaching the wall, he placed his back against it, determined to sell his life dearly; for of ultimate success, in such an unequal contest, he began to entertain but little hope, concluding that the bravoës or robbers, whichever they might be, would not retire till they had completed their murderous work. And this they would doubtless have accomplished, had not the door of the house been suddenly thrown open, whence a stranger issued, exclaiming — "Hey, gentlemen! what means this clashing of swords? How! two to one! nay then, for the honour of Old England and fair play, I espouse the weaker side." So saying, he drew off one of the assailants, with whom he soon

became hotly engaged, while Walter, encouraged by this most timely succour, struck at his antagonist's weapon with such fury, that his own treacherous rapier broke in half. Seeing him thus defenceless, his adversary closed, passed his sword, as he thought, through Walter's body, though it only pierced his clothes, and grazed the skin beneath the left arm, and immediately shouted out to his comrade—"Fly, Caleb, fly! save yourself, for the villain is sped—I have run him through the heart—away! away!"

Both the ruffians now took to their heels, and being favoured by the darkness, were quickly out of sight, when the stranger running up to Walter, and expressing a hope that he was not so fatally wounded as the villain's speech had intimated, tendered his arm for his support, and invited him into the house.

"Brave and generous stranger!" exclaimed Walter, pressing the extended hand with the grasp of fervent gratitude; "I have no wound, I trust, beyond a mere scratch, though the fel-

low may have bruised me with the hilt of his sword, for he thrust with the fury of a desperado. You have saved my life; but for your generous interference I must have fallen a victim to assassination, and I accept the present shelter of your roof, that I may express my gratitude, and learn the name of my courageous preserver."

"Heaven grant that you be not more seriously injured than you imagine!" said the stranger; "but in, in! enter quickly, lest the bravoës should recruit their forces and return."

Walter entered the house, following the stranger, who carefully locked and bolted the door, took a lamp from the hall table, ascended the stairs, and passed into a small room, where in an arm-chair, beside a table covered with letters, was a man fast asleep. "What, Sidney!" exclaimed the first, touching his friend on the shoulder, and awaking him; "I concluded that Morpheus was taking his revenge for your having bilked him by your last night's journey, or you must surely have heard the clashing of

swords beneath your window." And he then stated that, just as he had himself returned to the house, he had been alarmed by the noise of a furious fray, and had sallied forth in time to rescue an honest gentleman from the hands of braves.

"Generous but imprudent Baldwyn!" exclaimed his friend, rising from his chair, and speaking in a tone of reproach; "is yours a life to be thus idly risked in a night brawl, and at such a juncture as this? And for whom have you so rashly perilled both yourself and me? Who is this honest gentleman, I wonder?" This inquiry was made in a tone of marked sarcasm, and accompanied by a stern suspicious glance at Walter, which would at any other time have provoked him to an uncourteous rejoinder; but checking every feeling of this sort in consideration of the important service just conferred upon him, he contented himself with stating who and what he was, adding that as he had been only a few days in London, where he was almost a total stranger, he must have been mistaken by

his assailants for some other individual,—a supposition rendered more likely by certain injurious phrases that had been applied to him. They could hardly, he observed, be common robbers, nor did it appear that they had attacked him under the influence of intoxication, merely to exhibit their skill, or give vent to their pot-valour.

“No, no!” said his rescuer, whom his friend had addressed by the name of Baldwyn; “we have ugly neighbours in these fields, but this is no robber’s *camisado*, still less is it any *querelle d’Allemand*, for the villains were not only earnest but passionate, nor would they probably have fled had they not deemed that they had effectually disposed of you. By the by, unrip, Sir, unrip! let us lose no more time, but see how you have escaped. Aha!” he continued, after having unbuttoned Walter’s vest, “you are a lucky man, Captain Colyton; it is no more than a simple scratch, with a bruise upon the chest from the pummel of the fellow’s weapon, but the pass was shrewdly aimed for the heart.”

“Though it is a mere trifle,” said Walter, “my death would nevertheless have been certain but for your most opportune assistance. Indeed I defended myself badly, for I was completely taken by surprise, and yet I might have been better prepared, for that such night attacks were not uncommon in the outskirts of London I had already been apprised by my friend Captain Seagrave.”

“Captain Seagrave!” exclaimed both his companions at once, exchanging with each other the most significant looks of surprise, not unmixed with alarm, while he who had been awakened by the name of Sidney put his hand to his sword, which he seemed half inclined to draw. In a moment, however, he let it go, gathered up the letters upon the table, secured them in his pocket, and turning his stern, knitted brows upon Walter, said in a resolute voice, “Captain Colyton, you may now withdraw in perfect safety. Your comrades—I beg your pardon—I mean your assailants, have abandoned the field of battle; by turning to the left you will

presently gain the streets, where you will be secure from all attack: my friend and I have private and urgent business to dispatch. I wish you a good night." And he opened the door as if to intimate his desire that the visitant should instantly depart.

"At least let me know the name of the gallant gentleman to whom I owe a debt of eternal gratitude: if I mistake not, you called him Baldwyn?"

"Ay, Sir, with an *alias*, such as Thompson, Jackson, Harrison; I call him by twenty such in the course of a day. I dare say you are yourself well acquainted with the use of an *alias*."

"I do not understand you, Sir," said Walter, a good deal nettled.

"It is quite sufficient, Sir, that *we* understand *you*," replied his colloquist nodding, with a frown of menace. "At least you must comprehend our wish to be alone."

"I will not intrude upon you any longer at present, since you have such urgent need of pri-

vacy, but I trust that I may be allowed to call to-morrow to renew my acknowledgments to my brave preserver?"

"Oh, Sir! we have no doubt whatever of your calling to-morrow," said the man, bowing with a sarcastic smile, and at the same time opening the street-door, out of which Walter passed, and was repeating his thanks and good-night, when it was unceremoniously shut in his face and bolted on the inside.

"Such a cavalier dismissal is totally inexplicable," he exclaimed to himself—"especially after one of the parties had voluntarily risked his life to save mine. However, this is no time for parlance or explanation; my broken rapier warns me that I should stand but a poor chance against any fresh attack, and I must therefore make the best of my way to the streets." These were presently reached, when by inquiring of a watchman he was directed towards Holborn, and arrived at his own lodgings without any farther misadventure. Here, however, he was saluted by the objurgations of the Land-

lady, who reproved him somewhat sharply for his late hours,—a rebuke which Walter, who was not in any mood for rejoinder, received very patiently, and retiring immediately to bed endeavoured to compose himself to sleep. Various reflections and conjectures upon his dinner and colloquy with Lord Sunderland, his *tête-à-tête* and supper with the fascinating Mrs. Audley, the fierce and unprovoked attack made upon him by the bravoës, the critical interference of the brave stranger, the mysterious demeanour of the gentleman in the lone house, and his rude ejection from it, kept him awake for some time; and when at last he forgot himself in repose, his slumbers were disturbed by a confused presentment of all the occurrences of the evening mixed up together in fantastical combinations that were sometimes delightful, and sometimes startling and horrible.

On awaking the following morning he experienced some little inconvenience from the scratch and the bruise, but, not deeming them of sufficient importance to require professional treatment, he determined to set off immediately

after breakfast to call upon his generous rescuer of the night before, and express his thanks in a more formal manner than he had been allowed to do at the moment. "Perhaps I may find these singular gentlemen in a better humour," he reasoned to himself—"and if not, a lack of courtesy in them cannot excuse the want of gratitude in me. To evince a sense of deep obligation is manifestly my first duty. The rudest of the two seemed even to expect me when I talked of calling, although he expressed himself in a taunting manner that I could not comprehend. Methought he seemed to doubt my being what I had represented; and if so, it is incumbent on me to vindicate myself from his suspicions. They are gentlemen, I am sure, for both wore an air of distinction, though the manners of one were unceremonious enough; and at all events I shall, by calling, clear up the mystery that appears to attach to them."

In pursuance of this resolution he betook himself at an early hour of the morning to Great Ormonde Street, whence he easily found his way to the adjoining field, and the lonesome

house, a small and shabby tenement, on knocking at the door of which an old woman presented herself, and informed him, in answer to his inquiries, that its recent occupants had taken their departure on horseback a little before daylight, and she knew not whither they were gone, though she believed it was to some considerable distance in the country.

“ But you can at least tell me their names,” said Walter ; — “ the elder and the taller of the two was called Sidney, if I mistake not ; and the handsome young man, to whom I am indebted for my life, bore, I think, the name of Baldwyn.”

“ Lackaday, Sir, and if you are acquainted with their names, why do you seek them of me ? I know nothing of the gentlemen, not I, though I have heard say in the neighbourhood they had no servant, and never went out except o’ nights. As for me, I have been only sent in this morning by the owner of the house to set it to rights.”

After other equally vain attempts, Walter, finding that the old woman was either really

ignorant, or would not communicate what she knew, left her, and returned towards Holborn, much marvelling at the sudden disappearance of the two ambiguous strangers, and resolving by the way to make an immediate communication of all that had occurred to Lord Sunderland, who, from one or two expressions let fall by the bravoës, might perhaps throw some light upon the meaning of the outrage, and ought at all events to be apprised of it. On reaching his lodgings, he found the long expected letter from his father, in answer to the one he had dispatched from Westbury. It was written in the usual free and easy style of the good-humoured Squire, who, though he was sufficiently fond of money as the main security for his personal gratifications, did not love it well enough to annoy himself upon an unimportant loss, especially as it afforded him an opportunity for ridiculing the improvident precautions and the overweening self-conceit of his wife. He therefore enclosed a fresh order for the amount of his son's outfit, and the purchase

of another horse, recommending him to apply these funds immediately to their object, for fear of new mischances, and concluding his letter with a burlesque account of Mrs. Colyton's consternation when apprised of his adventure with the highwayman, together with the loss of the money, the godly book of hymns, and the bottle of *Rosa Solis* which with her own hands she had so carefully concealed in the stuffing of his saddle. One part of his father's injunction Walter lost not a moment in obeying—he went to receive the gold for the amount of his order, and was induced by the possession of his little treasure to make a trifling alteration in the intended disposal of the morning by calling in the first instance on the fair Catherine in Pall-mall, and refunding the sum she had so generously advanced. “I have three mysteries to clear up,” said Walter soliloquizing—“that which relates to the bravoës, to the unknown knights of the shabby tenement, and to the incognita whom I lately saw passing into the private gate of Whitehall Gardens. *Place aux dames*. I

will first seek an *éclaircissement* with the lady, and then betake myself to Lord Sunderland, who may perhaps afford me some clue to the meaning of my singular night-adventure."

In pursuance of this resolution he made his toilet as becomingly as possible, bought a showy sword-knot of a loyal colour for his new rapier, betook himself to St. James's Square, and in a flutter of expectation and curiosity knocked at the door of the handsome mansion occupied by the lively Catherine.

CHAPTER XI.

The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

SHAKSPEARE.

FOR the present we must leave Walter seeking an *éclaircissement* with the fair Catherine and the Prime Minister, as it is high time that we should elucidate the mysterious occurrences at Orchard Place, from which we have been so long absent, and whose horrified inmates, it will be recollected, we left half-maddened by their terrors of the supposed apparition. Startled by the screams of the servants, as the imagined spectre passed through the hall, Hetty Chervil, who had not yet undressed, hurried to Mrs. Colyton's chamber, imagining that the disturb-

ance must have been occasioned by a return of her hysterical fit. She found that lady in a state of the most alarming agitation and excitement ; for the servants, too much terrified to move, paid no attention to her repeated ringings, and as Edith, who slept in the adjoining chamber, had not answered her loud calls, the anxious mother concluded that some calamity must have happened to her, perhaps even that she had been smitten with death. Notwithstanding her illness and debility, she was on the point of getting up to satisfy her misgivings, when Hetty entered, and having remained a short time to pacify and reassure her as well as she could, offered to go to Edith's room, and bring her to her mother. Proceeding to her apartment with this intention, she found her sitting up in the bed, shivering violently, and rubbing her hands as if to warm them, while she gazed around her with the vacant bewildered look of one whose faculties were wandering. Hetty's entrance, however, seeming to recall her scattered senses, she exclaimed be-

seechingly—"O Hetty, dearest Hetty! comfort me, comfort me. I scarcely know where I am, nor what has happened to me, but I have had a frightful dream, and I am perishing with cold."

"With cold!" cried Hetty, embracing her—"Good heavens, Edith, so you are; your flesh is as chill as marble. What can have occasioned it? You cannot have been lying in the bed, where I left you fast asleep."

"I feel as if something strange and frightful had occurred, and yet I know not what it is. I am ill—I am shivering all over, but I can think of nothing but my dream, if indeed it was a dream; for now that consciousness has returned to me, I can almost fancy it to have been a reality. Methought that I awoke in the dusk of the evening, and that having been weeping as usual for our poor dear departed Richard, I betook myself to his room, in the closet of which were hanging up the roquelaire and hat, which he latterly wore whenever he was able to quit the house. The sight of them,

as it seemed to me, suggested the idea of putting them on, and of proceeding to the church-yard, that I might try to soothe my grief by shedding tears upon his grave. I dreamed that I did so accordingly, and while I was thus mournfully sobbing and crying, methought I saw my mother approach, who fled in apparent alarm as soon as she beheld me. I remained some time longer seated on the grave, when I arose, picked up my mother's scarf, which she had let fall in the church-yard, walked home through the dark, knocked at the hall-door, ascended the stairs, and returned to my bed. I know not whether I may trust to my sensations, but I have the impression on my mind that, being awakened by fearful screams and outcries, I sate up in my bed, and soon after saw you entering my room with a candle. This was my dream, dearest Hetty; but why I should feel so deadly cold and ill, I cannot explain to you."

During this recital, Hetty had seen enough to convince her that she had not been listening

to the relation of a dream, but to the detail of an actual occurrence, for she had observed Richard's roquelaire and hat lying upon a chair at the farther end of the room, with Mrs. Colyton's scarf thrown across them; and at once concluding, as was really the case, that under a temporary alienation of mind, or the influence of somnambulism, her afflicted friend had wandered to the church-yard, and remained for some hours sitting upon her brother's grave, exposed to the night air, she could easily account for the shivering fit of which she complained. Remembering too the striking resemblance she bore to the deceased, and which must have been heightened to an appearance of absolute identity by wearing his clothes, Hetty was no longer astonished at Mrs. Colyton's tenacity in maintaining that she had actually seen the apparition of her son; nor was she now at a loss to explain the recent cries and disturbance throughout the house, which had been occasioned by the same startling misapprehension on the part of the servants when

Edith had presented herself at the hall-door. Hetty, who well knew that the trembling sensitiveness of her friend's mind was liable to be wrought, by any powerful excitement, into an excess that might easily assume a morbid character, was not so much surprised at the temporary aberration with which she had just been visited, as doubtful respecting the propriety of undeceiving her. It would shock her less, she imagined, to leave her under the erroneous impression that she had been dreaming, than to alarm her with the notion of being subject to occasional hallucinations of mind, or fits of sleep-walking. Affecting, therefore, to lend herself to the belief that Edith had been dreaming, she entreated her to lie down, and endeavour to compose herself; when, covering her up with some additional clothes, and promising to return shortly with a cordial, she withdrew from the room, covertly carrying off the roque-laire, hat, and scarf, with which she hastened to Mrs. Colyton's apartment, whither the Squire also had by this time made his way.

“ Well, I declare now !” cried the former, “ Hetty has found my scarf ! there ’s a good girl ! I should have been sorry to have lost it, for you know what it cost me. I hope it is not soiled, although I fear I shall never want to wear it again. Heigho !”

“ I believe, my dear Madam,” said Hetty, “ that with the assistance of this scarf, and of the strange story I have to tell you, I shall be enabled to dispel all your alarms, and I must therefore beg you to be as composed as possible, and to give me all your attention.”

“ Hand me the scarf first ;—not at all soiled, I see ; that is fortunate. Now then tell me how you found poor Edith, why you did not bring her with you, and what is this marvellous story that you talk of.”

Hetty repeated the whole relation she had heard, producing the roquelaire and hat, and adducing the circumstances we have already detailed, together with the half-benumbed state in which she had found Edith, as conclusive proofs that she had been sitting on her brother’s

grave at the time that Mrs. Colyton had visited the church-yard, and mistaken her for an apparition.

“The Lord be good unto us all!” ejaculated that lady, not at all sorry to be thus relieved from the apprehension of her own approaching dissolution, which she had connected in idea with the sight of the supposed spectre. “It must have been so, it must indeed! Poor Edith, poor dear child! I always said that a little matter, where her feelings were concerned; would drive her wits away from her. We must take care of her, Jaspar, great care, or these fits of bewilderment may grow upon her. I hope nobody sent for the Reverend Jedediah Holdworthy, for he would expect some offering for coming, and as I do not accord with him on Predestination, I fear I should hardly derive benefit from his prayers. There are several other things too, in which he does not agree with me, for he is a very obstinate wrong-headed man, and, moreover, I already feel much better in my health. Hetty, my dear, fold up this scarf

—how lucky it was not soiled!—and put it carefully away. Methinks I shall have strength enough now to go and see poor Edith.”

“Sdeath, Becky!” cried the Squire, who having had his full quantum of wine, and exceeded his usual hour of retiring, was anxious to get to bed, “out of this room you stir not, lest you should see some fresh hobgoblin, and give us all another volley of squalling and hysterics. To bed, to bed! like a wise wench, and sleep off your tantrums and vagaries. *Mort de ma vie!* I said honest Dick would never think of scaring us in this way out of our seven senses; and Edith ought to be ashamed of herself for disturbing the whole house, worse than if a legion of witches had rode through it upon broomsticks.”

“Poor girl! she knew not what she did. I am indeed almost too ill to attend to her, and so I will retire to rest if you will see and get her some warm cordial to comfort and console her.”

“Hetty can manage all that,” said the Squire, who was a mortal enemy to trouble of any sort,

unless it was to procure some personal gratification for himself. "And at the same time Hetty," he continued, "you had better pacify the servants below, who are frightened out of their wits under the notion that they have seen Richard's ghost; explain to them how the mistake happened, and send them to bed without any more catterwauling, for I'm getting as sleepy as an owl. There, go along like a good girl, and don't disturb me any more. Take care of poor Edith; I dare say she will be better—Yaw! augh! haugh!—better in the morning, and so shall I too, I hope, after all this confounded clutter and confusion. I have been scared already out of my sleep with one alarm, and shouldn't fancy a second; but some people have no consideration for others. Good night, good—Yaw! augh! haugh!"

On making her way to the kitchen, Hetty found it in a sad state of confusion, none of the overturned chairs and tables having been replaced, while the inmates, afraid to retire to their beds, were huddled together by the fire,

endeavouring to sustain and fortify one another by the bottle of usquebaugh, as well as by resolutions not to separate, but to form a league of mutual protection, and to keep up a bright and cheering flame in the grate, until they should hear the first cock crow, when the disembodied spirit, according to the ghostly law in that case made and provided, would be compelled to return to its sepulchral prison. Hetty's unexpected appearance occasioned some fresh shudderings and outcries, which, however, were presently appeased by her being recognized, while all their terrors were gradually dispelled as she unfolded the real nature of the supposed apparition by which they had suffered themselves to be so needlessly appalled. Comical Kit, whose senses had been surprised and panic-stricken when he had opened the hall-door to Edith, although he was a man of strong nerves, and no ways liable to superstitious terrors, was the first to recover courage as this explanation proceeded, and quickly sought to re-establish his character for intrepidity by turning the whole affair into ridicule. "Slaughter and slugs, Miss

Hetty," he exclaimed, "do you think I took it for a real apparition? Not I — only it enabled me to have some sport; and egad! I acted my part so well that I believe if Miss Edith hadn't given up the ghost, some of us would have anticipated her in another half hour. By that time I myself should have been dead — dead drunk, I mean, thanks to the usquebaugh. Dolly the cook began to be fuddled and fanatical, and to talk of going to Tophet, in which case all the fat would have been in the fire; and Mrs. Harper, who would have been frightened out of her wits if she had any, took care to conceal herself effectually by standing behind her own nose."

"'On't ye ha' done, wi' your nonsense and jabbering, ye jibing skeer-devil!" cried the cook tartly, "I never said a nought, Miss Hetty, about gooing to Tophet, sin' I don't know where it be; but I ha' been to Topsham in Devonshire, and I ha' zeen Glassenbury Tor, and theasam, I reckon, be viner than all the tuthermy places that Kit doo keep such a cracking about."

"For my part I never attend to any thing

such a chattering jackpudding may utter," exclaimed Mrs. Harper, who began to recover her shrewish temper together with her courage, "but I retain my own opinion that the Sydenham cordial had something to do with the matter in the first instance, and I must say that it's very inexcusable in Miss Edith to frighten people in this dreadful manner—I'm sure I don't know when I shall recover my good looks."

"When I recover my estate in Yorkshire," said Kit.

Hetty, having prepared and warmed the cordial for which she came, once more desired the servants to retire quietly to bed, when she returned to Edith's apartment, whom she found more composed than when she had left her, though still complaining of the cold. In a very short time, however, after having swallowed the restorative mixture, she became warmer and more comfortable, when, feeling an almost immediate inclination to sleep, she dismissed her friend, with many thanks for her good offices. By the time Hetty was in bed, the servants had

retired to rest; Mapletoft, forgetting, in the perusal of Glanvil, all that he had recently seen and heard, withdrew at length to his apartment as if nothing whatever had occurred, and in another half hour the mansion which had so lately been a scene of general uproar and consternation, was buried in profound silence and repose.

On the following morning the scholar, having totally forgotten all the over-night's occurrences, prepared to sally forth, as was often his wont, into the neighbouring meadows, with a classic or other favourite author tucked under his left arm.

On a row of pegs in the hall was hung his hat, and upon a mat beneath it, was generally to be seen Keeper, the old brown spaniel, the inseparable companion of his excursions. Having long passed that age when dogs delight to frisk, and sport, and scud backwards and forwards over the ground that they may expend the superfluous vigour of their limbs, or the redundancy of their animal spirits, the sedate and grave-looking Keeper was seldom tempted to quit his mat, whatever might be passing around

him, unless to get his meals in the stable-yard, or to accompany his master whenever he quitted the house. As the latter approached the hall, for he knew his step before he appeared, Keeper would slowly rouse from his apparent slumbers, give himself a gentle preparatory shake, open his dull rosy eye, and lifting up his head, which from its long shaggy ears and pendant jowl presented a most venerable, not to say judicial aspect, would indolently wag his tail, sometimes to the accompaniment of a gape, in quiet recognition of his master as he came in sight, and as a token that he was ready to take charge of him, if it were his purpose to quit the house.

That he should have any consciousness of his duty in this respect will not appear strange to those who have watched the demeanour of dogs when they have been constituted the sole guardians of sheep or children, or of a labourer's jacket and keg of beer, on which occasions the four-footed custodians will not only betray a sense of the trust reposed in them, but even

take an apparent pride in the vigilant and faithful discharge of their duty. Such was pre-eminently the case with Keeper, who when marching a few paces a-head of his master, far from being tempted aside by the solicitations of other dogs, or by attractions of any kind whatever, pursued his steady course, not unconscious of the dignity of his office, and yet wearing his honours with that unobtrusive gravity of mien which might best beseem an aged and time-worn quadruped who had outlived all the vanities of boastful youth.

In the abstraction of the moment, for his thoughts were with Ovid and in the midst of the Augustan æra, Mapletoft, upon reaching the hall, took down the Squire's slouched and feathered cavalier hat, and placed it upon his head,—an appendage which formed a most incongruous union with his long gaunt cloakless figure. Keeper who was instantly conscious of the mistake, halted at the door, looked back at the row of pegs where the proper hat remained suspended, and whined; but his master took no

notice of these broad hints, and as the dog considered it his duty to comply in matters of trivial import, although he would insist upon being noticed, ay, and upon being obeyed too where the safety of his charge required it, he submitted without farther expostulation, waited till the door was opened, and then took his usual station, about ten feet ahead of his biped companion. As Mapletoft when he had any classical book in his hand, could hardly be said to be percipient of the external world, although he liked to be out in it for the sake of his health, he seldom varied his walk, generally passing into an open road that skirted the long garden wall, and thus making his way into the meadows beyond. The weather had been unusually sultry, and on the morning in question a scorching sun had driven all the cattle beneath the shelter of the trees; but although the garden wall afforded a cool and pleasant shade, our scholar walked along on the opposite side in all the glare and heat of day, screening his eyes with the slouched hat, and alternately

reading and spouting aloud as he proceeded. Keeper, whose short breath and fatness rendered him somewhat impatient of heat, chose the shady side of the road, keeping always in advance, but occasionally halting to pant, and loll out his tongue, and look behind him to see that all was right, after which he would again move leisurely forward.

In this manner they had skirted the garden, and had gained the meadows, when as they approached a ditch crossed by a narrow plank and hand rail, they were recognized by three individuals who were trudging towards them. These were Teddy Chubb and Bill Coomb, the two peasants who had brought home Mrs. Colyton when she fainted in the church-yard, and Margaret Chervil, Hetty's sister, who was making her way to Orchard Place with a basket, containing butter of her own churning, and some other little articles of farm produce, such as the Chervils occasionally sent over to the Squire's Lady out of gratitude for her kindness to Hetty. — "Zuggers!" cried Teddy Chubb—

“certain shower yonder be crazy Mapletoft wi’ tha Squoire’s hat on’s poll, alooking vor all the wordle jist like a mommick in a vield o’ clauver. Haw! haw! he be a queer chap, baint’n? Sim ta I the girt rawny be in one of his northering fits, and nif he be, I shouldn’ wonner if he do miss tha plank, an’ goo sliddering right into tha ditch, as ’a did a vortnight agone.”

“Begummers! I shood like ta zee’t,” cried the other—“’t’ood be better nor a shill’orth o’ beer, ’oodn’t it, Teddy? but ’a’s got Keeper wi’un, and I’d lay a groat, ay and down wi’ tha dowst too, that tha dog ’on’t let’n souse into tha mud-batch. I ha’ got a mutton-bwon in ma wallet, and I’ll try an’ coax’n away, that’s what I ’ool, so ware-whing! maester Mapletoft.”

“You ’ool, ’ool ye, Bill Coomb? Lors love ye! there’s not sich a hearam-skream chap as thee amongst a kit o’ twenty.”

“Vor shame then, Bill!” said Margaret, who was, however, infinitely too fond of jocular mischief to interfere, though she had thought it right to disclaim any direct participation in

their plot. By this time the party had passed the little bridge which Mapletoft was approaching, spouting in a loud and energetic voice,

“ *Ante fores antri fœcunda papavera florent,
Innumeræque herbæ: quarum de lacte soporem
Nox legit, et spargit per opacas humida terras—*

Beautiful, beautiful! Nothing can be more appropriate than the whole description of the cave. Spenser may imitate, but he cannot equal it.”

Bill Coomb, who, with his companions, was totally unobserved by Mapletoft, having tried in vain by whistling and wheedling to coax Keeper from his duty, now took the bone of mutton from his wallet, and held it out invitingly. Eyeing it wistfully for a moment, the dog whined and wagged his tail, and assumed a look of longing complacency; but as his master came up to him, he cast his eyes forward towards the little bridge, when, as if recollecting that his services might presently be required, he resumed his march, without once looking back at the tempting viand that might

have decoyed him into a momentary abandonment of his duty. Nor was Keeper mistaken, if he imagined that his tutelary functions would be speedily put in requisition; for the scholar, immersed in the beauties of his author, was taking a course which would have infallibly precipitated him into the very midst of the muddy ditch, when the sagacious dog, having vainly attempted to excite his attention by barking, raised himself on his hind legs, rested his fore-paws on his master's thighs, and thus fairly compelled him to stop, and discover his danger. "Goodnow, my trusty friend!" cried Mapletoft, patting and embracing him—"Jaspar had reason when he gave thee the name of Keeper. But for thee, I protest I should again have suffered the misadventure of Thales, the Milesian. Truly, the instinct of these animals is marvellous, and well has Homer availed himself of their fidelity, when he makes the dog of Ulysses recognize him in spite of his disguise and of his twenty years' absence." So saying, he crossed the narrow plank in

safety, quoting aloud, as he again held up the book —

“*Janua, ne verso stridorem cardine reddat,
Nulla domo tota est.*”——

“How minute, and yet how characteristic! — quite Ovidian.—Ah! Homer may sometimes nod, but the exile of Pontus was never more thoroughly awake than when he wrote this description of sleep.” Thus did he continue spouting and lounging through the fields, preceded by his four-footed guardian, while Margaret and her disappointed companions pursued their several ways, after having enjoyed a hearty laugh at the grotesque figure he presented, and at the ludicrous contrast between the staid regular progress of the grave-looking dog, and the vehement gesticulations of the master, as he blurted out exclamatory bursts of Latin, and occasionally threw up his arms in a sort of classical ecstasy.

We should perhaps apologize to our readers for reciting an occurrence so trivial and unim-

portant in its results ; but as we may hereafter have occasion to show that at this period of general corruption there were but few individuals, from the Premier to the page, who could resist the temptation of a bribe, we have thought ourselves the more bound, as faithful and impartial historians, to record this instance of staunch integrity and adherence to duty on the part of a humble quadruped.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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