THE

MAGIC OF WEALTH

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

MAGIC OF WEALTH.

CHAPTER I.

SCENE I.

PETER PERRYMAN, of Cheapside, London, haberdasher, milliner, and lace-man was of slender form, and sallow nance; rather more than five feet hi about thirty-six years old.

Each week-day morning, e Church clock struck nine, Peter l stantly received the last tou the barber's comb, had wiped the from his jessamine cheeks, and the rose of muslin beneath his chi

He the powdering gown was changed for the smart blue frock, or the red morocco slippers gave place to the tasselled Hessian boots, it was the custom of this *Grand Monarque des Modes*, to strut for half an hour up and down the shop. There, with all the majesty of millinery power, he issued forth the order of the day to several pretty girls, and girl-like boys, his female and effeminate apprentices, exciting emulation in each breast to measure ribands faster than their fellows.

At one time he would slyly sow the seeds of avarice in their young minds, by

That when they to the ladies made their court,
While simp'ring, they should snip an inch too short

Then, shifting the subject of his counsels from the science of attack to that of defence, with deep sagacity he would put them on their guard against the ambuscades of well-dressed shop-lifters, forged notes, and counterfeit Bank tokens.

One morning, while Perryman was thus parading and haranguing, his oration was interrupted by the appearance of a dirty lad, who enquired which was Mr. Perryman's shop.

"This is the shop, and I am Mr. Perryman. What do you want with me, boy? Who are you? Where do you come from?"

"I'm Boots at the Spread Eagle, Gracechurch-street, Sir. Here's a letter for you."

"A letter!—Spread Eagle!—A letter for me!"

"Yes, Sir; a gentleman that *comed* in just now, in the Yarmouth coach, sent me off with it."

"Bless me! very odd!" said Mr. Perryman, taking the letter between his finger and thumb; for the boy had soiled it not a little with his shoe-blacking hands. Perceiving, however, that it was really addressed to him, he drew forth from the pocket

of his white dimity waistcoat a shining pair of finger-forceps, clipped the paper round the wax, unfolded the envelope, and read thus :—

"The person referred to in the enclosed letter, waits for Mr. Perryman at the Inn, to which the bearer will conduct him."

In the superscription of the letter Mr. Perryman instantly recognized the handwriting of a very useful acquaintance, resident at Brussels, through whose ingenuity, combined with his own, it sometimes happened, that French laces, gloves, and fans, found their way into Cheapside without the *customary* ceremonials of the officers established by government to superintend the arrival of all foreign fineries. Eagerly therefore he tore open the letter, which he flattered himself was the harbinger of some new stroke of illicit success ; but was surprised to read—

"*Brussels.*

"MY WORTHY FRIEND,

"When last in London, I recollect you talked of taking a snug box at Pentonville, or Walworth, or some other genteel place in the environs of the metropolis, and letting out part of your expensive house in Cheapside. If you have adopted that plan, and if you should have room for a lodger at this time, I am happy to be able to recommend to you an elderly gentleman, who has lodged at my friend Gompertz's, for a month or two together, backwards and forwards, these many years past. I must, however, inform you, that he is a very singular character. In the first place, he is a perfect stranger;—for neither Gompertz, nor any other creature here, knows who or what he is, whither he goes, or whence he comes. He calls himself an American, and speaks good English. He is sup-

posed to be a Spaniard by some, because they know he receives frequent remittances from Madrid; though for the same reason, they might insist on it that he is an Englishman, since his receipts from London are as frequent. He also corresponds with the bankers at Paris; but he is much too grave for a Frenchman:—and though he sometimes has letters from the Hague and Amsterdam, he is too prodigal of his wealth to be mistaken for a Dutchman. He spends money as freely as if he had it for wishing for it—he is generous, but endeavours to conceal his charities—he sees no company at home—hardly ever goes out---seldom asks any questions---and almost always gives an evasive answer, when questioned by others. Singular as all this may seem, he is still a quiet, liberal, I may say, a princely lodger; and if you can only humour his oddities, I am sure twice the rent of your whole house will be no object to

him for a couple of rooms. Having learnt from my friend that he was going to England, and had expressed a wish that he might be fortunate enough to meet with as quiet and honest a landlord in London, as he had at Brussels, I ventured to recommend him to you. I think it is a golden moment for you if you can embrace it. If not, I beg of you to find him suitable apartments, and shew him a little attention, as we have reason to believe he never was in England before, which will serve both you and me, as I have made a great merit with old Gompertz of my interest with you. I shall write in a few weeks at farthest, on subjects of *another nature, not proper* to notice in this place, and till then remain,

"Your sincere friend,

"WALTER EVERETT."

"Dear me! only think how unlucky!" exclaimed Mr. Perryman, shewing the

letter to his sister, Miss Arabella Perryman. "Dear me, Arabella, how unlucky that you should have let the apartments only yesterday!"

"Let the apartments, brother!" said the shrewd virgin, after she had perused the fascinating epistle of smuggler Everett, "Pray what do you call let? To be sure, the people agreed to come, and I ordered the bill to be taken down; but you have never been after their character; they have not paid a farthing earnest, nor put so much as a tea-chest in the room to take possession. And would you be so silly, now, Peter Perryman, as to lose such a fine opportunity as this? Have you forgot what was the making of old Trottman, the common-councilman? Didn't he keep a little bit of a broker's shop, till one of his lodgers died, to whom he and his wife had behaved with attention in his sickness; and didn't that old lodger make a will, and leave them twenty

thousand pounds, when nobody supposed he was worth twenty pounds in the world? And here is an old gentleman, known to be as rich as a Jew, tumbles into your way, and you stand shilly-shally, like a pigeon pecking on a penthouse, when you ought to dart upon him, like a hawk after a sparrow."

If the eloquence of Arabella was not always successful in convincing her brother of the wisdom of her measures, her "consolidated three-per-cent." influence never failed to enforce their adoption. Equipping himself, therefore, in a few minutes, for the important interview, he followed the boy to the Spread Eagle.

SCENE II.

The dingy polisher of boots still acted as gentleman usher, and, conducting him to a small room, introduced the smirking, cringing Perryman to the

object of his homage, who sat in one corner of the room, leaning his elbow on a small red morocco trunk. He was plainly dressed in a suit of mourning, with a travelling surtout of grey cloth trimmed with fur. His countenance was finely expressive of energy of mind tempered by benevolence of heart; and in his person and manner there was a dignity, which was calculated to strike with reverence far less supercilious observers than this little-minded haberdasher.

"Your name is Perryman, Sir?"

"The same, Sir—very much at your service, Sir, I assure you. My friend Everett, Sir, has done me no small matter of honour in recommending——"

"No compliments, Mr. Perryman—our interview is an affair of business. Does it suit you yourself to take me for an inmate, or do you know any other person—"

"Sir, I am delighted to say, that my

house is open to receive you," said Perryman, interrupting him.

"Lead the way, then," said the other, taking his trunk under his arm.

"Stay, Sir," said Perryman, "I'll call the porter to take your trunk."

"Spare yourself that trouble, Sir,—I chuse to carry it myself."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," replied the haberdasher, bowing to the ground.

Making their way through the inn-yard between waggon-wheels and coach-poles, they came into Gracechurch-street, opposite a stand of hackney coaches. The officious Perryman here bawled out—"Coach!"

"What do you want with a coach? Are you lame?"

"Dear me! no, Sir; but a gentleman—I beg your pardon, Sir, but a wealthy gentleman, like you, would not surely walk through the streets with that there trunk under your arm."

"Why not, Sir?"

"It is not the custom in England, Sir."

"Custom! what is custom to me! If I have wealth, Sir, the chief blessing I derive from its possession is, that I can act as I please. I have at this moment no wish to indulge my limbs, and therefore I shall walk."

"Certainly, Sir,—by all means;" said the haberdasher—who now persuaded himself that the little trunk was full of diamonds. —"This way if you please, Sir—we'll cross over here—take care of that Greenwich stage, Sir—turn to the left—there, now we're in Cornhill, Sir. This pastry-cook's shop is kept by an Angel! he, he, he!—that's droll, isn't it, Sir?—That tall steeple there, with the grasshopper on the top, is the Royal Exchange, where all the merchants meet: you have heard of it, I dare say, Sir?"

"Who has not heard of it?—Yes, Sir, from every quarter of the globe I have held communion with it."

He then paused a moment, and fixing his eye on the building—exclaimed—"Hail! hallowed altar of universal confidence!—sanctuary of the fruits of universal industry, in times when the lawless rapacity of the sword has left the armed world none other!" Then turning to his guide—"Sir," continued he—"whenever that pile shall perish the empire of civilization in Europe will terminate with its fall."

Mr. Perryman smirked, and smoothed his chin, and bowed.

"That stone building over the way, is the Bank of England, Sir!"

"There then I behold an unrivalled monument of human wisdom and integrity, a glory to the British Empire, and a wonder to the world!—And pray where are the Treasury chambers? I have some bills of exchange upon the Lords of the Treasury."

"Oh! above two miles off, Sir,—at Whitehall."

"So much the better, Mr. Perryman. The Bank and the Royal Exchange may very properly be near and accommodating neighbours; but I am not sorry that the Treasury and the Bank are more distant acquaintances."

"Now, Sir, we're just in the Poultry. That's the Mansion-house, Sir, where the Lord Mayor lives. That's Bow Church; may-be you've heard the saying of 'being born within the sound of Bow bells."

"Not that I recollect, Sir. Pray what does it purport?"

"It means a man's being born in London—that is, what we call being a cockney. You must know, Sir, I'm a true cockney. I was born in Gutter-lane, over the way—went to school in Foster-lane—served my time in Bow lane—set up business first in Lawrence-lane, and then took this here house, Sir, all within the sound of Bow bells. A nice house, isn't it, Sir?—Cost me a mint of money:

this genteel pri-
made, the very
warden."

SCENE III.

The descriptive elocution of Mr. Perryman was here accompanied by a thundering application of the knocker of the aforesaid private door, which was opened by Miss Arabella in person, whose surprise at seeing the man of wealth carrying a trunk, though in size and shape it might have passed for a quarto volume, was prodigious. Exclamations that might, without poetical licence, be called screams, followed each other, with "Why don't somebody come and take the gentleman's trunk?"

"Spare yourself the trouble, Madam," said he; "for nobody shall take it from me."

Miss Arabella recollected that he was

a singular character, and drew her wonder-strained eyes and mouth within the compass of respectful acquiescence. She marched on most stately before him to his apartments—expatiated on his good fortune in obtaining them, and begged to know his commands.

"I like these rooms well, Madam," said he. "The chamber, I see, communicates with the sitting-room. That is quiet and retired; this is lively and even noisily cheerful.—Going to the window, "What a bustling crowd of human beings!"

"Would'nt you like to take some refreshment, Sir?—Tea, coffee, or chocolate?" said Miss Perryman.

"What a motley multitude!" continued the stranger, as he stood musing on the passing scene.

"What shall I get for your breakfast, Sir?" in a louder tone, said Miss Arabella.

"Sheep—oxen—horses—men!"

"Sir!" screamed the landlady, half afraid that her lodger was mad.

"What's the matter, Madam?" turning round.

"I was only repeating my question, Sir, to know what you usually have for your breakfast."

"Is there any danger of a famine, that the addition of one individual to your family occasions so much anxiety."

"La-dear-me, no, Sir," said the haberdasher: "Miss Perryman only means to pay attention; but she is apt to overdo the thing a little, and then, as I says, Sir, it becomes troublesome."

The stranger, totally disregarding the speeches or the presence of his landlord and landlady, stood silently contemplating the passing crowd beneath; while Peter and Arabella gazed at each other with significant nods and winks, which intimated their shrewd surmises, that the mental faculties of

their lodger were not in the best possible order.

Their conjectures were confirmed, when the abstracted mind of the stranger, unconscious of any auditor, gave utterance to feelings excited by the contemplations which engrossed it.

"Wonderful scene!" exclaimed he—"Within the little space on which the eye now rests, are visible all the offspring of human civilization;—Agriculture—Manufactures—Commerce—Arts—Science! In how many various forms and applications are here exhibited the products of Labour, the inventions of Art, and the discoveries of Science; while the activity of Commerce, protected by laws, and rewarded by plenty, is strikingly discernible in every passing object! Happy people!—Favoured city!—Oh that the powers and ingenuity of man should ever be perverted to turn a scene like this to Pandemonium!—Away,

away the thought, that ever should be here enacted the barbarous tragedies of anarchy or ambition! Oh, let me not be doomed again to view such scenes, as make the angels weep! Never may these streets be crimsoned with the blood of its own citizens: nor become the horrible arena on which contending brothers grapple for each other's hearts; while violated virgins, and hoary-headed grandsires fall, indiscriminately, wreaking victims to lust and cruelty! Yet such scenes have been played, nay, at this moment, peradventure, are performing by human beings, in realms called civilized! Yes, to such infernal purposes have the powers of man's arm and intellect been perverted by ambition!—Hell-born ambition! Brothers had men been —children of universal peace, but for ambition!—Had that demoniac passion ne'er swelled the human breast, man had been free and happy! Millions of

confiding circles would each have been encompassed by a patriarch's arms, but none would have been fettered with a tyrant's chain. The peopled world itself would then have been an equilibrium of bliss: each kindred and each nation would have known a father, but the earth's master had been God alone!"

"Shall we leave him?" said Perryman.

Turning round at that moment, the stranger observed his auditors still gazing at him with surprise. He concealed with his handkerchief the tears which were falling on his cheeks, and said, "You were speaking of refreshment. Having travelled all night, the refreshment which I most desire, at present, is repose.—I shall retire to my chamber."

CHAPTER II.

SCENE I.

"Well, brother!" said Miss Arabella to the haberdasher, as they seated themselves in the parlour at the back of the shop.

"Well, sister!"

"What do you think of this, brother?"

"What do you think, sister?"

"I have my notions, Mr. Perryman; I am not without my ideas; but—"

Here the maiden applied her fingers to a silver snuff-box, which was a specimen of the manufactures of the last century, and in silence regaled her nose.

"I dare say now, Arabella, you have got one of your romantic schemes in your head—one of your famous plots;

but you know they always miscarry. You flattered yourself with the idea of a prodigious prize in your elegant lodger, young Lancaster, and see how it has turned out. There he lies on a sick bed, without a farthing in the world to pay for the water-gruel he swallows: and I verily believe we shall have to pay the apothecary's bill, and be at the expence of burying him into the bargain.

"And have you the assurance, Mr. Perryman—have you the assurance to call young Lancaster *my* lodger? Was'nt it your croney, Jack Lightfoot, that recommended him to you as one of the most clever, dashing, spirited young fellows he had ever met with? Was'nt you flattered with his complimenting you on your speaking prologues and speeches, and your taste for the stage and the drama, and the poets? Was'nt you always ready to feast and carouse with

a parcel of players and poets, and authors and literati, as he called them. *My* lodger!—Did ever I regale myself with him and his spendthrift crew, as you have done, with your three-times-three, and your hooping and hallooing, till you have almost shook the bells in Bow church?"

"I confess, I was flattered by being introduced to those celebrated characters."

"Yes, yes, my sage Sir, I know you were; and these celebrated characters, these players and authors, and newspaper men, were ready enough to visit young Lancaster in the first floor, when my new Brussels carpet was spoiled with his wasted champaign! But which of the celebrated characters, pray, has come near their dear friend, poor, sick, and dying? But he sha'nt die here, I'm resolved. I insist on it he goes to-day. Pattle is now overseer, and he promised to send the chair for him; and I'm sure

we pay poor's rates enough not to burthen ourselves, when there is a workhouse for him to go to."

In one corner of the parlour in which this scene was passing—stood a table, round which sat four young women, busily occupied with needle-work. They had all listened to this dialogue; but one with more peculiar interest than the others; and scarcely was the word "workhouse" uttered from the lips of the unfeeling Miss Perryman, when the muslin she was working fell from her hands, and she fainted.

"Hey day! fine work, fine work indeed!" said Mr. Perryman. "I understand it—it's all very well—but I'll make an example of her."

Miss Perryman screamed for water—ordered her brother into the shop—shut the parlour doors—overturned the work-table, and began to loosen the dress of the unfortunate sufferer.

SCENE II.

"Take warning, girls! take warning!" said the self-satisfied spinster. "This comes of being flattered and cried up for a beauty."

"I could never see any such wonderful beauty," said Miss Bartlett.

"Nor I," said Miss Cole.

"Beauty or no beauty, she is at least as innocent as any one of us," said Miss Burrowes.

"One of *us!*" exclaimed the Cheapside Czarina. "Of whom pray do you speak? But I am not surprised that one hussy should take the part of another: and I tell you what, Burrowes, I believe in my heart that you are as much in the mud as Emma is in the mire."

"If you mean, Madam, that I am equally deserving of such illiberal suspicions, I do not hesitate to agree with you," said the friend of the unconscious Emma.

" If sentiment was virtue, you would both be paragons, I grant," said Miss Perryman; " but stand aside, she recovers!"

The lovely object of this scandal now opened her beautiful, but woe-wild eyes, and faintly exclaimed,

" Oh, Madam; Oh, Miss Perryman! I am ashamed to—"

" And well you may!"

" I am quite ashamed—to—to—occasion so much trouble."

" Trouble enough, God knows! Its a-comfort, however, that you have no parents to bring into trouble. I might myself, to be sure, have expected a better return for the parent's part I have acted towards you. I might have looked to the profits of a few years' service at least for all the pains I have taken; but, however, my loss is the least of the evil. What's to become of yourself, is the question. Where you will take

yourself, or how you will get your bread, must now be thought of."

Aroused from a train of tender thoughts by this unfeeling speech, Emma started—and said,—

"Get my bread! Good heavens, Madam, what do I hear! How have I offended you? Surely ill-health is not a crime in your estimation, Madam. I know that of late I have been unable to earn so much as formerly; and if I should get worse, and become too ill to work at all, I could not expect to be be a burthen to you. I know that—that the—that, in that case, the parish—that the workhouse." Her lips trembled in agony at that word; the idea that had occasioned her malady returned with force—herself was again forgotten, and tears prevented her from finishing the sentence.

"If you should get worse, Miss; what do you suppose then that you are

to stay here till you can stay no longer? Monstrous assurance! No, Miss, not another hour after this discovery, or rather this confirmation of what I have long suspected, shall you remain with virtuous girls."

During this speech of Miss Perryman, the countenance of Emma expressed astonishment approaching almost to madness. Her pale complexion was for a few moments tinted with the deepest crimson—her fine black eyes seemed bursting from their sockets—she passed her hand repeatedly across her forehead—she rose hastily from the chair—sat down again—directed a wild enquiring look alternately towards her mistress and her friend but could not speak, nor weep. Until that instant she had not fully understood the cruel insinuation of her unfeeling mistress.

"You will deprive her of her senses, I am sure you will," said Miss Bur-

rowes: "you will have her life to answer for—you will kill her."

"Whatever consequences follow, she must thank herself and her Lancaster," said the unfeeling arbitress of the fate of Emma.

"Lancaster!" echoed the sufferer, with a convulsive start: "Workhouse!" —And then placing her crossed hands upon her breast, she breathed a sigh so deep and melancholy, that tears started into the eyes of Burrowes; and even Miss Perryman was for a moment affected.

"Take her up stairs for the present, Bartlett," said she, after a pause; "I must consult my brother, and see what's to be done."

CHAPTER III.

SCENE I.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon ere the new lodger rang his bell. Miss Perryman was at that moment occupied in searching a trunk which belonged to Lancaster; whom, in a state between life and death, she had just consigned to the charge of the parish beadle. Arranging her cap, and smoothing her forehead, she hastened to obey the summons in person.

"I beg your pardon, Sir; I would have waited on you sooner, but we have just been getting rid of a young fellow that has given us a deal of trouble, with nothing but thanks for our pains. His room was in such a pickle, what with

medicines, and filth of one sort and another, that it will take a month or two to make it wholesome again; and I was just———"

"Peace, my good woman! for mercy's sake! What have I to do with your family chronicles? You will galvanize my whole frame with such a battery of speech as you possess. It will oblige me exceedingly if you will confine the exercise of your very voluble tongue to such short answers as my few questions will require from you. For instance—What's o'clock?"

"Past five," said Miss Perryman, pettishly.

"Can I have some tea?

"Yes."

"The sooner the better.

Away flounced Miss Perryman; and shutting the door with rather more violence than was absolutely necessary,

muttered a vow, never to wait on the queer fellow again.

SCENE II.

The tea was served by Hannah, the housemaid. Her eyes were red with weeping. She strove to conceal her distress; but, in spite of her efforts, a sigh burst from her breast, the seat of genuine humanity, and tears of sympathy glistened on her cheek.

"What's the matter, my good girl?" said the lodger, as soon as he perceived her.

"Nothing, Sir."

"That's a falsehood," said he, angrily. "You are in distress—real or imaginary—What is it? Have you broken the china, or have you lost your sweetheart?"

"Nothing of that sort, Sir.—I beg your pardon——"

"I beg your's, my good girl, if I am

impertinent; but if I knew the cause of your grief, possibly I might alleviate it."

"It is not me—Sir—its—its——"

"Speak without fear, child. What do you cry about?"

"It is very foolish, Sir; I know its of no use, but one can't help it, to see such a nice young man as he was—such a gentleman—such a complete gentleman and a scholar—and a poet—sent—to a work-house!"

"Workhouse!—Who!—What workhouse?—Speak quickly, child—I have heard of your workhouses—I wish to visit one—to do so, is among the objects of my sojourning here."

His manner considerably alarmed the young woman.

"Who is it, my good girl, that is gone to the workhouse?" said he, in a milder tone: "Your brother? your sweetheart, perhaps?—How was it?—Come tell me all about it."

"No relation at all, Sir, nor no sweetheart of mine; though I feel for those who I'm sure will break their hearts. He was a lodger, Sir, as you may be; and when I came first to the place, he was as gay and handsome as a lord, and seemed to roll in riches. These were *his* apartments then, Sir."

"You say he and his—What is he? What is his name, child?"

"Lancaster, Sir. He is a young gentleman that walked the hospitals, Sir, to learn to be a doctor."

"Well!"

"He has got no father nor mother, Sir; but a very rich relation in the country used to send him a mint of money; and he used to spend it like a Prince. Such good dinners as I have seen in this room; I have seen it full of authors, and actors, and such like, Sir. My master, and mistress too, has had a world of presents from him; and so

have all the young ladies in the house but one, and she would never take a farthing's worth of him, nor be treated any where: and yet, since he has been poor and sick, she is almost the only one that has felt pity for him, or done any thing to serve him."

"And who is she? What's her name?"

"She is an orphan young lady, Sir: her name is Miss Emma Clarendon. She is one of our apprentices. Ah, Sir, if you knew what she suffers——"

"What, then, she loves this Lancaster.

"I must not tell, Sir."

"It is too plain to be concealed, my good girl. You say, when he was gay and rich, she shunned his general notice —she behaved distantly while her companions flirted—and now that he is poor and wretched, deserted by the sharers of his wealth, she attends and serves him?"

"Yes, by stealth, Sir. She has pinched herself this many weeks to get

nice things for him, which Miss Burrowes, and she, and I, contrived to make him think my mistress sent him: for he little knew they had resolved to send him to the workhouse, if his relation would not pay for him."

"And would *not* his relation pay?"

"No, Sir. The day before yesterday a letter came from him to say he would'nt. Poor Mr. Lancaster has been to blame to be sure, Sir; and his enemies have made it out worse to his friend, and so he will have nothing more to do with him; and to day, Sir, mistress got an order for him to be taken into the workhouse. He has just gone, Sir, and there he will die, without a single soul near him that cares a pin about him, or whose face he eversaw before!"

"Fetch him back," said the lodger, wildly. "Why did you suffer him to go, barbarian?" Then recollecting himself, I am not angry with you—give me my hat—Where is this workhouse?"

"I don't know, Sir."

"Enquire of your Mistress."

"My mistress will never forgive me for telling you, Sir."

"She shall tell me a vast deal more herself. Send her to me directly."

Hannah, with mingled sensations of joy and terror, hurried to obey his order.

SCENE III.

Miss Perryman appeared peeping at the door, as if afraid to enter.

"Come in, woman! Come in! What have you done with the unfortunate youth, Lancaster!"

"Sir! Sir!"

"Nay, don't stand muttering, good woman; but tell me where I can find him!

"Sir!—Find him!—La, Sir, you find him!—Why, dear me, Sir, do you know any thing of poor Lancaster? Who should have dreamt of such a thing! How un-

lucky, Sir, that you didn't mention it when you first arrived. Perhaps, Sir, you would have prevented his going to the workhouse?"

"Yes, at the expence of thousands, I would have prevented it!"

"Astonishing! Who should have supposed such a thing! We were fully persuaded that he had not got a friend in the world!"

"I believe you," said he, sarcastically. "But where is Miss Clarendon?"

"Bless me! Do you know Emma, too? I'm sorry to say, Sir, that the young woman, I have good reason to think, ought to be ashamed to see any one who knows her; but if you desire it——

"Why should she feel shame? Has she committed a crime?"

"She shall speak for herself—I will fetch her."

SCENE IV.

When Miss Perryman had left the room, the stranger thus gave utterance to the thoughts that arose from this incident.

"So — So — Here is work for me! With wealth, that gives me over millions of my fellow-creatures the powers of the genii of romance, I am here in England, where poverty and riches are terms almost synonimous with vice and virtue. The first scene that presents itself upon my arrival in this isle of commerce, exhibits the effects resulting from an ignorance of the power of money. Poor Lancaster! How many a counterpart have I seen of thee! A lovely bud of human nature, gaily unfolding the beauties of a generous heart in the cheering rays of prospering suns; when suddenly has intervened a blighting cloud of indiscretion :—and then unless some sheltering hand of friend or parent is

stretched forth to screen the trembling plant from the impending blast—it falls, and perishes ere it is ripe to blossom!

"If then already that nipping blast has not destroyed thee, Lancaster, I will redeem thee from thy errors!—Yet—Heart of mine, be on thy guard!—But there can be no trick in this!—Impostors would be fools to take the semblances of poverty and sickness. Prosperous faces may indeed be cheats to catch a selfish race of fellow creatures, who turn and fly at the approach of misery! Well, grant then that the misery which now presents itself be real—grant, too, (such is thy magic power O wealth) that the bliss be mine to chase away disease—avert the stroke of death—and kindle glowing fires of joy and love in breasts the victims of despair; shall I have found at last the rare, rare gem, of gratitude!—Why let the issue of the act be what it may, Treachery, thou shall not make me cruel! Though

knowledge of the world has chilled the ardent hopes of virtuous joys once cherished by my fancy, by my heart, let it not deprive me of the charities of nature. No! thou strange heterogeneous congregation of similar-shaped animals, called mankind—though I no longer seek among you for the sympathy, sincerity, and love, of which I dreamed in youth;—I will not be a misanthrope.—True it is—that dearly-earned experience has given me justly to estimate you all, ye scramblers or crawlers on one common soil, your universal origin and end. I know the impulses and passions that keep you all in joyful or in fretful motion—I mark with philosophic eye, your pigmy projects, and smile to see the microscopic power of such passions exhibiting them to you as mighty objects of ambition! To me even "the great globe itself" is only a vast theatre, and all that it inhabit "are my company of players."

What infinite variety of scenery, of incident, and character!—Emperors and slaves—heroes and cowards—philosophers and idiots—patriots and parasites—misers and prodigals—saints and libertines—bigots and infidels—the beautiful and deformed—the young and the old—the rich and the poor—the healthy and the sick—these are the contrasts that form life's drama. Oh! 'tis a glorious privilege to stand aloof from such a world;—to be a looker-on at such a play! Therefore I will not shun life's scenes, but still pursue and make them my amusement. Though Fate has freed my heart from individual cares, affections, or attachments, it is not yet so dead, but that it feels an interest in the affairs of men: and may, when strong occasion urges, be still excited to active interference."

SCENE V.

Miss Perryman re-entering the room, panting with rage, exclaimed, "Oh, Sir, she's off!—she's gone!—decamped!—eloped!—run away!"

"Off!—gone!—whither?"

"Heaven only knows, but most likely after her fellow—followed him perhaps, for she is wicked enough—to the workhouse."

"Away, then! let's after them, good Madam. Come—to the workhouse."

Miss Perryman shrieked and trembled.

"I go to the workhouse!—I enter the filthy place!—Lord have mercy upon me! the very thought of the thing makes me all over of an ague: I would'nt go, Sir, if you would lay me down a thousand golden guineas."

"Then I must go alone."

"Oh, pray don't think of it—you'll

bring some infection back with you, ten to one; or at any rate, you will be covered with vermin!"

"Indeed! Is this your own description of the place to which you have consigned the youth, your lodger, on whose indiscretion you have fattened? Woman! I sleep not beneath your roof again! Quit my sight. Your face is of the human form, but your heart—There—go, go—poor woman—go!"

Pride now overcame even the feelings of self-interest, in the breast of Miss Perryman: bursting with rage, she exclaimed—

"Poor woman—go!—Poor woman, indeed!—Mighty well, Mr. God-knows who!—Pray go yourself—the sooner you're off the better, since you come to that. I believe in my heart you're no better than you should be;—and that Everett must be an old rogue to send such a suspicious character to any re-

spectable tradesman's house. You may be a spy of Buonaparte's for any thing I know; and I verily believe you are, for you look like one for all the world—you do—you do—you do! But my brother shall watch you—and I'll make him give information to the Alien office, and 'll set the Bow-street officers after you go where you will. Poor woman, indeed!"

crying with ānger, she quitted the room.

The stranger followed her; and having obtained a direction to the workhouse, set forth, exulting in the hope of finding the fugitive Emma, and the unfortunate Lancaster together.

CHAPTER IV.

SCENE I.

WHEN the stranger arrived at the street to which he had been directed, he noticed a person of whimsical appearance standing at the door of an apothecary's shop. His figure was slim—his face pale—his hair frizzed and powdered. He wore a black coat, on the knap of which the brush had committed sad depradation—a once-white dimity waistcoat, which frequent washing with bad soap made yellow—a pair of black satin breeches—and white cotton stockings.

"Can you tell me, Sir," said he, "where the workhouse is?"

"*Can* I tell you?—Good—that's good—he—he—he!—Pray step in, Sir.—I perceive you don't live near this parish,

Sir, or you would have known what happened yesterday was a week, when I gained as complete a triumph over my old master, Partlett, as the immortal Jenner has obtained in the victory of Cow-pox over Small-pox. I'll tell you how it was," (taking the stranger by the button of his coat.) "Old Partlett had been apothecary to the workhouse seven and twenty years, — some few days. I served my time to him: 'he treated me like any Turk,' as it says in the song of "Sally in our Alley." Mrs. Green, my godmother, had left me fifty pounds;—I walked the hospitals, that is one of them, no matter which—a cheap one to be sure; and by two or three years of œconomy was, at length, enabled to set up this very shop right opposite to old Partlett. Resolved to outshine and eclipse him, I fixed a gilt mortar over my door, as you perceive, thirteen inches in diameter larger than his; and placed two patent burners behind

each of my coloured bottles, which completely darkened the faint glimmer produced in his dirty windows by a slim cotton candle, one of twelve to the pound. Nothing like a show of vigour against your enemies. I was as fortunate as bold; for having married, whilst apprentice, the fair daughter of Mr. Manassah Minories, the right hand neighbour of old Partlett, that alliance laid the foundation of all my parish honors and emoluments. Manassah is parish clerk and undertaker, and a man of very considerable influence, Sir; Manassah has recommended to me half of the inhabitants as patients, and between you and I, I have done much for him in the burial way."

"Not a doubt of that," said the stranger; "but where is the workhouse?"

"I'm coming to that. There is something of what is called coincidence in this

affair.—You ask where is the workhouse? —Now mark—The left-hand neighbour of old Partlett is Mr. Brand, the baker, a person who more than divides the parish influence with my papa Minories; for he is churchwarden, collector of the income tax, and a deputy of the ward. He was attached to Partlett, and there appeared no chance of gaining him over to the family compact, when Fortune again came to me in the shape of a Tom-cat."

"Tom-cat!—Am I talking to a madman?"

"*Mens sana in corpore sano!*" said the apothecary. "In sober truth, I mean, literally, a Tom-cat.—The celebrated cat of Whittington is not more deserving of immortal fame than Miss Brand's Tom—Bless all Tom-cats! Thus, then, it was —Mr. Brand has a maiden aunt, who resides with him, and who is celebrated throughout the parish for her immoderate

love of three things—Scotch snuff, Daffy's elixir, and her Tom-cat. Well—Sir, Partlett's 'prentice keeps pigeons; Miss Brand's cat killed Partlett's 'prentice's pigeon; Partlett's 'prentice shot Miss Brand's cat—Partlett took part with his 'prentice—a rupture with his neighbour ensued, who, in his quality of collector, called on Partlett next morning; words arose—threats ensued—Partlett vowed Brand should lose half his customers; and Brand declared he would kick Partlett out of his apothecaryship for the workhouse; and this day week, by a junction of the Brand and Minories interests, your humble servant, Charles Christopher Crisp, was actually elected his successor, and it is of me, that you enquire where is the workhouse!"

"I am lucky then," said the stranger, "in meeting with you, Sir—I am going to visit an unfortunate youth, who——"

"I know, I know—you mean poor

Lancaster. I have just left him—he can't recover—nothing in the world will save him—but its very good of you to follow him to such a place—very few do it. You may procure him a little wine—any thing he fancies, in short; and make him as comfortable as you can. He wont last many days,—and you will excuse me, I'm sure, for mentioning the subject,—but as I suppose you'll have him buried a little out of the common style of paupers, here is a card of my father-in-law's, Mr. Manassah Minories, who will do the thing in a genteel manner, and on as fair terms as any in the trade."

The stranger started—sighed, and paused a moment in silence; then considering that this man, merry-andrew in manners, and icicle in feeling as he seemed to be, might yet be useful to him in his present pursuit, he requested him to accompany him to the workhouse.

The apothecary bowed, turned into a

parlour behind the shop, popped a little cocked hat on his powdered pate, twirled a cane by the string on his wrist; and then skipping before his new acquaintance, with an air of authority, led the way.

SCENE II.

The mansion allotted for the reception of the objects of parochial relief was situated in a narrow, dark, and dirty lane. Its portal, "flew not back at the loud knocker's summons;" but a small grated aperture in the door gave a view of a long paved yard or court, and discovered a hoary-headed man, whose palsy-stricken limbs just served him to rise from an old weather-beaten sedan chair, and act the part of porter. His trembling hand with difficulty turned the key; he bowed with unfeigned humility to the apothecary, and tottered back again to his post.

The stranger stood still, and fixed his

strong attentive gaze upon him. The few remaining locks which age had left him where white as snow; his eye-brows had been full and commanding; and his whole countenance seemed the wreck of manly beauty. His apparel was coarse grey woollen; but there was about his person a striking indication of as much attention to cleanliness as his lot allowed him.

While the apothecary went to apprise the master of the workhouse of the stranger's visit, he remained in the yard. He still gazed on the old man. "What steps of life can have conducted such a man as this to a workhouse?" he said to himself. "His face betrays no lineaments of vice; the neatness of his person proves his carefulness, and temperance is depicted in that tranquil eye,—regrets are there, indeed, but there is no remorse!"

He approached him—"Have you been long an inhabitant of this place, old gentleman?"

"Alas! too long, good Sir. 'Tis several years since Providence saw fit to rob me of my poor Harriet, and I was thrown a burthen on the parish. My limbs were useless to me when I was brought hither, or, old as I was, for I was then threescore and ten, I would not have submitted to subsist on parish bounty."

"Who was this Harriet you speak of?"

"Your question is abrupt, Sir; but it is excusable: every inhabitant of this house is, I know, considered a dependent on every parishoner; and every man who pays his scot and lot has certainly a right to ask the pauper, whom he helps to feed, what vice, or folly, or misfortune, made him burthensome to his parish. Don't mistake—I censure not your question—your's is not the enquiry of vulgar curiosity, nor of official unfeelingness. I can see, Sir, that you feel for old age in my circumstances, and perhaps too you

are surprised that the porter of a workhouse-gate is not ragged and filthy. They, who take up opinions without experience, may wonder at this; but you will confess, Sir, that there is nothing marvellous in the pride of an unfortunate old merchant, who, even in a workhouse, keeps his hose well darned, and his shoes clean."

"A merchant!" said the stranger, with an emphasis.

"Yes, Sir, a merchant!—In my dealings with mankind, hundreds of thousands have passed through these hands; and thanks be to God that I can now look on them without dread of beholding a stain."

"What sad reverse of fortune could bring a British merchant to such a state as this?"

Ah, Sir—you make me think of scenes I strive hard to forget—The grave—and what's beyond the grave, I endeavour to fix my mind upon.—The future can-

not afflict me—does not terrify me:—but, oh, Sir! when you bid me look back—I see—I see—phantoms that pain me beyond expression——Oh, Harriet, Harriet!"

"I fear to give you pain, but yet your face bespeaks a tale so worthy of relief—and I have so much of means and inclination to relieve you, that not to enquire further is to neglect a duty. Can unbounded wealth do any thing to serve you?"

"Wealth can do wonders in this world of want—but even wealth has not the magic power to restore the dead to life!—Oh my Harriet!

"Who was the Harriet you so feelingly allude to?"——

"She was my child, my only child—The story which your humanity excites you to implore—is short:—I am a native of North America. At a very early age I was brought over to this country by an uncle, my only relation. I

was a plodding boy, a steady, temperate, youth; and at my uncle's death, when I was only five-and-twenty, I succeeded him in trade: habits of industry made business my pleasure; and, having no leisure for expensive pursuits, I grew rich without effort. I was forty ere I became a husband, when I married an amiable woman, who, in giving birth to my Harriet died. Harriet, then filled my heart—Harriet the infant Harriet, became my world. I traded for my Harriet—I toiled—I travelled. To add one thousand to another for my Harriet was the chief object of my mind's pursuit, and my heart's joy. As she advanced in years and beauty to woman's state, in her, her mother's face and form rose up before me like a renovation of that very corpse I had committed to the grave. Once again the world renewed its interests in my breast—then once again the many indescribable enjoyments of domestic life were mine.

She was at once my companion and my child; graceful and accomplished; affectionate and dutiful. Desirous of anticipating every wish each other knew, with all the means which affluence and reputation in society afforded, where were there on the earth two such happy beings?—Oh, God! what moments does too-faithful memory record! 'Twas not to last. There came into the circle of our acquaintance a villain—Oh! what a specious villain!"

Here anger kindled in the old man's breast, and an almost supernatural fire flashed suddenly in his eyes.

"Great and good God! if a frail creature of thy power may ask a boon of thee, Oh, blast from off the earth each specious villain!—The profligate, the drunkard, the gamester, the robber, are weeds upon the surface of society which men may see and shun; but the specious, the deceiving villain, clothed with the garb of graceful virtue, adorned with

fascinations that attract the social feelings, and impose upon the generous heart, Oh! just Avenger! send thy lightnings forth, and spare them not. The raging pestilence, the volcano's burning breath, are pigmy emblems of thy wrath compared with the still wider-spreading desolation, and the far, far more lasting woes, which flow from specious villainy!"

This paroxysm of rage overpowered the old man's strength; large drops of agony started on his temples; his speech failed him, and his whole frame appeared to be convulsed.

At length he wept again, and lifting up his eyes towards Heaven, seemed to address a silent prayer for forgiveness to that deity, whom, in the frailty of his nature, he had so improperly invoked.

The stranger now pressed, with affectionate warmth, the aged victim of despair to his breast, and said,

"Can wealth, in any part, repair thy

injuries? Can sympathy alleviate thy woes?"

"Sympathy! sympathy!" said the old man; "sympathy within these walls! I dream! Surely I do not hear that word! Oh, Sir! the very tenderness of your compassion wounds me; for it recals to memory *her*—my poor lost Harriet. That tone of voice is so unusual in this place—notes of pity so seldom strike upon my ear,—that your kind words seem, to poor old White, like the sweet whispers of his Harriet's spirit."

Ere the stranger could reply, an object of a very different description called off the attention of himself and the old man from the further pursuit of the melancholy tale.

SCENE III.

A female of tall stature approached them: her face was reddened and bloated

by habits of intoxication; and she was dressed in tawdry rags, the remnants of her former finery. A dirty cap of worn-out muslin, admitted through several apertures matted locks of black hair, which had once been remarkable for it beauty. Her gown was of brown camlet, the common workhouse dress; but under it she wore a yellow satin petticoat, with a deep flounce, in the rents of which her slipshod heels were frequently entangled. She carried a snuff box in her hand; and with the air of a woman of quality curtesying to the stranger as she passed him, said to the old man, "Mr. White, I am concerned to trouble you, but I must go for some snuff."

White was not sufficiently collected to reply; but, by signs, gave her to understand, that she was not permitted to go out.

Changing her manner from the ease of a lady of fashion, to the fury of a vixen,

"And why not, in the name of all wonder?" exclaimed she. "Do you think, you old gaoler, that the cousin of the Honorable Mrs. M'Dougal McHunter, is to be detained a prisoner in such a low receptacle of the common vermin of mankind as this? By the spirit of my ancestors, if you had twenty thousand eyes, and twice as many hands, you should never keep Augusta McHunter among you, unless she can be treated with the respect due to her birth and connections. "Isn't it a sufficiently humiliating case, Sir," addressing the stranger, "that a person of my pretensions to rank and distinction in society—that a woman of quality, a female of sentiment, should be abandoned by obdurate relations, and compelled to honour such a place as this by accepting it as an asylum? is not such a destiny of itself sufficient to lacerate a susceptible heart, without the insult of being denied

ingress and egress for the purpose of furnishing oneself with a little snuff?"

A lad of about ten years old, who acted as an assistant to old White, was unable to restrain his laughter; and exclaimed at the same time, "Snuff! that's a good one! Gin you mean, Mrs. Hunter. Remember the joke they played you t'other day, when you could not see very clear, and came home with a quartern of gin in your snuff-box, and an ounce of rappee in your bottle."

"Insolent insinuation!" disdainfully uttered Mrs. Hunter, aiming a blow at the rude urchin, "but I'll quit this horrible place for ever. I'll expose the M'Dougal McHunter family, by a public subscription for the 'Memoirs of a Woman of Quality and Feeling, labouring under unmerited Misfortunes;' and put my real name in the title page. I shall have thousands eager with their guineas, and I am

resolved to spare the M'Dougal M'Hunter pride no longer!"

With the step of a tragedy actress she disdainfully walked away.

"Oh, human nature!" exclaimed the stranger, "Oh, poor human nature, into how many thousand shapes, by how many thousand causes, art thou moulded!"

"I consider her sometimes as insane," said White; "and doubtless, many deem me so always. The indulgence of my vain regrets is an intemperance perhaps as far removed from soundness of reason, though not so gross a gratification, as is drunkenness."

SCENE IV.

The apothecary now appeared, accompanied by a round-faced, robust man, with coal-black hair, and small black eyes. His dress was the costume of a methodist

preacher; and the expression which he was evidently desirous of giving to his countenance, was that of superior sanctity. His cheeks, however, were much too plump, to assume that length of visage so necessary to the outward appearance of the gloomy methodist: and the sparkling of his little eyes, which betrayed the most perfect complacency and self-satisfaction, was most provokingly in contrast with the hypocritical cant of his tongue, which was continually declaring "the miserable state of his soul." He was detained at a distance from the stranger by the victim of inebrity; who, by appealing to his authority, frequently gave him an opportunity, which he never neglected, of alarming her conscience with the terrors of eternal punishment; the effects of which, combined with an habitual use of spirituous liquors, made rapid inroads on the intellect of this miserable woman.

During this lecture, the stranger was enquiring of the apothecary the state of Lancaster.

"He is dying; and I doubt whether Bogle will let you see him."

"Who is Bogle?"

"The master of the workhouse. He is coming to speak to you. That's he—he is preaching to *Quality* Hunter, as they call her: and you must know, that she is really a woman of some family."

Taking hold of the stranger's coat by the button once more, "I'll tell you Hunter's story," said he. "Her father was a Dean, and her uncle a Baronet. Unluckily for her, the ecclesiastic thought proper to fill her head full of Latin and Greek, to the exclusion of common sense. She had naturally a warm imagination; and when she was nineteen or twenty, was familiarly called Sappho. Sappho's pursuits did not suit the young men of her day; and at the death of the Dean, she became a

learned log in the family of the Baronet. Slighted by her cousins, she left the protection of her uncle, and commenced authoress. The public treated her productions with neglect; and having exhausted the very small independence which her father, the Dean, had left her in making waste-paper for the trunk-makers and cheese-mongers, she was compelled to take the situation of assistant at a boarding-school, where it was the fashion to teach the girls Latin; but where the professor of the language, herself, was held up to general ridicule. At this critical moment of disappointment and chagrin, she unfortunately became the friend of a French governess in the same house, who taught her to seek a temporary oblivion of her lot in the use of spirituous liquors. From that moment you must be aware, Sir, (though not of the profession as we say,) that she was inevitably lost: her powers of mind gradually faded, and then

withered; until her expulsion from the seminary became absolutely necessary. For it wouldn't do, you know, to let the little misses see their Latin governess, in so *impropria persona*. The protection of her cousins which she had disdained when her mind was in its sovereignty she now meanly crouched for, when sensuality had dethroned it. To save themselves from disgrace, they clubbed together to support her in cheap retiremnet; but of such a nature is the fatal habit to which she was the prey, that no moderate sum would supply her excesses, nor would any respectable family receive her under their roof. After repeated trials, with unsuccessful results, here at last poor Sappho will die; unless indeed she becomes too outrageous for a straight jacket; in which case, she would be sent off to Hoxton, and my papa Minories would lose a good job: for I pretty well know that her eldest cousin, the Baronet,

would'nt grudge a good funeral as a last expense on poor Sappho! But here comes Bogle.—You must know, he is a rank methodist—got his place through the interest of the *Saints*, as they are called, who, between you and me, carry every thing in this parish. The rector, to be sure, is not one of them; nor is he, in fact, one of us, for he seldom shews his red nose among us; but the curate, the lecturer, the clerk, the sexton, the beadle, the pew-openers, are all of their chusing; and they actually made a grand struggle to turn out a poor blind youth from the situation of organist, because he attends the play-house as a chorus-singer. Humanity, however, in that instance prevailed over prejudice; some of the saints proved that they had tender hearts as well as tender consciences, and voted accordingly. But in the election of Bogle, they triumphed again. The rival candidate was a well-educated man, of upright

morals, and unblemished character; but he was not a methodist. So Bogle carried the poll,—I'll tell you his history. "Bogle, in the days of his youth, was a sub-priest in the temple of Bacchus, *vulgo*, a potboy; from which situation he was promoted to the office of porter to a wine-merchant, who is considered one of the pillars of methodism. By the brawniness of his shoulders, and the suppleness of his spirit, Bogle won the affection of his master. He could carry half a-hundred weight more than any of his fellows; and he became an implicit believer in the creed of the tabernacle. A year or two ago his employer being about to retire from trade, was desirous of providing for the brawny Bogle, who had faithfully kept all the secrets of the cellar. It happened that the situation as master of this workhouse was vacant:—"this good providence, or lucky hit," presented to the spiritual dealer in spirits, a cheap mode of reward-

ing a servant, and *forwarding the cause;* an effort was made—and Bogle, who can scarcely write or read, was elected by a large majority—Mum—here he comes."

"Your most obedient servant, Sir," said Bogle. "May I make so bold as to ask what relation you may be to this here unfortunate youth?"

"I am no relation in the sense you mean," said the stranger; "I cannot call myself his father, uncle, or cousin; nor can I claim relationship with poor Lancaster, by any other title than that of fellow-creature. But surely it is not necessary to produce a patent of relationship as a qualification for administering relief to the wants or the miseries of a human being!"

"Why you see, Sir, the thing is this," said Bogle; "to be sure you speaks what seems serious and good. But, perhaps, for all I knows, you may be a Romish Catholicish priest, or a mere preacher of

good works; and you see there is a spiritual good man now with him, who is striving hard——"

"To render his last moments miserable to himself, and horrible to those around him;" interrupted the stranger. —"Stand aside, man —Though my life answer for the breach of ceremony, I WILL see the youth!"

Bogle attempted to intercept him—but the apothecary interfered, and partly by cajolery, and partly by intimidation, disarmed his opposition.

CHAPTER V.

SCENE I.

"Where is Lancaster?" said the stranger, as he entered a long room, called the Men's Ward; on a bed at the other end of which the unfortunate youth was laid.

"Where is Lancaster?" repeated the stranger. The only reply to this exclamation was the wild laugh of a madman, who, chained to a bed on the right hand as he entered, was loudly singing, and immoderately laughing, by turns.

Ere the stranger could recover the shock which his heart sustained at this unexpected sight, so different from those death-bed scenes where weeping friends silently attend, watching for the slightest intimation of a dying wish from the quivering lips of some loved object;—

while yet his feet were rivetted to the spot, and his eyes were fixed on the wretched maniac, an idiot boy, about twelve years old, came dancing round him, holding to his slabbering mouth with both hands a piece of bread and butter, and articulating, in a voice scarcely of human tone, the only sounds that ever passed his lips, "Mopsy, Mopsy, Mopsy good, Mopsy good, Mopsy good."

"The stranger sighed, involuntary smote his forehead with the palm of his hand, and with apparent effort, rushed by a number of other objects without notice, and found himself at the bed-side of Lancaster.

A meagre form, with haggard visage, her lips besmeared with snuff, her breath impregnated with gin, was kneeling on one side of the seemingly expiring youth holding a tea-pot to his lips; while, on the other, an illiterate fanatic was screaming in his ears all the horrors that a heated imagination supplied him with

as the youth's eternal doom. Lancaster at the moment had sunk into a lethargy, the consequence of a violent paroxysm of delirium, which had been greatly increased, if not altogether excited, by the circumstance of his removal to the workhouse, and the effect produced upon his debilitated intellect by the fanatic. His state was now so nearly that of death, that the old woman, practised as she was in such sad scenes, declared she thought him "*gone*;" when a convulsive quivering of the lips and eyes, announced that the last painful struggle was not yet over. His eyes opened, his senses returned.—He attempted to raise himself up. The stranger and the nurse assisted him. "Where am I—Where am I," faintly whispered he. "Oh, I know—I recollect——in a workhouse. I die—in—a---workhouse.—They might have saved me this last pang.— My uncle surely would have paid———"

As he spake, his eyes turned on the fanatic; at the sight of whom he sunk down on his pillow, and covered his face with the bed-clothes.

"Worse than murderer!" said the stranger. "Behold thy slaughter! What have you not to answer for, or rather those mistaken men who sanction and encourage you, to do such deeds as this! Charity teaches us to hope all things; and I would fain hope that you and they are sincere, even in your phrenzied ravings! Who but a madman can believe, that by administering horror and despair to the last moments of a fellow-creature; and by superadding the acutest torments of the mind to the last agonies of the body, he is performing a duty grateful to him, whose divine errand upon earth was to proclaim peace and good-will towards men; and the very essence of whose revelation was, that God is love."

The ignorant fanatic was awe-struck

by the manner and words of the stranger. The old woman gaped: and one pauper after another drew nearer to the bed to hear him.

The half delirious Lancaster caught something of the sense of these last words:

"What voice is that?—What sweet words are they?—I wish I could hear those sounds again."

"Poor Lancaster!" said the stranger.

"Who here knows me? my uncle! Is he—is he come at last.—Ah, no—no."

"No, not your uncle; but a friend, who comes to offer to you his willing services; who, had he arrived one day sooner, would have prevented your removal, and who is now anxious to do all human power can accomplish."

"I understand—I understand;" faintly articulated he: "whoever you are, receive my dying thanks: but, with respect to what, in a few moments more, will become

of the remains of Henry Lancaster, I have not a care."

"Think of your soul, your precious soul!" screamed the fanatic.

"Silence, maniac!—Silence!" said the stranger.

"Alas!" said Lancaster in a plaintive tone, "what more can I now do for my soul, than commit it to the mercy of Him who gave it?"

"Believe— believe—believe!" bawled the mad zealot.

"Hold, fanatic, hold!—The wild and blind belief you call for never yet served the purposes of Him, whose name you babble, but of whose doctrines you are ignorant. Ambitious tyrants of the earth indeed, who murder men for the extension of their temporal sway, may employ such ministers as you to kindle flames of bigotry in the breasts of those they drive to slaughter. Yes, too often has the blind faith you preach, filled the ranks of armies;

too often has it raised the human arm to plunge the dagger in the human heart!

It also, on a lesser scale, has too often served the purposes of cunning, avaricious hypocrites, who, blinding the reason, and hardening the hearts, of their victims, contract all the energies and the charities of human nature to the sole prosperity of certain sects and congregations; of whose consciences and wealth they become lords and masters. These sanguinary, and these mercenary purposes, I own, may be promoted by your faith—without reason; your zeal—without knowledge. But, are these the purposes of Him, whose name you blasphemously use? No—no—no!"—Then turning from him: "Listen not to the jargon of this man," continued the stranger, addressing himself in an affectionate tone of voice, to Lancaster; "compose your mind."

"It is composed—I am better;" said Lancaster. "If that person could be

taken away, I think I should die in peace. He has filled my brain with horrid images, which have disordered it:—but I am better—I am resigned. I no longer repine at my early dismissal from this world; and I humbly trust in the mercy of my Maker for the future! Is it not wonderful, Sir, that our minds should be susceptible of such changes?—If it had been told me only a few months ago—when Pleasure and Ambition divided all my soul between them; when the enjoyment of the passing hour was enhanced by the prospect of future eminence; ah, Sir, had it then been declared to me that I was doomed to endure the sufferings I have since encountered, and that these sufferings would only be terminatd by the hand of Death on a workhouse bed, without a relative or friend, or even a familiar face, on which my last gaze might fix; think you that the mind, even in its vigour,

could have sustained the prophecy, if it had believed it?"

These sentences were uttered at intervals, in a low and broken tone of voice, weaker and fainter after every pause; while strong symptoms of death made the stranger hang with attentive eagerness upon each syllable, supposing it the last which the tongue of Lancaster ever would pronounce.

Curiosity would have prompted many a question; but his benevolent mind only sought how best to administer the sweet consolation of sympathy to his dying moments. He knelt by the bed-side; he pressed tenderly his already clay-cold hand; and, in a tone of voice, and with a countenance that seemed to Lancaster celestial in contrast with the fiend-like face and roar of the fanatic, who had quitted him, he said, "Adore—adore, young brother—Adore the Power Beneficent, who thus sustains thy spirit; and,

on the very meekness of thy resignation to his will, engrafts the fortitude to bear it!"

SCENE II.

He was now summoned to the other end of the ward by the apothecary, who introduced him to a tall thin man, plainly dressed, saying, "This, Sir, is Dr. Ogle; one of the most shining ornaments of our *Collegium Medicorum*, not more famed for his active exertions in the promotion and encouragement of benevolent, scientific, and learned institutions at home, than for his extensive correspondence with the various *literati, docti, cognoscenti*, in all the states of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Sir, it is extremely fortunate for your friend Lancaster, if indeed, his recovery be within the grasp and compass of human art, that the young lady's

importunities with the doctor were irresistible; and that here he is, after having knocked up four pair of horses in the distribution of his minutes among an almost innumerable crowd of patients of distinction; besides the discharge of his public duties as senior physician to two hospitals, and six dispensaries."

The extreme rapidity with which this speech came tripping from the tongue, prevented interruption; and ere the stranger recovered his surprise at this caricature apothecary, Doctor Ogle informed him that as he was stepping out of his chariot, he was accosted by a very interesting young woman, who implored him, in terms expressive of the keenest anguish instantly to accompany her. "Her manner," said the doctor, "at first induced me to consider her insane; but I discovered, in a few moments, that what I mistook for madness, was a noble and energetic spirit of benevolence, com-

bined with a tender passion, and freed by some momentary and strong excitement from the trammels of ceremony, and cold constraints of what is called decorum."

"Sir," said the stranger, "your decision reflects honour upon your understanding, and your heart. Accident has brought me acquainted with these unfortunate lovers, for such they are. Yonder lies the youth, who I much fear will never rise again—But where is the generous Emma Clarendon?"

"Why there again, Sir," said the apothecary; "more wonders—more surprises and mysteries. If this young lady be not mad herself, she is absolutely the cause of madness in others; for no sooner did old White, the porter, open the gate to her and the doctor, than he staggered back a few paces, and fell flat on the stones of the yard. The young lady screamed with terror; but instantly recovering her presence of mind, flew to

his aid, and in the most affectionate manner raised the old man's head, and supported it on her lap as she knelt on the stones."

"Is he romancing?" said the stranger to Doctor Ogle.

"Not this time," said the doctor; "he states facts.—The old man's senses returned in a few minutes; and opening his eyes, they met those of the beautiful female, which were fixed on him full of tender sensibility. A convulsive shock of strong surprise succeeded; and he exclaimed, in a tone of phrenzy, 'Harriet—Harriet! my child—my child!' and again fainted. It was evident that the disorder of the old man arose from the strong resemblance of the young lady to some object, whose reflection was thus suddenly brought upon his brain by her appearance. We removed him to his apartment, and the innocent and unconscious cause of his malady is still with him."

"I must see her," said the stranger: then placing his hand familiarly on the shoulder of Doctor Ogle—"This is not a moment for ceremony my good Sir," said he; "I am rich enough to pay his ransom, and willing too, if thousands can redeem the ill-starred Lancaster from the grave.—You will see me below—Let me know your opinion, whether there be hope of his recovery; and whether we may remove him from this place.—Behold what objects of misery and woe it contains: this is no poetic fiction; here really are 'the moping idiot, and the madman wild.'"

At that moment, the maniac, near whose bed they stood, began a song. The stranger started; and hurried down stairs to the apartment of old White, which was in the ward beneath.

SCENE II.

The room which the stranger now entered, was of much smaller dimensions than the ward above it. It was parted off from an adjacent one; and among the unfortunate tenants of the mansion, was called the "Quality Ward;" being assigned to such paupers, as by their former station in life, and present good behaviour, were deemed objects fit for separation from their more vulgar and disorderly brethren. On each side of the fire-place, was an old wooden high-backed chair: on one sat an image of a man —a mere semblance of the human form in extreme old age. He was in his ninety-seventh year; he had lost his sight, and was as totally incapable of helping himself as an infant in arms. He was fastened in his chair to prevent his falling;

and in that state he remained from morning till night, with no other appearance of animation, than a constant paralytic motion of the head. This object was too striking to be overlooked by the stranger, even at that moment; and he could not help exclaiming: "Ah! there is, indeed, the 'last scene of all, that ends this strange, eventful history!'"

It was, however, but a momentary transit of feeling o'er his mind, for on the opposite chair sat old White, and on a deal box, which served occasionally in this place for chair and table, sat close to his knees, Emma Clarendon. To beauty was added grace at all times in the face and form of this amiable girl; but, at this moment, the agitation of her spirits, and the anxiety of her mind, gave an interesting expression to her countenance, which the pencil might copy, but the pen cannot describe. Her black hair was contrasted with the simple white riband,

which tied close to her crimsoned cheek a plain chip hat; and she was dressed in a white robe, which shewed one of the most graceful forms imaginable to the utmost advantage. At the entrance of the stranger, whom she mistook for the governor of the house, she rose with trembling modesty, and attempted to address him. Rough and unceremonious as hitherto had been his conduct and conversation, he now modulated his voice to tones of gentleness, and by his gesture and action, evinced the tenderest emotions.

"Lovely and amiable Emma!" said he, "I cannot say how much my heart esteems you."

"Emma!" said old White; "Ah! 'tis all a dream then—and Harriet is really, really dead: yet, that face—those very eyes—that voice—all so like to her's, who was unlike all other mortals! Forgive an old man's weakness, whose head -whose

heart deceived him. If I had died when first I saw you, I should have expired in a blessed delusion."

"Is then this young lady so like your Harriet, my friend?"

"Mention it not, good Sir, it breaks my heart to look upon her; when she quits my sight, I shall not long survive it."

"Well, but why should she leave you?"

"Sir," exclaimed old White, "you are too good to make an old man's griefs your sport: and yet, what a jest!"

"No, White; I do not jest. Tell me, Emma, what was it you proposed to yourself by coming hither?"

"Pardon me, Sir—You take me by surprise—I—I—know not whom I have the honour of addressing—and if I were acquainted with your right to question me, I am afraid———"

"Your reproof is just: I should have explained to you, that I am the person,

who this morning took up his abode at the house of your unfeeling mistress. By the simple report of an ingenuous servant girl, I learned, that the unfortunate Lancaster was consigned, for want of money, to this place. Now, I have more money than I know how to spend; I therefore resolved to follow him; and if possible, to preserve him."

The countenance of Emma was brightened by a spark of joy.—"Oh, generous! good,—great,—noble!" exclaimed she. "Wonderful Providence, that should direct a stranger to do such a deed as this, when friends and relatives——(It was a momentary joy: the recollection of his state recurred—she sighed—) But great as is your benevolence, Sir; boundless as may be your means; what pity, or what power, but God's, can save him from the grave!"

"Hope still beckons," said the stranger: "nor 'till the last sigh is heaved, will

the sweet promiser forsake us. The skill of Dr Ogle, whose attention——"

Emma blushed deeply.—"I ought to explain, Sir, the apparent impropriety of my conduct."

"Impropriety?"

"I shall be happy to explain the apparent impropriety of my conduct."

"Impropriety! unmeaning nonsense! the action you have performed, is either right or wrong."

"I hope it is not wrong, Sir."

"Do you doubt?"

"My heart does not condemn me: but the world——"

"The world!" interrupted the stranger; "oh, my child, how very diminutive a particle of the world cares for, or thinks of, you. Come now, tell me, of how many does your world consist.——Who are they?"

The idea thus forced upon the fair fu-

gitive, almost brought tears into her eyes. The stranger continued:—

"Perhaps, you have no parents?"

"Oh! no, no! I have not a relative in the world!" said she.

Old White bent down his ear, to catch each syllable with eagerness.

"And your friends?"——

"I have this day quitted the only friend I had; if friend I ought to call one so unfeeling and so unjust."

"You mean, Miss Perryman? Nay, blush not, lovely creature. The little of your history that I know, redounds so much to your praise, and to the honour of human nature, that I am impatient to know more.—How long have you lived with the woman we are speaking of?"

"Ever since I left school, Sir. I never shall forget the circumstances of my first acquaintance with her."

Old White betrayed increasing impatience, and the eagerness of his anxiety,

was evinced in the restlessness of his frame.

"Were the circumstances you allude to so remarkable?" said the stranger.

"Yes, Sir; for the pain which they inflicted on me."

"May I request the favour of being made acquainted with them. Believe me my enquiries spring not from an idle curiosity."

"Pray tell us, sweet young lady," said White; "I feel an interest not to be described, in your story—I feel as if my fate were, by some thread or other, woven with your destiny."

"My knowledge of my own story is very circumscribed indeed;" said Emma: "but of all I do know, there is not an incident I am desirous of concealing. I cannot tell who were my parents; neither do I know the place of my nativity. I scarcely remember my nurse; but from the faint impressions still remaining on

my memory of the good old woman, her cottage, and its surrounding mountainous scenery, I have persuaded myself that my infancy was reared in Wales. I am the more inclined to think so, as I have a clear remembrance of being conveyed by sea to Bristol; where I had the happiness to be received under the protection of my dear Mrs. Wainwright. With the discretion of the preceptress, that lady combined the affection of a mother. It was, indeed, a boon of Fortune, to be the pupil of such a governess. Happy were the days, which in infancy and childhood, and until my fifteenth year, I passed beneath her honoured roof, in the bosom of her amiable family, and amidst the accomplished and respectable circle of her friends. Then came a sad reverse of destiny.—The most excellent of women had been, for a few days only, confined to her chamber by what was deemed at first a trifling indisposition;

when it was announced to her by her physician, that her disease was mortal, and that within the space of eight-and-forty hours, her life would end. With the resignation of a Christian she bowed to this brief summons from the world; and with the same spirit of disinterested benevolence, which had marked the whole career of her existence, she appropriated those few hours to the interests of those to whom her life had been devoted.

"Among others, whom on this occasion she requested to see, I was summoned to her dying pillow—'Emma, my love,' said she, with a countenance that finely imaged forth the heavenly peace she felt herself, mingled with a parent's cares for me—'Emma, my love; I have sent for you, from a conviction of your natural strength of mind, and a confidence in the efficacy of principles, which it is my joy to have implanted in your

heart. Otherwise, I should have spared myself the pain of taking leave of you for ever. You must not disappoint me. I can allow—I can sympathize with your tears—I receive them as testimonies of a love truly filial; and when I relate to you, which I am about to do much sooner, and with more brevity, than I once intended, the history of our connexion, you will perceive that I have, in some degree, merited your love. You have hitherto, my dear, conceived that you are an orphan, and that your deceased parents were distantly related to me, and bequeathed you to my care. It is now necessary, that you should learn the truth.'

" She then related to me, in a tone of feeling, and in terms of delicacy, which it were presumption in me to attempt to imitate, or recollect, a tale, that filled my heart with surprise and sorrow.

" She stated, that one summer's even-

ing, on her return from a walk, the servant acquainted her, that a post-chaise and four had stopped at the outer gate, from which a gentleman alighted, and left a little girl with a letter, saying, he would wait on Mrs. Wainwright in a quarter of an hour. I was that little girl; and this is the letter—(drawing it from her bosom.) It is written by the author of my being—and it is the only trace of him I ever have obtained.—Therefore I hold it dear—but oh, it is a painful transcript of a mind so lost—so totally destroyed by vicious principles—that more than once I have been tempted to commit it to the flames; when the flattering voice of Hope has whispered, that it may possibly be the means of yet discovering to me a parent—and that repentance may have rendered him a father, whom I might yet rejoice to find, or at least a father, the pangs of whose remorse I might be so blessed as to alleviate."

"Amiable! excellent young creature!" exclaimed the stranger. "Blessed be the hour that conducted us to this interview! The cold reasoning caution of experience shall not restrain my heart's impulse now —I will be to you a father by adoption; already have you gained a daughter's interest in my bosom."

"What then must she have gained in mine;" said old White—tears trickling down his cheeks; in mine—to whose eyes she brings the very face and form —and to whose heart the tenderest recollection of a wife and daughter—But mine is impotent affection—Pauper as I am—my blessing and my prayers, are all I can bestow."

"I have abundance for you both! said the stranger: "but having thus far united ourselves by confidence and sympathy, we must not from any motives of false delicacy lose one link in the chain;

that letter, therefore, if it be not too painful to your feelings——"

"I tremble with dreadful apprehension of the contents of that letter," nterrupted White. "That letter, dear young lady, you say is written by your father?"

"I judge from the internal evidence," said Emma. "It appears too natural to be feigned:—but if you please, Sir, read," continued she, presenting the letter to the stranger, who read thus:—

"MADAM,

"The writer of this letter has had the pleasure of being in your company. He has relished, with no common taste, the charms of your lively wit, and he has been compelled to admire (—would to God he had adopted—) the principles of unaffected piety and religion, which have added a grace to, while they have tempered, the brilliant sallies of your elegant

and accomplished mind. He is a man of fortune, of family, and distinction in society; but he is, at the same time, a villain, and a wretch. He admires, he loves virtue, and the virtuous; yet through life he has ever acted in contradiction to his conscience: in short, Madam, by some cursed fatality, he has been, from his eighteenth year to the present day, a libertine in spite of himself; and the sins which hang over his head, are as numerous as the hairs that cover it. It is, however, only necessary to trouble or disgust you with the one in which you are concerned.—Start not, Madam—I would run the slanderer through the body, that durst breathe a whisper to your prejudice—I will explain myself. A lovely creature, fairer than the fairest amongst Eve's daughters, happened to cross my path. I met her at the house of a friend. I will not shock you, Madam, by recitals of my guilty love; the progress of my

unextinguishable passion for the wife of another man—that man my friend; nor agonize you by the story of my criminal conquest; nor insult you by whining, Werter-like apologies for a crime, that has sunk me, even in my own estimation, lower than all the other acts of a bad life. I will hurry to the purport of this letter. Some good genius of the future fate of my little Emma has inspired me with the thought, and given me a minute's resolution—a minute free from intoxication's fumes—to write to you. Look on her—she will be before you when you read this letter.—Is she not an interesting little creature? Speak to her. —Is she not an innocent little prattler? Pity her, then, Madam, I beseech you— She has no mother; and I—her father —have this moment kissed her for the last time---I am resolved---'Tis over— Never, never, will I see her more—for I can behold already such lineaments, such

features—and the miniature of such a form, as in maturity would blast my sight, and chill my blood to death-cold ice—Madam—Madam—She will be the very counterpart of her———"

"Oh, God of Heaven!" exclaimed old White, "of her mother, and of her grand mother—Oh, my wife—my child—my grandchild, all in one!—Oh, God——"

He struck his forhead with his hand, and sunk back in his chair.

As soon as his senses returned, the old man threw his arms round the neck of Emma, and sobbed aloud. When he could articulate, he exclaimed:—

"Yes, villain---Yes, your prognostication is verified indeed!---Sweet form of thy wretched mother!---Though she was guilty, don't hate *her*---Don't despise your mother's memory."

"My mother!" said Emma: "What mean you, Sir?"

"It is plain as the evidence of sense

and reason possibly can render it," said White. " Your strong resemblance, and that letter---Is it not signed Gordon?"

" It has no signature," said the stranger. " But be calm ; and I will finish it. —There appears to have been some little interval of time," continued he, " between the writing of the sentence last read, and what follows ; the ink is of a different colour, and the writing is scarcely legible."

He proceeded to read—

" I made an effort, Madam, to scrawl thus much---but it is painful—I hate writing—it requires thought, and thinking is not among my usual occupations.---At once then to the point---I wish---I wish---yes, from my heart, I wish the little offspring of guilt and sorrow to be free from both!---With you, I know she will be virtuous and happy.—Take her then—and no chance shall prevent me from repeating these memorandums of my gratitude---They are

good Bank bills---and you shall have more of them——"

"Here is another break," said the stranger; "and the paper is stained apparently by wine."

He continued, "Now then a bumper to my Emma—one to you, good lady - One to--I beg your pardon—I was going to throw this letter in the fire—but if I do, I shall never be sober enough to write another—and then, what would become of this little creature? You, my good Madam, believe in souls; and if there is any chance for the soul of little Emma, now is the moment—the dye is now in your hand. If you refuse her—God knows where she'll go—for I shall be on the other side the globe in six months, if the frame that holds me lasts so long. But I will not think it possible that you should decline the task;—for bad, bad, very bad, as is her wretched father, he

cannot bear the thought that the horrors of a life of vice should be the only legacy he leaves his child. Teach her to believe herself the orphan of your bounty; for it is impossible for you or her ever to obtain the slightest clue to a discovery of her parents. Not a whisper of the transaction alluded to has ever reached the ears of rumour. She has been reared more than an hundred miles from home by a peasant, who has been imposed upon by a false story of the child; and from that peasant, I have in a feigned name and character, myself, conveyed her to your door. She is your's from this moment. Therefore, to conclude in the language of Holy Writ, which you will not despise—Remember the conduct of the daughter of Pharoah, and dare not to be deaf to the voice of Providence, which commands you to

"*Take this child and nurse it for me.*"

"'Tis Gordon's letter," exclaimed old White; "'Tis Harriet's child—None—none but Gordon could have penned that letter. He, compound as he was of the most tender and ardent feelings, with the basest passions and most vicious habits, he speaks in every line. But say, my love, did you ever see this person afterwards?"

"Never—Nor did my benefactress ever hear from him again. The bank-notes contained in that letter amounted to two hundred pounds; and that sum was all that she ever received. From no particular motive, but that I must bear some name, she added that of Clarendon to Emma; and keeping the secret of the letter from all the world, as long as she lived, she deposited it in my hands only a few hours before her death. That event was a misfortune to many besides me; for her bounty had been exercised to the utmost verge of her ability, and left her

nothing to bequeath besides her bright example. She, however, most urgently recommended me to the care of her brother, and enjoined me to consider him my guardian. His benevolence obtained me a situation with Miss Perryman. It was not, I confess, the walk in life I should have chosen; but during my month of probation, he also died; and no alternative was left to me.

"Thou art the offspring of my Harriet," said White; "but oh, thy guilty father!—It could be none but he."

"Who; and what was he?" said the stranger.

"Oh! 'tis a long and sad—sad story ---the end of which recounts my ruin, and my child's dishonour. The villain fled to India——and I have no doubt—"

"This place and time are both unsuitable to further explanation," said the stranger. "Enough, however, my aged friend, is evident to point out to us the

conduct we must pursue. That it is in my power to procure you an asylum, better adapted to your present wants and former habits, I thank Heaven! and whether this amiable young creature, whom compassion, or perhaps a tenderer feeling, has driven in a moment of indiscreet enthusiasm, to quit a home obnoxious to her, be bound by the ties of consanguinity or not, to administer comfort to your declining years; let us ask, whether she has any objection to remain with you, at least for a time, in some calm retreat, which I will find for both of you. The youth, whose fate yet hovers on the beam of life and death, shall also, if he prove worthy of protection, find every friend, that he has lost, regained in me."

Old White grasped the stranger's hand with trembling energy: Emma held down her blushing face, and wept.

SCENE III.

At this instant the apothecary, followed by Doctor Ogle, entered the apartment.

"Never will give up a case again! Never will," exclaimed Mr. Crisp—"*Dum vita est, spes est,* is a motto that ought to be labelled round the neck of every M. D. in the King's dominions—Doctor Ogle gives us a hope of this young man's recovery. And if he should recover, his life will be the property of that fair angel—Pardon me, Miss; but he will owe it you, poz. And if, after all, Papa Minories should be baulked of a job in the funeral way—beg pardon—but the other turn of affairs will still be in the line of his trade; for as parish-clerk he touches the matrimonial fee:—beg pardon, Miss—must have my joke—he, he, he!"

His jesting was, however, soon checked by the stranger's dignified interruption.

The doctor reported, that though he indulged a strong hope of Lancaster's recovery, he could not possibly be removed for a day or two.

In the mean time, an asylum was to be procured for Emma and old White. The stranger briefly recounted to Dr. Ogle the interesting situation in which they stood to each other; and his determination to take them both under his protection. The disgust, which he felt for the conduct and character of the Perrymans, prevented his return to their house; and having an insuperable objection to residing at an hotel, he confessed the dilemma under which he laboured.

"The luckiest thing in the world," said Crisp; "our lodgings are vacant—very neat apartments. We can make up three beds; and as pleasant a drawing-room as any in the parish. I'll take upon myself to promise you every comfort for a few days at least, as Mrs. Crisp very for-

tunately is out of town, on a visit at Walworth; where her sister and brother, the little Minories, are ill of the measles."

The proposal was accepted; and Crisp, as he led the way towards his house, expatiated on the benevolence of the stranger, and the marvellous adventures of the evening; and said, "That he had foreseen in the morning, that something wonderful would happen in the course of the day, having dreamed last night that Miss Brand's cat was alive?"

CHAPTER VI.

SCENE I.

Rumour retains not in her countless train a more effective agent that Charles Christopher Crisp. His ears, ever on the watch, suffered no whisper to escape them; and his activity, exceeded only by his impudence, hunted every winding in the labyrinth of scandal, to trace a tale; which, when discovered, he propagated with a zeal unparalleled.

His talents for such pursuits had never been more strongly stimulated than by the conduct of the stranger. He lost not a moment, ere he enquired of the haberdasher, who and what he was. The manner of his arrival, and his eccentric behaviour, as described by Miss Perryman,

had all the charming mystery of Romance; and the prying apothecary was absolutely robbed of his rest by the fever of curiosity which seized him.

At the appointed hour he attended Doctor Ogle, and the stranger to the bedside of Lancaster, whom they found in a state, that confirmed the hopes of convalescence, which the former report of the physician had excited.

Lancaster, conscious of the beneficent attention of the stranger, and attributing the attendance of the physician also to him, conceived the idea that his uncle had requested him to perform these acts of kindness.

The stranger did not undeceive him, delicately feeling, that it lightened the sense of obligation, which the unfortunate youth would too acutely feel, for bounties purely eleemosynary; but affectionately encouraging him to hope for a speedy removal from his present abode,

hastened the conclusion of his visit to avoid further explanation.

When they quitted the workhouse, Crisp, burning with curiosity, began a masterly attack on the mystery that enveloped the character and story of the stranger. He practised a variety of manœuvres, but the habitual reserve of the stranger foiled his repeated efforts :—still he persevered, and, by artifice and impudence, endeavoured to entrap him into some confession that would afford him the clue to a discovery.

In their way home they were stopped by a crowd of persons, who were collected to admire a remarkably superb laudau-barouche, which was drawn up in waiting, at the door of an eminent goldsmith. Just as they were making their way through the throng, they were interrupted by the cane of a tall fellow in a rich livery of yellow and silver, while his comrade let down the steps of the carriage for a lady, who,

with the air and grace of a sylph, ascended them; and throwing herself back, was in the act of drawing up the glass, when her quick and sparkling eyes met those of the stranger, who involuntarily started. In an instant her fingers caught the check-string; the footman dismounted, and the stranger found it impossible to escape the notice of the fair enquirer, who said to him in French: "Millions of pardons, Signior, if I am deceived—but it is impossible!—'Tis certainly the ghost of Signior Martelli, or the Signior himself!"

"Amazing!" said the stranger, in the same language: "in this disguise, could Eliza detect her old tormentor?"

Poor Crisp at this moment would have bartered all the drugs in his shop for a knowledge of languages.

"No parleying," said the lady; "surrender at discretion.—Open the door, Frank."

The step was let down—the stranger

hesitated; and the apothecary was in a paroxysm of anxiety. Pride, interest, and curiosity, were, all at once, operating upon his agitated frame. The lady, who thus familiarly noticed the stranger, was the celebrated Countess St. Orville, whose mere nod conferred distinction on nobles, and whose patronage was a certain passport to fortune. Who then could the stranger be—to be so familiarly recognized by the Goddess of the day! And what a stroke of good luck, if he would but introduce him!

While these ideas flew through the brain of the apothecary—

"Come, capitulate," continued the Countess, still speaking French: "I promise you your own terms, though a prisoner: seriously, we must not separate without explanation, and this species of *street tete-a-tete*, in the midst of a multitude, is not the most convenient or desirable."

"I must obey," said the stranger, bowing; then turning to the apothecary—"Mr. Crisp, do me the favour to say to Mr. White and Miss Clarendon, that having accidently encountered a friend, I have accompanied her home. We shall meet again to-morrow. You have duties, Sir, to perform at yon receptacle of the wretched; for which you must not forget you are responsible. Let the levity of your temper be confined to good humour, and the good nature of your disposition be expanded into real benevolence, and I shall honour you."

"Sir—Sir—I beg your pardon," said Crisp, (drawing the stranger from the carriage, and lifting first one foot, and then the other, from the pavement, as if he stood on burning lava)—"Sir—it would do me the greatest service—it would make my fortune, if you would only be kind enough to pop a few of these cards, '*C. C. Crisp, Inventor and sole Proprietor*

of the Rosa Tinctura,' into her ladyship's hands; and would condescend to recommend to her ladyship's patronage that elegant cosmetic. Sir, if it was only known that her ladyship used it, it would enable your humble servant instantly to sport a gig and a foot-boy; and, if it were possible to obtain permission to use her name, it would be as good as a chariot and pair of bays!"

The stranger smiled, as he ascended the carriage; and the apothecary, as he assisted him, popped a handful of his cards on the seat, saying: "In case of any commands, I beg permission to trouble you with my address." He kept bowing till the barouche whirled off; and then turning round on one heel, clapped his hat on his head with a theatrical air, curved his neck like a swan, and could not help exclaiming:---"Oh! that old Partlett had but been passing by!"

SCENE II.

"And now, my mysterious Sir," said her ladyship, "ere we enter upon negotiation, it is positively necessary that we should exchange our full powers. Be it known then to your mysterious excellency, that in me you no longer behold the simple Eliza Beaumont, daughter of Sir George Beaumont, Baronet, of Beaumont Hall:—but Eliza, Countess of St. Orville, and Baroness of Bury. No longer the apron-string appendage to an invalid aunt in the last desperate stage of maidenhood, or the pennyless dependent on a penurious papa: but—an uncontrouled rover in the regions of fashion, with wealth enough to buy all Switzerland; where first I had the pleasure, shall I say, or the vexation, of meeting with the most incomprehensible of all human beings—if indeed you be human."

" Under every change of name and destiny, Eliza, I perceive, will ever be a madcap, and a rattle."

" Ever the same," said her ladyship; " but what shall I say to your variable visage, now grave and severe—now smiling and sportive—or to your Protean appearance, and endless *alias's* of name —I'd give a county to know your birthplace, and your real character: but pray, Sir Proteus, what does it please you to be at present?"

" You take me by surprise. I arrived only yesterday in London, and to confess the truth, have not yet quite determined on my character; the name by which I have travelled, since my landing on your shores, is Lyttleton."

" Lips, remember Lyttleton," said the Countess; " and should Martelli or Belvidere, or any other of this gentleman's appellations trip to my tongue, keep them prisoners, and let none pass but Lyttleton."

"You still then recollect Martelli?"

"Never shall I forget you in that character. Our earliest impressions are the strongest; and the romantic scenery, and marvellous adventures which, in my thirteenth year, I beheld and encountered in Switzerland, will live in my recollection for ever.

"When you recognized me at Venice for Martelli, where I passed as Belvidere, you were assisted in the discovery by accident; and I was then much less surprised than I am now. I flattered myself that this dress, so very dissimilar to any habit or appearance I have heretofore assumed, would have completely disguised me, even from those who knew me intimately."

"Do you imagine that I can ever forget the little red trunk?" said the Countess, pointing to it as it lay on the seat of the carriage; for the stranger always carried it about with him.

Lyttleton turned pale—a crimson blush succeeded—he instinctively placed his hand on the trunk. As soon as he could recover from the effects produced by this allusion—

"Madam—your pardon—but—philosophic even to marble as I wish my heart to be, on which the hand of observation alone should chissel its impressions, there is a circumstance connected with this trunk, which——"

"I know all about that, my good friend."

"You know all!" exclaimed Lyttleton.

"Nay, be patient—I mean only to remind you, that it is not a new discovery——"

"Discovery! How!—What discovery, Madam?"

"Bless me, how impatient the good man is!—I say it is no new discovery to me, that there is a secret connected with

that trunk, which I have never been able to find out. Can I forget your anxiety about it, when you were an inmate of Veroni's cottage, in Switzerland? Still less can I efface from my imagination, the tremendous burst of passion which deformed your countenance on the day of the carnival at Venice, when, masqueraded as a savoyard, I tripped into your closet to surprise you, and caught you weeping, with the lid of that trunk open."

"Weeping!—no—no—no:—you said so then, I recollect; but you know I told you, I was only wiping some dust from my eyes. I was startled, I remember, and was very angry at being broken in upon so unexpectedly. Now let us talk no more on such a trifling subject."

"You ask no small sacrifice when you desire a woman to relinquish curiosity. I will, however, aim at magnanimity,

and obey you: but let me ask, where is your old domestic, the Swiss?"

"He is dead."

"He knew the secret," said her ladyship, significantly.

"What square is this? said Lyttleton, apparently disregarding her remark.

"St. James's Square: and yonder edifice is your hotel, as long as you will honor its owner with your company."

"Having already lived under the same roof with you, you know my habits; and if you can condescend to bear with me for a day or two, I gladly accept your offer. I have two or three different plans for the future in contemplation; and until I decide, I accept your kindness, and rely on your discretion. But can you answer for your lord?"

"Oh! I forgot to mention, among my other titles, that of—Dowager. You must know, poor Lord St. Orville died of a duel. This mansion and furniture is mine

by his lordship's will. Beauville Lodge, and the acres around it are mine by deed of settlement before marriage, which, with a jointure of three thousand a-year, is all I owe to his lordship; as the St. Orville estate has followed the title to a younger brother, a minor. I am, however, in possession of the Beaumont estate, by the death of my father, and of a princely fortune in the funds, by that of my aunt. So that, as far as wealth can aid me in the pursuit of happiness, I am not in want of auxiliaries. But——"

A deep sigh passed her lips; which, however, assumed a smile. The carriage stopped — they were ushered into the most superbly-furnished mansion in the metropolis. The contrast of the scenery here to that of the workhouse he had so recently left, forcibly struck the mind of Lyttleton; and he could not help exclaiming:—

"Oh, Eliza! whence these extremes

of contrast, in the destinations of the same creature!"

"Expound that speech, if you please," said the Countess, with a curtesy, and a playful gravity.

"It cannot be explained to you, Madam; unless, indeed, you would accompany me to-morrow, and let me hope you will, to the workhouse, from which you have just brought me hither."

"Workhouse!" exclaimed the Countess. "Surely you jest—and yet I know you to be so eccentric.—Oh, you wicked creature—Are you serious?—You are.—Go instantly to your chamber, and perform quarantine for four-and-twenty hours. Benevolence is a very amiable quality, but I have no inclination to outvie Howard in fame; and therefore, beg to decline following his steps or your's in the pursuit of it. You have absolutely terrified me to death with the idea of the risk I have already encountered. My new

barouche had better have been demolished in last night's crash, and then I should have had *eclat* at least for my money: I can never enter it again!"

A little French lap-dog was barking and playing with the rosette on her ladyship's slipper. She called to her female dependant, under the name of companion: "My dear Miss Norton, call Roscius away—and don't approach me, as you dread all the horrors of the plague, until I have taken a bath. Oh, Martel—— Oh, Lyttleton; how could you be so cruel.—Dread the punishment that awaits you."

"For the quarantine you prescribe, I thank your ladyship sincerely. It will afford me the solitude I am so much in want of, and could no where else so well enjoy."

CHAPTER VII.

SCENE I.

THERE were four persons assembled at the Countess's breakfast-table the following morning, and each was perusing a newspaper. Her ladyship was occupied with a column of the Morning Post, in which a tale of mystery in high life, was, through the ingenuity of the writer, rendered still more delightfully mysterious. Her humble companion, Miss Norton, was searching among the advertisements in the Morning Chronicle for the title of some new novel, for the amusement of her patroness. The Reverend Mr. Flirt, her ladyship's domestic chaplain, and private secretary, was gathering food for scandal from the short *inuendo*

paragraphs of the Morning Herald; and Lyttleton was exercising the powers of his comprehensive mind on the impending destinies of the world, and Napoleon Buonaparte, as presented in the eventful scenes described under the head of Foreign News, in the pages of the Times. A fifth newspaper had fallen on the carpet, near a velvet cushion, on which Roscius, the Countess's lap-dog, had been sipping cream; and the little wanton animal, as if offended by the contrast to his luxurious state, had pierced his silver-haired paws through the advertisement of a case of uncommon calamity, which had reduced the widow of a once opulent tradesman, and her seven children, to the want of bread.

Lyttleton was the first who broke silence; but his speech was in his usual manner; rather an ejaculation of his thoughts, than the communication of

them to companions, whose minds were ill-suited to receive them.

"How is the career of this warrior to be reconciled to human views of Providence!" exclaimed he, laying down the newspaper. "To imagine that he is made an instrument in the hands of the Omnipotent, tends to paralyze all opposing energies! And on the other hand, to doubt the controuling influence of super-human power on the world's affairs, is to surrender the destinies of mankind a prey to the passions of an individual."

"That's precisely what every body expected," said the Reverend Mr. Flirt, striking the paper he held in his hand with the eye-glass he had been using, without paying the slightest attention to Lyttleton.

"Sir!" said the latter, with a stare of surprise.

"Yes, Sir, precisely," repeated Flirt. "When a girl of nineteen, who is heiress

to ten thousand a-year, is immured alive in an old Welsh castle, depend upon it, the first knight errant that holds out his hand to deliver her from captivity, will be welcomed; even though, as in this case, he be absolutely nothing better than a knight of the shoulder-knot, alias a foot-boy!"

"Who is it?—Who is it?" said the Countess, and her dependant, at the same moment.

"You shall hear," said the clerical caterer of scandal. He then read—

'The following occurrence is likely to furnish much amusement in the upper circles, at the expense of an ancient family of large fortune in South Britain. A certain venerable peer, whose connexion with a celebrated musical syren has prevented his associating with the respectable female part of his family, having been appointed guardian to Lady Susan L——, his grand-daughter, had for fifteen years kept her in a state of the most

rigid seclusion at his castle in South Wales, under the strict vigilance of an old housekeeper.—Various stratagems had been contrived by all the lawyers' clerks, and apothecaries' 'prentices, in the neighbouring towns, to release the imprisoned damsel; but they were all frustrated by the watchful suspicions of her keeper. The grand exploit was reserved for the genius of a dashing lieutenant of dragoons, on the recruiting service; who contrived to obtain an introduction to the duenna, by attending three following Sundays at church, and finding out the collect for the old lady, whose eyes, even with the aid of spectacles,

"Would scarcely serve at most,
"To guard her (nose) against a post."

He also insisted on carrying home the family prayer-book, which was as heavy as a knapsack, and he sighed so tenderly in the old lady's ear, that emotions, which had long forsaken her breast, were re-

newed in her memory; and such was the force of sweet delusion, that, in spite of her caution and doubts, she consented to receive the visits of the young dragoon at the castle. Sighs, and nods, and winks, soon explained to the imprisoned heiress, even in the presence of her purblind keeper, what were the real intentions of the lieutenant; and Lady Susan panting for freedom, was neither slow nor dull in communicating her acquiescence.

'The Lieutenant had an intriguing foot-boy, who owed his existence to a violation of the statute of Queen Elizabeth, having been born in a barn, where his mother was one of a company of strollers. Sam was an adept at tricks and disguises; and, by his aid, the fair captive was enabled to escape from her prison, in a suit of Sam's livery clothes; while the Lieutenant beguiled the attention of her duenna.

'At the next post-town, Lady Susan

and Sam were to wait for the Lieutenant, who, glowing with triumph at the conquest of beauty and ten thousand a-year, arrived at the inn; where, enquiring for his *servants*, he was informed, that a strange metamorphosis had just been effected, that one of his lacquies had been converted into a *London fine gentleman*, and the other into a beautiful lady; that they had gone off in a chaise and four, and had left their liveries, and a letter for Lieutenant Hosier. Trembling with rage, the outwitted Lieutenant read thus:

'SIR,

'I thank you for my deliverance, and hope you'll forgive my preferring Mr. Samuel Austin to Lieutenant Hosier.

'Adieu!'

'The liveried lover has since become the husband of Lady Susan, and we imagine, that the possession of ten thousand a-year will be a passport for Mr. Austin,

in spite of the shoulder-knot, to the tables of some of the first families in the kingdom.'

"Yes, to their Faro tables, at least;" said Lyttleton. "But what do I see?" taking up the paper he had just laid down. "Is it possible! can it be?——"

"What agitates you so?" said the Countess.

"Moreton Hall!" exclaimed Lyttleton.

"What of Moreton Hall?"

"It is to be sold!"

"All the world knows that," said the Countess; "but why should that agitate Martel——I mean, how does that concern you?"

"I must be the purchaser."

"You? Do you mean to settle in England, then?"

"I must be the purchaser."

"Have you an idea of its value?"

"If it cost me a million, I must be the purchaser."

"Don't let the auctioneer know that; said Mr. Flirt.

Lyttleton again took up the paper and read aloud:

'Valuable Freehold Estate—Manorial rights—Great and small tithes—Capital Gothic Mansion—Park—Pleasure grounds.' "Strange coincidence within a day or two of my arrival, to be put up to public auction!"

SCENE II.

An interruption was now occasioned by the entrance of a person, whom the Countess introduced as the Honourable Mr. Light. He was dressed in the most eccentric style of coachmanship. He wore a brown beaver hat with a broad brim, which seemed fixed on his head; a box coat with from ten to fifteen capes, which reached to his waist; a groom's

jrrock, with mother of pearl buttons of the size of a dollar; a striped worsted waistcoat, about six inches in length; and a pair of buckskins, which reached from the arm-pits to the ancles, where they were met by the tops of his boots, whose straps touched the ground.

Such was the dress of the Honourable Mr. Light; who, flourishing a coachman's whip over his head as he entered, addressed the Countess, with—

"Well, St. Orville—go or not—now's the time—'pon my soul it'ill do the business—such a style dont often offer. Look at it—only gaze—see how the new ones stare."

In the square stood his new-invented vehicle, and four fine horses. The ridiculous whimsicality of the machine excited the wonder of Lyttleton; who enquired of the honourable owner, what he called it.

"Can't hit upon a striking name—it's

quite *unnameable*—all my own invention. —What do you say, St. Orville—like the article, eh—Will it do?"

"What a question, Light!—It is a masterpiece."

"An't it?"

"It is the very acme of fashionable notoriety—I defy any inventor of modern oddities to go beyond it. Can any one say, he could ever have imagined such a vehicle? Every part of it displays originality of genius."

"Right, St. Orville—thankye for the hint. I'll call it The Original."

"Your dull fellows who build carriages professionally," said the Countess, "would have puzzled their wits for years, and never have conceived a thing like that. They would have pondered about safety, comfort, and utility; celerity of motion, ease to the horses, elegance of design, and similar ridiculous common-place stuff."

"To be sure: so they would—but

tip me over, if ever you catch me plodding at that—no, no; I meant something new—and I think I've hit it—And now doubt me if you can, Countess;—not a soul has seen it before you. Fat Lady Chesner would give a thousand to have the first drive—but no—here I am—punctual—constant—steady to my bargain—But I've more to tell you yet.—Where do you think I shall spank you?"

"Where?"

"To the match!—A famous thing!—Not above a dozen in the secret—all the London police and county quizzes are diddled—none of them know the spot."

"What spot?"

"Ambo Park—stands in two counties—If the quorum of one shire smoke the business, away we're off to the other.—Ambo Park for ever!—That's the scene of sport!"

"What does he mean?" said Lyttleton to the Countess.

"You do not comprehend," said she.

"With Mr. Light's permission, I will explain."

"Oh, certainly, with all my heart. What the gentleman is new, is he? Dont remember the article—fresh importation, I suppose."

"Be it known to you, then, Mr. Lyttleton, that since the demise of her poor dear lord, being in possession of various goods and chattels, and not yet in the last stage of personal decay, the Dowager Countess St. Orville has received a variety of proposals to re-enter the holy, honourable, and happy state, of wedlock. Among others, Sir, the Honourable Mr. Light, the gentleman who now stands before you, and whom, possibly, from his appearance, you would not suspect to be the son of a peer, and a senator of this realm, has made me the most flattering overtures."

Mr. Light bowed in the true coachman-like style—twirled his whip, and

buttoned and unbuttoned his great coat: and then said, "what's the matter with my appearance—where's the M. P. who cuts a better figure?"

"It would be tedious," continued the Countess, "to detail the numerous proofs of his profound regard. Had he been a rich miser, I am persuaded, he would have evinced the sincerity of his suit by placing at my feet his bags of gold; had he been a poet, he would have stripped Parnassus of its choicest flowers to weave a chaplet for my brow; had he been prime-minister, I am convinced he would have sacrificed all the aims of his ambition to my humour; and that, by a smile, I might have purchased the fate of nations! Can I doubt, for an instant, that he would have acted thus, when I behold this representative of the people in his character of a member of the Barouche Club, inventing an indescribable and unnameable vehicle, on purpose to convey

me half a hundred miles, to participate in the refined delights of a boxing match? Not Cleopatra's self, in all the splendour of Imperial state, with the world's master for her slave, ever excited so much homage as should I in the ring at Ambo Park; where Gulley—Crib, the Champion—Dutch Sam—Big Ben, with their various patrons, Princes, Peers, Pickpockets, and all the motley multitude of St. James's and St. Giles's, would gaze at, and adore, me as the tutelar goddess of bruisers."

"Bravo! Bravo! Countess, well said;" exclaimed the amateur coachman. "But we have no time to lose—come, equip—equip—You have no comprehension what a gay grand thing it will be."

At this moment a shout was heard in the square, which drew the whole party a second time to the window. The crowd of people which had gathered round the carriage, suddenly became tumultuous.

The grooms of the honourable Mr. Light were exercising their pugilistic prowess against three or four athletic executioners of the law, who had remorselessly seized the carriage and horses of their master, by virtue of a warrant from the sheriff of Middlesex. The byestanders were divided into parties, some aiding, and some resisting the ruthless fangs of law, and a general engagement ensued.

"What's the cause of this?" said Lyttleton.

"Cause—A most infamous cause!" said Mr. Light: "tried the term before last. A scoundrel of a tailor—Don't owe him above five hundred: and if the unreasonable rascal would but have had patience till our party walk over to the right hand side of the Speaker, I promised him a contract, that would have cleared him five thousand."

While he was speaking, the terrified horses broke from the grasp of the per-

sons who attempted to hold them, set off at full speed, dashed the new, indescribable, and *unnameable* vehicle to splinters against the iron railings in the square, and galloped into Piccadilly, with the fragments at their heels, followed by the shouting multitude, the bailiffs, the grooms, and the Honourable Mr. Light himself; who, vanishing most unceremoniously from the witnesses of his disgrace, joined, whip in hand, in the pursuit."

SCENE III.

"Now, what says Mentor, to this first specimen of the suitors of his pupil?" said the Countess to Lyttleton.

"Pupil!" exclaimed the Reverend Mr. Flirt, with an air of surprise, elevating his pendant eye-glass to his nose, and staring at Lyttleton.

"Yes, pupil!" said the Countess;

" but don't be alarmed, my good Master of—*Arts*; I shall not discard you. Mr. Lyttleton has formerly given me a few lessons—but his subjects do not interfere with yours. When one is occasionally reminded, as it will sometimes happen, in spite of fashion itself, that we have a heart, a mind, or a soul, or whatever you call it, then Lyttleton's lessons are valuable indeed. But how rarely that is the case: while every hour one stands in need of a master in those arts and accomplishments, of which the Reverend Mr. Flirt is a professor. For instance: Lyttleton, though a layman, could never have read to me, in English, the manuscript novels of Monsieur Le Marquis de ———, with which you half-shocked even me; but as all the world reads them, I could not be ignorant. Then again, Lyttleton is as incapable of unravelling the charming mysteries of a delightful paragraph of inuendo scandal,

as Omai of Otaheite would have been—and would be as much at a loss to explain the hieroglyphics of our fashionable chronicles, as I am to decypher the characters on Alexander's sarcophagus at the British Museum. Such a being, my dear Reverend Mr. Flirt, would make as awkward a figure in a cabinet of scandal, as you would in a synod of grave divines."

"Your ladyship, I perceive, is as fond as ever of raillery," said Lyttleton.

"There is so much charming sprightliness in the sallies of her ladyship," said Mr. Flirt, "that for my part, I feel proud of being the object even of her sarcasms, when it affords her ladyship an opportunity of displaying the force and brilliancy of her fine fancy."

Accustomed as was the Countess to the incense of adulation, this offering of the clerical flatterer had more meanness in it than her good sense could bear. She

blushed; and to hide her blushes, stooped to pick up the newspaper which Roscius had torn; when her eye, attracted by the rent, rested on the advertisement of the distressed widow. A silence of two minutes ensued—Then—

"You have offended me, Sir," she said, in a serious tone, to Mr. Flirt; "and I am this instant furnished with the means of inflicting a penance upon you."

"My lady!" said the alarmed secretary.

"I gave you ten guineas to leave at Birchall's, as my subscription to Madame Italini's concert. You will do me the favour to take the money immediately, according to this direction; but on no account mention either my name or your own."

"Am I to understand, that your ladyship is serious?"

"Yes; for once in my life, serious: and, if to relinquish frivolity for a moment, should disqualify me for ever as a

candidate for fashionable notoriety, you may, if you please, add to the anecdote—that my lamentable misfortune was occasioned by an odd combination of the speech of a chaplain, with the action of a lap-dog."

"And—But—Then the concert—Your ladyship will absolutely be too late—— You will be shut out."

"Sir," said the Countess, "I understand you; but monstrous as the metamorphosis may be, to transform a clergyman from a purveyor of amusement into an almoner of charity, I must persist in my cruel request, and shall consider any further hesitation as rebellion."

"I fly to execute your ladyship's pleasure. Upon my honour, I glory in being the bearer of your bounty. I trust the object may be worthy: these things certainly are not always impositions — and to-morrow possibly may be time enough for the concert."

SCENE IV.

"Why do not the powerful and the rich bring honour, honesty, benevolence, and truth, in fashion?" said Lyttleton. "See, with what ease the parasites of the great are made to run to right or left; to good or evil. Lady, lady; look to this."

"Miss Norton," said the Countess, "may I beg the favour of you to run over this duet in the music-room. I'll join you presently, and we'll try it together."

The Countess now alone with Lyttleton, said:—

"Do you know, my dear Sir, that had it been my fate at this moment to have been in company with the Reverend David Delude, of methodistical notoriety, I am persuaded, that he would have found no difficulty in convincing me, that there was

something supernatural, miraculous, or *spiritual*, as they call it in the incident of this newspaper: for as I perused the heart-rending statement, and glanced my eye at the next advertisement, I experienced just such a sudden and overpowering qualm of mind as poor Lady Longface described to me as the means of her conversion and call. You perceive, that the announcement of Madame Italini's Concerts immediately follows this afflicting story. (Reading:) 'A few pounds would enable this poor widow to carry on her husband's business, and provide for seven children:'—all this distress I had neglected, and I had given ten guineas for the pleasure of hearing a foreigner sing half a dozen songs—No, not even for any thing so rational as that; but—for the vain boast of saying that I had done so. None but yourself hear me, and I know you won't expose me; but at the moment

when my folly—why not call it by its right name, my guilt struck me, I actually felt something so painful at my heart; something at once so real, and yet so indescribable, that I can no otherwise convey to you an idea of the sensation than in the old-fashioned jargon of a book, which speaks of conscience, but which, in polite circles, you know, is never to be mentioned. Now, though one should to a certainty be laughed out of countenance, if such a word slipped from the tongue in company, between you and me, I am inclined to believe, from what I felt and feel, that there is positively such a thing as conscience."

"Is such a thing!" exclaimed Lyttleton.——"The blind may doubt the power of the solar rays, Eliza; and laugh to hear men talk of light and shade. So they, whose hearts and minds by avarice, ambition, or sensuality, are rendered incapable of feeling or of reasoning, may

question the existence of such emotions as you have attempted to describe. Yet not more palpably demonstrable to corporeal sight, is total darkness from light's meridian blaze, than to the unsophisticated soul, are truth's bright dictates from the gloom of error; and virtue's impulse from a guilty thought!"

"Is it not a shocking thing then, my dear Sir, that the world should be made up of such blind, sophisticated creatures, as we all are? I except you of course; but I mean such folks as poor I, and ten thousand others that I could name, who really do most wilfully shut our eyes and hearts to those bright dictates, and those virtuous impulses; and suffer ourselves to be led blindfolded, wherever the crowd moves; hearkening to no voice but that of fashion, and regarding no impulse but that of fear, lest one should not be able to keep up with the throng of fools."

"Well may you fear," said Lyttleton, with mock sorrow. "Woeful indeed is your lot, if compelled for a moment, as at present, to remove the bandage from your eyes, and seek out away of your own."

"In such cases, no doubt," replied the Countess, "the aforesaid dictates of truth would be very convenient guides."

"And the impulses of virtue," said Lyttleton, "most cheering companions. Yet let me caution you against becoming a mere creature of impulse—let the understanding approve the act which the imagination prompts, otherwise whatever good to others may result from your conduct, it is merely the offspring of fanaticism."

"Admitted---admitted, my dear Sir. I am aware what a most delightfully harmonic machine such a piece of organization as I am would be if I could

but make this giddy noddle and this fluttering heart to form a diapason."

"The concord is practicable, though to a lady of fashion, I allow, not very easy.—Yet I once formed a higher expectation of my fair friend, than that she would flutter away life in such a listless character."

"Nor shall she wholly disappoint you.—Even yet there is enough of time remaining to redeem a part at least of the fair promise of my youth."

The Countess uttered these words with a glowing energy—and when recollection checked the animation of her expression, the crimson tint upon her cheeks remained in blushes for the boast she made, and her eyes told the humility that succeeded it.

"That is an impulse that I trust will ripen into the firmest resolution."

"If I could hope for the aid of such a monitor, as Lyttleton is qualified to be, I would defy the sneers of all the

fashionable world ; throw off the servile yoke of imitation, and act in future from motives originating in my own will, and sanctioned by my own—conscience I was positively going to say again—But alone, and unaided in the vast region of fashion, I dread to be pointed at as an innovator. The rational, the conscientious being, we have been talking of, would be such a non-descript among the people I have hitherto mingled with, that the effect of a scarecrow upon birds, is but a poor image of the fright I should occasion. Still, I candidly confess, that I am not at ease as I am. In the circle of which I am one, every thing of late has run into extremes—.There is no medium between impiety and fanaticism—the majority are athiests, and the few that are not, have turned methodists.---Now I have no sort of desire either to patronize atheistical lectures in my own drawing room ; or to build a chapel for

saints. But let me recollect myself—I am absolutely confessing to a man in a mask—Yes, Lyttleton, you are a being of so much mystery, that I can only regard you as the shadow of a friend—and before I can bring myself to believe that you are any thing but a ghost — I have a thousand enquiries to make. What brings you to England? Do you intend making a stay? and were you serious about Moreton Hall?"

"Inclination has brought me to England—I intend to stay here if your government will permit me—and I was very serious about Moreton Hall."

"You really intend to purchase it?

"Certainly; if it be possible."

"You never were in England before?"

"I have not said so."

"Well then, without further evasion —Whence arises your anxiety to purchase Moreton Hall?"

That question, my fair catechist,

points to a secret, which you will oblige me by not seeking to explore."

Lyttleton said this with an expressive gravity of tone and countenance, placing his hand sorrowfully upon his heart.

"Your pardon, Sir——but, I also feel an interest in the fate of Moreton Hall; and, cannot be indifferent as to who may become its possessor."

"You feel an interest—You, Eliza—Pardon me, Madam; but it is strange—it is remarkable.—What interest can your ladyship have in the fate of Moreton Hall?"

"That question, my grave catechist, points to a secret, which you will oblige me by not seeking to explore."

This was said with an air half serious, and half in arch-mockery of Lyttleton.

"Let me, however, relieve you from the dread of a competitor," continued the Countess; "I had no design of becoming a purchaser myself; though I

have written to the auctioneer, to request the favour of knowing, as soon as possible, the name of its new possessor."

"When is it to be sold?" said Lyttleton.

"This very day!"

"This day!" echoed Lyttleton, taking up the newspaper, and reading: 'At Garraway's Coffee-house, 'Change-alley, Cornhill, this Day, at One precisely.' 'Tis so, indeed—I have not a moment to lose."

"Shall I order a carriage?"

"By no means—I might as well wear your livery—and I wish to be quite in *obscuro;* besides, I shall visit the workhouse, ere I see you again.—Nay, don't start.—For, if you permit me, I shall do more. Are you, or are you not in earnest, Eliza, in the wishes you express for the renewal of our friendship."

"Indeed, most fervently, I solicit it."

"Will you, then, allow me to claim your protection for an aged merchant,

whom it has been my happiness to deliver from a workhouse?"

"You ask much—what will the world say—but why should I prefer their clamour, to my own approbation?—Bring the old merchant by all means."

"Noble effort! One trial more:—I have also met by accident, with a friendless female orphan. Your bounty to the distressed family, I trust, has been well bestowed; but, the object to whom I allude, is one whose case peculiarly calls for the protection of a lady of rank and fortune; and never can the sanction of your ladyship's name, or the benefits of your wealth, be more honourably employed. Shall I bring the young woman?"

"I know discretion ever regulates the impulse of your benevolence, and I place myself with pleasure at your disposal."

"Eliza, you renew the hopes of my youth—you make me once again think nobly of my species.—In a few hours we meet again."

CHAPTER VIII.

SCENE I.

LYTTLETON ordered the driver of the hackney-coach to stop at Lubbock and Co.'s in the Poultry, where he discharged him.

Having transacted his business there, he was coming out of the banking-house, when he was recognised by Mr. Crisp, who was in Debatt's, the pastry-cook's shop opposite, sipping a custard, and listening to the scandalous chronicles of an old lady, who was pretending to furnish the key to a newspaper tale of Love and Murder, in which only the initials of names were printed. The apothecary no sooner espied the object of his fever-

ish curiosity, than jumping up, he attempted to place his custard glass on the counter; but unfortunately deposited its contents in the old lady's lap, and applied the iron-bound heel of his shoe to her triple-corned toe at the same moment. Deaf to her screams, he took a harlequin's leap over the feathered head of her grandson, a little boy in a scarlet jacket, and nankeen trowsers, and reached the corner of Lombard-street, just as Lyttleton had turned up Cornhill.

His first impulse was to overtake him, tap him on the shoulder with a "Hem," and a "How d'ye do?" but the genius of curiosity checked his arm in time; and he determined to watch him at a distance.

As Lyttleton walked slowly, Crisp was obliged to loiter; and having stopped under pretence of reading "The Rich State of the Wheel," in all the Lucky

Lottery Offices, he suddenly lost sight of the object of his vigilance. His heart beat with joy, however, when he again descried him turning the corner of 'Change Alley. Pretending to examine the price of stocks, in Richardson, the bookseller's window, he kept his eye upon him, till he again turned a corner; then following at a short distance, he perceived that he entered Garraway's Coffee House.

"Now would I give the world to know what brings that strange old fellow here," said Crisp to himself. "It must be so—Miss Perryman is right — he is a spy of Buonaparte's---Oh, Matthews! Matthews! thou wonderful performer of Metamorphoses, what would I give for thy *transmogrifying* powers! I'd turn myself into a different character every hour, and stick close to this impenetrable incognitus all day, without his suspecting who was at his elbow.

He followed him into the Coffee-room, which was literally crowded with Jews, Turks, Quakers, Parsons, Merchants, Merchants' clerks, Brokers, Lawyers, Agents, Captains, Porters, Peers, and persons of almost all descriptions, drawn into one focus by the love of gain.

"I'll mix in the crowd, and keep as much out of sight as possible," said Crisp, stealing to the left hand of the room, as Lyttleton turned to the right.

Round the bar were collected more than a hundred persons, jostling each other, and scrambling to obtain the viands, which the landlord, with a good-humoured, rosy face, was dealing out with expert celerity, assisted by three or four flying waiters. While the wondering eyes of Lyttleton were employed on this scene, his ears were assailed with the discordant cries of "Soda, soda!" — "Who wants spruce?" — Capillaire and water." — "Ham-sandwich." — "Rum-

Doctor."—"Give me change."—"Seven-pence." — "Beef-sandwich." — "Seven-pence." — "Brown stout." — "Spruce, spruce." — "Ten-pence halfpenny." — "Waiter."—"Coming, coming." The vocal part of this coffee-house concert was instrumentally accompanied by the incessant drawing of corks, and the frothing and whizzing of spruce beer, bottled ale, and soda water.

Crisp who had been silent five minutes, could no longer restrain his tongue: but jostling himself close to Lyttleton, touched the sleeve of his coat, and cleared his own throat by a loud "Hem."

"What is the occasion of this assemblage?" said Lyttleton. "Who are these people scrambling with such eagerness for food?—They appear half-famished."

"Proof you're a stranger, Sir,—any of our cits would have explained what it is to take a sandwich at Garraway's. — This is a sort of fashionable city luncheon

for gentlemen who do not dine till seven in the evening; and for some that do not dine at all.—Hope I have the honour to see you pretty well this morning?—Hem!—hope the Countess St. Orville is pretty well?"

This last sentence was uttered in a higher key, purposely, that it might strike the ear of a young man genteelly dressed, who stood near him; and whom he introduced to Lyttleton, before the latter had time to reply.

"Give me leave, Sir," said he, "to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Mason. —Mr. Mason, my friend Mr. —Hem!"—Then taking Lyttleton by the sleeve, he whispered in his ear, in despite of his resistance — "My friend Mason, Sir—is a sort of out-door editor to the newspapers —he is a very clever dog—a little satirical or so, but means no harm. By attending this house for several years past, he is acquainted with every character here. He stagged you in a minute as a stran-

ger. You'll find him very entertaining."

Lyttleton merely bowed.

Mr. Mason, however, was one of those characters, who require very little *drawing-out*, when it appeared to him that he was likely to *pick-up* any thing in exchange. This was the motive of his acquaintance with Crisp, from whom he frequently gleaned the materials of a paragraph. Hearing that Lyttleton was an inmate of St. Orville-House, he fastened on him with a strong determination to turn him to some account. Crisp had remarked that the scene was quite new to his friend Mr.—hem;

"The Garraways of our times is a very different scene, Sir, from that described by the Spectator," said Mason.

"It is still the rendezvous of your merchants and money-dealers, is it not?" said Lyttleton.

"Why yes—that is—no—I should say, in a certain sense—I mean, it was—but

it is getting rather obsolete—rather on the decline as to *eclat*.—We have new-modelled every thing so completely in the present times—that it is by no means surprising old-fashioned coffee-houses lose their attractions.

"My friend Mason, Sir," said Crisp, "you must know, is a holder of shares in an opposition concern called the New Auction Mart."

"Pray what is that?"

"It is, Sir," said Mason, "a superlatively elegant edifice, erected in Bartholomew Lane after classical models of all the orders of architecture, and designed for the exclusive transaction of that department of the extensive business of this opulent metropolis, which is executed in the rostrum, by the means of eloquence and an ivory hammer, vulgarly denominated sales by auction. The thing, Sir, was absolutely called for by the superior refinement of the times."

"Refinement of the times!—Refinement!" mumbled an old gentleman, in a cocked hat, the only one in the room besides Crisp's, "refinement of the times," repeated he, thrusting his hands deeper and deeper into his breeches pocket, as he stood with his back to the fire. "Quackery of the times, you mean, young fellow!"

"Sir," said Mason; "I don't quite comprehend."

"I say quackery—quackery—'Tis the age of quackery—Truth and plain dealing are out of vogue; and the commonest wants and plainest purposes must now be supplied and pursued by the most impudent disguises and crooked courses: even the hunger and thirst of our city apprentices, you see, must now be quacked like the vapours of a fine lady; the rein-deer's tongue, or the boar's-ham, must be cut into slices, and nick-named sandwiches; and pump-water must be

impregnated with fixed air, corked up in a bottle, and pay the duty of a quack medicine, ere the clerks from our counting-houses can be supplied with a luncheon."

"You are rather severe, Mr. Stubbs," said a little pert, sharped-nosed man, smartly dressed, and powdered, with a bundle of papers sticking out of each of his coat pockets; "but there's a good deal of truth in what you say."

As this little gentleman spoke, he was in the practice of tilting himself upon his toes, and rubbing his hands with an air of self-satisfaction.

"Well; but what do you say to some shares in the new Cattle Life Insurance? —famous good concern—up, up, up, up they go—not a share to be had in two days."

"Quack, quack, quack," said old Stubbs. "Oh age of quackery!"

"See you don't like it—Well—what

do you say to the Portsea-Island Water-Works—or the Strand Bridge—Surrey Institution—Golden Lane Brewery—Croydon Canal—East London Water-Works—Auction Mart—Commercial Dock---West India Dock---Grand Junction --- National Theatre — Gas lights. ---Eh? what not hingdo?---well, when you want me---know where to find me.---I'm your man---buy or sell, which you will; quite content with a small commission, and the turn of the market."

"Pray, what is that person's profession?" said Lyttleton to Crisp.

"Who is he, Mason?" said the apothecary.

"Don't you know Timmy Tattle?" said Mason; "I thought all the world knew little Timmy: he's as good-natured a fellow as ever lived; he will tie your shoe-string, will carry you a message or a parcel with all his heart; do any thing in the world to serve his

friends, except lending them money without security. Some forty years ago, Timmy's station was on an elevated piece of wood between the hind-wheels of an old lady's chariot; where being somewhat abridged in the usual altitude of a foot-boy, he acquired the habit of standing on his toes, that his hands might reach the holders. Tim by his care of the small beer and brickdust won the good graces of his mistress; and at her decease, was rewarded by a hundred pound-legacy. That old Codger in the cocked hat, who is thirty years older than he looks to be, was executor to the old lady, and first put Timmy into the road to wealth. By bustling incessantly, and bowing and smiling perpetually and indiscriminately, Timmy Tattle has contrived to make his hundred pounds at least a hundred thousand. But with the wealth of a nabob, he still retains the servility of the foot-boy,

and will touch his hat to his tallow-chandler, in the same style precisely as he would to a Knight of the Garter.

"But Sir," continued Mason, in an under tone of voice, addressing Lyttleton; "Do you observe those three persons standing at the other end of the room? Him in the middle, I suppose, you know."

"No indeed," said Lyttleton.

"I understood you were an inmate of St. Orville House. That young gentleman is brother-in-law to the Countess, the celebrated St. Orville the minor. He is as well known in 'Change Alley as in Bond-street. Every day you may see his phæton and four bays, with two grooms in the hind boot, standing for an hour in Cornhill. The tall figure in a brown wig, and broad brim hat, with his coat buttoned up to his chin, is a quaker, whom every body knows to be immensely rich, but nobody knows how

he became so. The sallow-faced, thin little man, on the other side of the minor, is a Jew negotiator between 'old rich 'rogues that have money to lend at fifty 'per cent. and extravagant young fools 'who will give a hundred rather than 'go without it.'—They are coming this way."

They approached the box where Lyttleton and his present companions were standing.

St. Orville was disfigured by his extreme adherence to a fashionable style of morning dress; which gave to a form and face remarkable for its manly beauty and graceful symmetry, the appearance of a stable groom. He had only recently entered his twenty-first year; but his air and countenance denoted that he was by no means a novice of the world.

"Waiter! pen, ink, and paper. I will give you the promise in writing, old gentleman;" said the Earl to the Quaker.

"Vat vill dat shignify, my lord, vithout a stamp—not vorth dat," said the Jew, snapping his fingers; "not vorth dat."

"It will not be deemed evidence against thee in the tribunals of Westminster, unless it be stamped."

"Why now, my good fellow," said the Earl; "why should you teaze me with your nonsensical objections; you know, both of you, very well, that at any time it can be stamped, if needful."

"Thee sayest true, friend; but who will pay the cost thereof?"

"I will, Mr. Marsden, on my honour."

"Pooh! psha! vat nonsense; your lordship make game of us—vat you pay for shot to shoot yourself; ha, ha!—no, no, you see I must mind my good friend, Mishter Marsden be secure at all points. Vat vould I think of myself to take his monish for my agency, and not see him safe at all points, ha, ha! dat's not my

vay—Isaac Isaacs would not have had so many tousands go through his hands, if he vas so green you see—ha, ha! No offence your lordship."

"You want the value of the stamp paid down then—Is that it?"

"Yea; that would be, as it is said, having Ball in the stable."

"Ver true, Mishter Marsden; ver true. And if you have no occasion to ride Ball, you see you can return him to his master again—ha, ha!"

"Well, well, settle it your own way; only let us be expeditious, or the sale will be over before we agree. Here is another ten pounds, Isaacs, (giving a bank-note.) Now come, what must I write? You dictate, and I'll be amanuensis."

"Vith all my heart; begin at the top, my lord. Let me see. "Mishter Zachariah Marsden—Sir—"

"Well—Mishter Zachariah Marsden,

Sir.—' " Very well; that's done—get on quick—quick—"

" As I am under age."

" Well ; what next !"

" As I am under age."

" Oh, Scribes and Pharisees !" exclaimed St. Orville, " this will never do man :—we shall be all day at this rate. —See here, I will scribble a note in two minutes."

" Mr. Zachariah Marsden.

" Sir,

" I hereby request and authorize you to purchase for me, and on my account, but in your own name, a certain Freehold Estate called Moreton Hall."

" Moreton Hall !" loudly exclaimed Lyttleton, who had overheard the conversation.

The whole party started with surprise.

" Vat did you say, Sir?" said Isaacs.

"Dids't thee address thyself unto me friend?" said Marsden.

Lyttleton, without condescending to reply, moved from that bench to another, and taking up a newspaper, sat down apparently to peruse it: but his mind was occupied with Moreton Hall, and the minor St. Orville; and his eyes were frequently turned to the box where he sat. In a few minutes he observed him entering into conversation with Mason.

"Dat letter do ver well; but ve must get some vitnesh."

"Witness, witness! Zounds, man, call the waiter for a witness," said the Earl; "or, let me see.—Ah, Mason, how do? What's the news—never mind—here, sign this paper my good fellow."

"With extreme pleasure, my lord," said Mason.

"One witness is good, two is better," said the quaker.

"Zounds!" said St. Orville, "Why dont you provide witnesses; and charge them in the bill—Lets see———"

"Here is a respectable friend of mine; Mr. Crisp, a gentleman who I am sure will be proud"—said Mason, "Mr. Crisp, Lord St. Orville: Mr. Crisp, my lord."

"Will you do me the favour, Sir?" said his lordship.

"My lord, your lordship confers an honour upon me," said Mr. Crisp; then popping his little hat under his arm, and whetting the tip of his finger with his tongue, he took the pen, and signed the paper.

"Bless my shoul, vat a long title the shentleman has got," said Isaacs; (Reading) '*C. C. Crisp, sole proprietor, inventor, and patentee, of the celebrated Rosa Tinctura.*'

Scarcely was St. Orville able to express his thanks for laughing; when Sud-

denly the whole assemblage in the coffee-room was put in motion, by a proclamation thrice made in a stentorian voice by the head-waiter, and in these words. 'Messeiurs Skinner, Tuchin, and Forrest's Sale of Freehold Estates just going to begin: please to walk up stairs, gentlemen."

SCENE II.

In the sale-room at Garraway' are a number of tables, which it is the custom to spread with bowls of negus and punch, and with biscuits, for the gratuitous refreshment of the company, who take their seats indiscriminately in the different boxes.

Lyttleton sat down at the table nearest to the pulpit, in which the auctioneer had taken his station; and in the opposite box sat St. Orville, with Mar[illegible] and Isaac [illegible] He was earnestly watching

that party when he felt his sleeve touched—

"Will you do me the honour, Sir, to take a glass of negus with me," said Crisp who unobserved by Lyttleton, had seated himself on the other side of the same table.

"No, Sir!" said Lyttleton: who, with a chilling frown, fixing his elbow on the table, and resting his chin in his hand, turned his back on the mortified apothecary.

"Why, Crisp," said Mason, who sat next to him, "What a green-horn you must be. You will perceive, man, that none but the most vulgar will sip a drop of these liquors."

"Bless me, who should have thought of such a thing. Beg pardon, Sir, I'm sure," said Crisp; "but if nobody takes a drop, pray what are they brought for?"

"Custom, custom; an old-fashioned custom, which did well enough a century ago, when the monied world dined at one

o'clock, and sales took place after dinner; but the thing is quite a *bore* now, when the monied world is completely merged into the fashionable world; and when all the world dine at eight o'clock. They will manage these things better, I trust, at the Auction Mart, and instead of punch and negus, serve up chocolate, capillaire, and lemonade."

"Whipped syllabubs would be very appropriately emblematical," said old Stubbs, who stood near.

"Pray, Sir," said Crisp to Mason, "if all the world dine at eight o'clock, what meal is that bald-pated old man making; who, I perceive, has already devoured five or six biscuits; and, vulgar as it is, has swallowed as many glasses of negus?"

"He is a singular character, who is supposed to subsist almost, if not entirely, in that way. Some say that he is a distressed poet; and others think him a mi-

serable rich man; a miser—*in veritate miser*."

The auctioneer had now called the attention of the company to the business of the day; and the first lot was knocked down at a moderate price, without much competition. The second lot was Moreton Hall.

The agitation of Lyttleton was now visible. He appeared to be combating with some powerful impression of the mind; and while the auctioneer, as is usual, was reading over the printed particulars of the estate, he abruptly turned round to Crisp, and said :—

" I saw you sign a paper, which Lord St. Orville wrote."

" Mr. Mason, Sir, did me the honor to introduce me to his lordship, and we both had the honour of witnessing the paper."

" It's a very odd whim of the young lord," said Mason, " to fall in love with an old ruin, for I understand the house is

tumbling to pieces; but so it is—he has authorised Marsden to purchase it at any price, and I have no doubt has engaged to pay the most exorbitant interest for the use of the money."

"He shall not have it," said Lyttleton.

Just then, old Stubbs was accosted by a short chubby-faced man, who asked him "If he meant to bid for Moreton Hall? Because I can tell you what," says he, "I know how to make it a borough."

"A borough!" exclaimed Stubbs, straining his eye-lids.

"It has not the patronage of the borough," said the other, "but whoever is owner of this estate, with a little proper management, must always carry the borough. Now Mr. Stubbs, I'll tell you what—the thing is not known; and you can't lay out your money better. I know every acre of the estate: have been over every inch of it. The old hall is not

worth more than the value of the materials; the rent-roll may be improved to three thousand a-year; it's not fifteen hundred at present. Now I'll tell you what; I will undertake to get you six thousand for the two nominations every election."

Old Stubbs dived his hands in his breeches-pocket, screwed up his lips, and fixed his eyes on the floor.—Then suddenly turning round.—"It's doing things in a hurry. I wish I had known this before, Wilson. But are you sure—Is it a certainty; that the Moreton Hall Estate can be made to carry the borough?"

"With my management—a certainty. The whole estate has been dreadfully neglected; the mansion has been deserted for several years by the Moretons, and the sleepy Dutch family that has the nomination at present does not dream of being disturbed."

"And do you think nobody else here has your ideas on the subject?"

"I'll tell you what:—I'll be very candid with you. Young St. Orville applied to me; he is ambitious, but he can't touch the stuff till he is of age. Isaacs has introduced him to that sly old quaker, Marsden; but under the rose, I may tell you, that they mean nothing more than to dupe him out of a few hundreds."

"If I thought it would carry the borough;" said Stubbs.

"I'll tell you what—I'll ensure it—Did I ever deceive you?"

"Why no: but your terms are"——

"Harkye," said Wilson, and whispered for a minute or two in his ear.

"To return one thousand, if both nominations are not the sitting members," said Stubbs.

"That's the bargain," said Wilson.

"I say, Mr. Stubbs," said Mason, (twitching the old gentleman's elbow,)

"Don't you think the *Corruption* of the Times, almost as romantic, and more scandalously injurous than the '*Quackery of the Times*?"

Biddings had now begun for the Moreton Hall Estate; and Marsden was at present the highest bidder. Stubbs advanced—Marsden advanced upon him; and the contest lay between them, till the sum offered was so much above the supposed value of the estate, that a buzz of wonder went round the room. Marsden at length desisted. In vain St. Orville goaded him — supplicated — threatened. The hammer was raised for the third time upon Stubbs's bidding; when Lyttleton rose, and in a tone of determination, bid aloud, a hundred pounds above him. Stubbs now declined; the hammer fell; and Lyttleton, having pronounced his name aloud, was declared the purchaser of Moreton Hall.

While he was engaged with the

auctioneer's clerk, in making a deposit on his purchase, Crisp, who had been seen to speak to him, was assailed at once by St. Orville and Wilson, at the same instant, with a score of questions respecting him.

All that he knew, the glib-tongued apothecary related with considerable embellishment, to the amazement of his hearers.

"Do you say he resides with the Countess?" said St. Orville. "Lyttleton! Lyttleton! I do not recollect the name.—'Tis very strange."

"I'll tell you what," said Wilson, "I'll take ten to one, that he's an agent for the *Saints*, who are up to every thing in the borough way. I've had better offers from that quarter than any other party in the kingdom; many a thing of the sort I've seen knocked down in this room to their associated interest; and as to advowsons and presentations in the church, there's no coming up to their prices.

—I'll tell you what, if bishoprics could be brought to the hammer———"

At this instant Lyttleton approached. An unaffected dignity constantly attended his steps, and put to flight the race of impertinents, who buzz like flies, round characters less shielded from their troublesome attacks.

Even Wilson, who, from motives of interest, was admitted to a familiarity with some of the highest characters in the kingdom, was unable to encounter the eye of Lyttleton; and after rubbing his chubby-face, three or four times with his right hand, he gave up the attempt of addressing him.

The young Earl himself, well schooled as he was in the modern code of politeness, and with a half claim of acquaintance through the countess, felt, in introducing himself, more hesitation than he had ever experienced since he left College.—Bowing respectfully, he said:—

"I believe I have the honour of addressing a friend of the Countess of St. Orville."—

Lyttleton bowed.

"My name is St. Orville."

Lyttleton bowed again.

"We have been competitors, Sir; but you must allow me to say, that having lost it myself, I am happy that a friend of my sister is in possession of one of the most improvable estates in the kingdom. I intended to bid high; but there is no possibility of success against unlimited wealth!

"There is no possibility, at least to a sincere man, of returning an unlimited compliment; but I take it as you meant it, my Lord, civilly."

"Then you have'n't got it, my Lord! What shall I do?—What shall I do? Poor feyther — poor Suke — feyther's heart 'll break, as sure as I stands here,—he made so sartin of it."

This abrupt address to Lord St. Orville,

came from a young rustic, whose distress was rendered visible by tears, which the back of his rough hand could not remove speedily enough to escape observation.

"Silence, William," said St. Orville,—"Go to your father, and I'll see you there."

"I han't the heart to go, my lord—pray don't ye bid me. It'll kill him, poor ould soul—it will kill him—and he'll die in prison.

"Prison!" exclaimed Lyttleton; "die in prison,—what is this, my Lord—ceremony must be waved on these occasions."

"I have committed an error, Sir, "said St. Orville, "in permitting a distressed farmer's family to hope that I might be the purchaser of the estate, now your's.

"Be Moreton Hall *his* then, your Honor?"—said the young farmer, pointing to Lyttleton—"And do you know un?—pray speak for feyther, my Lord—pray speak in time, for look there, my Lord—Clinton's agent be already at his elbow."

"Your most obedient, Sir," said a spruce young spark to Lyttleton.

"Pray who are you, Sir?" said he.

"I am a clerk in the house of Flimflam, Flit, and Co. Our house, Sir, have received orders to apply to the purchaser of the Moreton estate, whoever he might be, on behalf of Mr. Clinton, of Moreton, with offers highly advantageous for the grant of some farms adjoining his own lands, the leases of which have elapsed, and are now in the hands of beggarly tenants, some of them gone to gaol, and some ready to run away."

"So please your honour, its a woundy falsehood!" interrupted the rustic. "Call feyther beggarly again, young chap, and I'll lay you sprawling, so I wull. It is such as Flimflam and Co. as makes all the mischief.—Ould Clinton could'nt go on as he have done, filching acre after acre from a starving family, to put to his own overgrown farms, if it wan't for the like of such paper-kite-flying fellows as they."

Lyttleton stood with his arms folded in an attitude of thought.

"I am commissioned to say," continued Flim-flam's clerk, "that Mr. Clinton is ready to advance handsomely upon any offer that may be made you, Sir,—as, from the contiguity of several of the farms to his own estate, they are worth more to him than any other person,—and he will either rent or purchase—or if money is an object, he will lend any sum that may be wanted."

"I have been thinking," said Lyttleton, addressing himself to the Earl, and turning his back towards Flim-flam's clerk, "how soon I can visit Moreton Hall—for visit it I will, before I sign a lease or an agreement—or give one verbal promise respecting an acre of the estate. 'Tis long, I suspect, since a landlord's eyes surveyed the domains, or a landlord's ear was offered to the tenantry of Moreton Hall."

"Nobly said—nobly said!"—exclaimed the earl; "just so I should have done

myself: to say the truth, my bays are now fretting in front of the Royal Exchange—and had I been the purchaser, I should have galloped *bang-up* to the door of the Fleet Prison, made an inside passenger of old Wilson, popped Billy here into the hind boot—and rattled away the ribbons for Moreton Hall with a heart as light as my head."

"You would have done this?"—said Lyttleton, with animation.

"May I never catch the Speaker's eye, if such was not my purpose."

"Well then—As you *would* have done, my Lord, you may still do. My power in this respect is your's."

The earl stood amazed and silent.

"Will your vehicle carry another inside passenger besides the farmer?"

"Will you, Sir, be that passenger?"

"Meet me, my Lord, two hours hence at the Countess's. Your enthusiasm pleases me—I myself am an enthusiast;

but there is this difference betwixt your Lordship and me. I have nearly passed through this strange drama, called the World, retaining the same warm feelings with which you are entering it. Few men are enthusiasts at my age, though many are so at your's. It results that the union of enthusiasm and experience is a very rare match. I do not mean a boast, when I presume to say, that in me time has united these qualifications of the mind.

"If the impulses, which have operated thus far so nobly in your lordship's breast, as to hold forth the promise of rescue to oppression, or relief to distress, in the instance of this farmer's family, have yielded delight to you, that delight, if it spring from the right source, will not be lessened though another agent should effect the good which you have meditated. But we must recollect ourselves;—this corner of a public room is not the most convenien spot for this enquiry. I shall meet you a

the Countess's. Mr Crisp, you and I must repair to the workhouse, and learn when Lancaster will be able to be removed. We will then call for old White and Miss Clarendon, for whom I have obtained the protection of the Countess St. Orville. You, my Lord, will bring to us this young rust c and his father; and I will venture to assert though her ladyship's doors have been thrown open to thousands of the fashionable world, they never admitted personages more deserving of her welcome, than the guests which your Lordship and I shall have the honour to present to her from the parish workhouse, and the Fleet Prison."

"Crisp! Crisp! for heaven's sake, my dear Crisp," exclaimed Mason, who had overheard the last speech of Lyttleton, "give me the particulars of this romance—do, my dear fellow—I could fill a whole column of the Morning Post with the materials, and it would establish my claims

there for ever—Workhouse—Fleet Prison—Countess St. Orville—never, never, was there such an odd association in print before."

The attention of Crisp was however too much occupied by Lyttleton, who was giving him directions respecting Lancaster, to permit him to listen to his *paragraphic* friend.

In a few minutes the whole party quitted Garroway's; and, each on separate business bent, pursued their several ways.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCENE I.

On the right hand side of the highway, at the entrance of an extensive heath, across which lies the road to Moreton Hall and village, the eye of the passenger is attracted by the grotesque appearance of an old Escutcheon, which is suspended high in air, on creaking irons, between two poles, supporters of a horse trough.

This symbol of mortality owed its origin to the decease of Sir Roger Moreton; and having darkened, during the prescribed season, the principal window of Moreton Hall, was consigned to the lumber garret; where it would have remained for ever in obscurity, had not a mingled sentiment of gratitude and am-

bition in the breast of John Elliott, redeemed it from its dusty doom.

During a period of thirty years, John had wagged his jolly face as butler at the Hall; and so well had he husbanded his wages and his vails, that, upon the demise of his master, he found himself rich enough to purchase an Inn, the only one in the neighbourhood; and which had, till then, been known by the sign of the Golden Lion.

No sooner, however, was Elliott installed a landlord, than he petitioned the executors of his master, for the gift of the aforesaid specimen of Heraldic Art; and causing "*Quies in Cælo,*" to be translated by the village painter into "Good entertainment for Man and Horse," he raised it to its present elevation; and where the Golden Lion long had swung, now swings the symbol of John Elliott's gratitude and glory, the Moreton Arms.

It was a pleasant evening.—John was

smoking a pipe, on the bench at his door, when, turning his eye towards a hill, about half a mile distant, he discerned on its summit the barouche and four of Lord St. Orville; who, in his late visits to this part of the country, had always honoured the Moreton Arms, by making it his hotel.

"My Lord St. Orville!—Joe! Jem!—My Lord St. Orville in sight!" bellowed John.

Away went the pipe and the tankard, and every living creature under John's dominion was roused to action. The horses were served with an instant ejectment from the stable, and driven into the fields. The ostler and his helpers were rubbing their hands, already feeling, by anticipation, the tickling of his Lordship's silver in their palm. Betty, the barmaid, who had dreamt the night before that she was married to a lord, ran up stairs to adjust her ringlets and her

ribands. The gardener was dispatched to gather vegetables, and the cook to kill poultry :—the best sheets were put to air; the best china was taken down to dust; and, such was the universal bustle of preparation, that a beacon of alarm for an invading foe could scarcely have occasioned a greater sensation at the Moreton Arms, than did this signal of the approaching noble customer. Besides the necessary bustle of issuing commands to all the various subordinates of the household, John had also to undergo the fatigues of the toilette, in exchanging his every day apparel for the garb of Sunday. His best brown wig, with smooth shining curls, his new blue coat, and red plush waistcoat, now adorned the expectant landlord; who, with the ostlers and the waiters, drew up in line to receive, with usual honours, the noble Earl; while Betty, decorated with new cap and ribands,

craned her neck and strained her eye-balls from the garret window.

"But who shall speak the horrors of the scene"—when, instead of the customary *bang-up* at the Moreton Arms, the noble driver only touched his hat in return to their obsequious bows, tipped them the *go-by*, turning the corner in a style quite *prime*; and, galloping across the heath, left the whole group motionless, and dumb with disappointment.

The clowns gaped—John Elliott whistled—then, placing his fore-finger significantly to his nose, sagely remarked,

"I foresee something."

"By Goms!—my Lord have got the Hall—my life on't!" said the ostler: "for I heard Master Yates say as how it was auctioneer'd away; and we do knaw he had a woundy hankering after it."

"Blockhead!" said Elliott, "don't you know a minor is not of age; and, ergo, as the vicar says, he cannot buy estates.

Moreover, don't you know that Farmer Clinton, and Banker Flim-flam, have set their heads together to get it in their hands."

While this debate was carrying on, the attention of the landlord was arrested by the approach of Lyttleton on foot, with his trunk under his arm.

He had succeeded in placing old White and Emma Clarendon under the protection of the Countess; who had engaged to bring them in a few days to a seat of her own, which was situated about ten miles from Moreton Hall. He had left Lancaster so far recovered, that his removal to Mr. Crisp's was expected to take place in a few days; and the Apothecary had consented most joyfully to accompany him to Moreton in a post-chaise, as soon as he was able to bear the fatigue of the journey.

These arrangements being made, Lyttleton had resolved to be the passenger of Lord St. Orville.

When the carriage arrived within a short distance of the inn, he requested his Lordship to proceed to the Hall, while he stopped at John Elliott's, with whose history and character he had been made acquainted during the journey.

"What strange figure is this!" said Elliott, as Lyttleton approached.

"He's a queer looking chap," said the ostler; "I thinks he be either a player-man, or a methodistical preacher, or something of that kind."

Lyttleton walked slowly up the hill, and at length reached the door, when he stopped; and, fixing his eye upon the sign, he raised his hand in an attitude of admiration, and exclaimed,

> "To what base uses we may come, Horatio!
> Imperious Cæsar, dead, and turn'd to clay,
> Might stop a hole, to keep the wind away!"

"Aye, sure enough—he's a player!" said Elliott to the ostler, then walking to-

wards Lyttleton, "Well Friend, where are you tramping—dusty walking—what company do you belong to — is your caravan far behind ?"

"Man!" exclaimed Lyttleton, with an air and look, and tone that shook poor Elliott.—He started back a pace or two; and recovering his senses, bowed, and was beginning to apologise—but Lyttleton interrupted him with a wave of the hand—and in a manner, the mingled dignity and gentleness of which no language can do justice to — said "shew me to a room," and followed the awe-struck landlord into the house.

SCENE II.

There were two topics of discourse on which the eloquence of John Elliott was inexhaustible.—The one "The Gentry's Club," as he called it; which he had the merit of having himself formed, with the aid of

the Vicar, who had been Chaplain at the hall; and the other "The Biography of the Moreton family:" and whatever guest would condescend to listen to their loquacious landlord, soon became acquainted with every character of his club, and the history of the whole generation of the knights of Moreton.

Lyttleton had ordered coffee which he was taking in the Blue Parlour—a snug little room, from one of the windows of which, there was a view over the heath, of the distant spire of Moreton Church. He was leaning his head on his arm, apparently lost in contemplation of that object, when John Elliott entered the parlour with the county newspaper, which had just come in. Roused by the interruption, and half ashamed of his absorption of mind—he enquired—

"What spire is that across the heath?"

"The spire of Moreton Church."

"How far is it from here?"

"A shortish mile or so."

"Is Moreton a town or village?"

"A village, Sir, and one of the pleasantest in all the world.—There I was born and bred, Sir,—and there, Sir, stands the noble mansion of Moreton Hall, time out of mind the residence and estate of the ancient family of the Moretons, the last of whom, Sir Roger Moreton, I had the good fortune to serve full thirty years, as butler,—a better master, or a nobler gentleman, never trod in shoe leather."

"Sir Roger then is dead.—And pray who is his heir?"

"Why Sir, that same question has puzzled all the big-wigs in Westminster Hall, ever since the breath was out of my poor master's body.—And now at last, as I understand, it is put into chancery, where they say once within a hundred years or so, it is like to be answered."

"He left no children then?"

"None, Sir; he never married."

"Was he himself an only child?"

'He was the eldest of three children of the former Sir Roger. The second was a wild young spark, who went abroad and died in foreign parts. The youngest was the loveliest and beautifullest angel when a girl but who in her prime, when she was the joy and pride of her brother, my dear master, one day, *one fatal day*——— I beg your pardon, Sir, but yonder comes Master Yates for the club letters, and I must run and give them to him."

"Who is Master Yates? and what club do you speak of?"

"Who is Master Yates! and what club! It is plain, Sir, you don't live within a short gallop of the Moreton Arms, or you would know that the Moreton club is the pride of this county, and that Master Yates is the Secretary.—Sir, I make bold to say there is not such a club within a ride of twenty miles; a real quality club.—Give me leave to read you only a few of their

names: taking a book from a corner cupboard, and resting it on "his fair round belly, with good capon lined."

Lyttleton was not unwilling to receive information of the characters in the neighbourhood of the Hall; and he therefore humoured him "to the top of his bent."—

"Imprimis—that is to say, first and foremost," said Elliott, "stands my good and worthy friend, and patron, the Reverend Arthur Easy, President, Founder of the Club, and Vicar of Moreton. There's a man for you!—There's a pattern of what a parson ought to be—always makes himself agreeable, and every body happy where-ever he goes.—No quarrels about tithes with him—takes 'em as he can get 'em, in kind or in money—no squabbling with him about a few shillings more or less! He never turns up his nose at a man for thinking different from him about politics or religion.—Lord love you, Sir, I have seen him make Pittites and Foxites shake

hands :—aye, and Protestants and Catholics, and Church folks and Dissenters too.—Oh, he is a good creature—takes every thing all in good part—beef or mutton, roast or boiled—punch or wine, just which it happens to be—He takes it all in good part, and to say truth, a good part of all."

"It were well for the world," said Lyttleton "if all parish priests were as conciliatory as your Vicar."

"Then secondly, stands Master Yates—That's he tripping over the heath—he with the little white wig, and a long nose, that short man in black.—I put him second on the Club-book, though he's only parish clerk, because he acts as Secretary. Yates, Sir, is a very discreet man, and fit for the station : he knows his place. and says *Amen* to all ; let the left hand member say black and the right hand cry white, Yates replies to both of them, 'True—true.'—I don't blame him—they are all his superiors, and though they may think pro-

per to differ among one another, it is his duty to agree with them all.—Then he understands music, and sings catches and glees; but, after all, I believe, his chief recommendation to the gentry is, that he makes most excellent punch, and mixes a sallad better than the Vicar himself."

"Well! but landlord, you were speaking of the sister of Sir Roger.—One day, you observed, one fatal day."—

"Ah! Sir, that day—never shall I forget that day!—sweet young lady that she was till that fatal day, when—— but let me finish the club,—and I'll tell you poor Miss Augusta's story afterwards. Third on the list, Sir, stands Squire Oldways.—Hats off, if you please, when we talk of him.—"Adam Oldways, Esq. of the Manor House, member of Parliament for the county, justice of the peace, *et cætera, et cætera, et cætera*, as the Vicar says. Aye, God bless him,—where can you match him, now Moreton

Hall stands empty?—Can you shew me such another country Squire as he?—His coach—his horses—his servants—his tenants—his ale—his wife—are all old—at least as old as I am.—None of your new gimcracks at the manor.—Lord, it does my heart good, when I see old Jem, the postillion, and old Jerry, the coachman, and the four old horses, pull up the old coach to this door! Then to see the good Squire in his clothes of the same old cut,—no stinting of cloth: (why, the sleeves of his coat, and the flaps of his waistcoat, would make a modern a suit of clothes) with the shining gold buttons—and the shining silver buckles in his shoes;—then again, Sir, to see him with his gold-headed cane, and his gold-looped cocked hat in his hand, to see him walk up the room with his head bolt upright; as much as to say, I a'nt afraid of seeing any one among you—I have not sold *my* votes, nor oppressed *my* tenants;—why he looks like a king among them all, respectable and

great folks, true gentry as they are.—There's the next on the list, Mr. Flim-flam, the great banker, who owns half the land in the county, and has got all our farmers and manufacturers under his thumb; why, when you come to talk of real gentlemen and true English Squires, I only wish you could see these two together at our club! Lord, Lord, there's as much difference between Squire Oldways, and banker Flim-flam, as there is between one of your new-fashioned wine glasses, and a good old silver tankard."

"Is the Squire's estate in this neighbourhood?"

"It joins the Moreton estate, or rather it did, for more's the shame, I verily believe that great part of the Squire's lands be some how, or some how, got into hands not quite so clean as his own: which brings me to the fourth on the list, that is to say, Francis Flim-flam, Esq. This gentleman is a good speaking sort of a gentleman enough, and

spends freely I own: but yet some how one does not seem to know how to believe he can be a real gentleman.—To be sure, he *must* be a gentleman, or else our Lord Lieutenant the Duke, would not keep company with him. But then I remember his father's keeping a shop at the next market town here. The old man was a tenant of Sir Roger's, and at that time of day was glad of a year's indulgence for his rent.—His son was put 'prentice in London to a banker, and all of a sudden, one summer, old Flim-flam turned the dowlas and broad cloth out of one side of his shop, perched a little boy with a pen stuck in his ear behind the counter, wrote up 'The Bank,' upon a bit of board at the window; and began giving his customers, pieces of paper directed to his son Frank in London, which, strange as it may seem, the good-natured folks took instead of money.—After a while this sort of trade answered so well, that away went the old con-

tents of the shop altogether, and down came this very Frank, to go partners with the old man,—and so it became Flim-flam and Son, Bankers. How they did it I could never make out; but sure enough they did persuade people to bring all the money they had saved up to pay their rent, or go to market with, to their "Bank," as they called the old shop, and to take their notes of hand instead. It became quite the custom—I never could tell why, but only, I suppose, as the saying is, one fool makes many. By and by, however, folks began to smell a rat, for if a field was to be sold, or a lease fell in, who had it? Flim-flam and Son to be sure: nobody could bid against them; for, let the price be ever so high, they were always the buyers.

"Sir Roger was the first to put a spoke in this new wheel of fortune, for he set his face quite against it from the beginning. I well remember how he used to talk to the gentry and nobility, though it

be so many years ago. 'I foresee,' he used to say, 'I foresee the most calamitous effects from thus suffering pedlars and huxters to become creators of a paper currency, for the purposes of gain.'"

"He foresaw correctly," said Lyttleton, "and how did he act?"

"He discouraged it all in his power, but it was something new, Sir, and so it pleased folks in spite of all opposition;—and what made it take above everything, was, that Sir Christopher Cringer, a parliament man, who was receiver of taxes for the county, became what they call a sleeping partner, and from that time the bank has flourished to such a degree, that the oldest families in the county are obliged to bow to Frank Flim flam, who, since the old boy's death, is what they call the head of the firm."

"Dangerous crisis!" said Lyttleton, "when a skilful manœuvrer, by speculative arts, can wrest from the descendants

of an ancient nobility, the means of supporting with necessary dignity, that rank and influence in the state, which the wisdom and experience of their ancestors considered, and confirmed, as a most salutary balance between the monarch's power and the people's will! Where is that influence now? when the hereditary lords and owners of the soil behold, daily rising round them, an heterogeneous order of men, sprung from desks and counters, and shops and warehouses, to whom the legerdemain of artificial opulence has transferred that political power, and public consideration, which will ever follow the command of riches. Vain is the baronial title, and worse than mockery the ermined robe, without the effective quality of wealth; and that too gathered from revenues equally independent of kingly favour, and of sordid commerce."

This speech, though uttered in his presence, was by no means addressed to the

landlord of the Moreton Arms, but was one of those ebullitions of Lyttleton, which he frequently suffered to escape him, without considering of what order or capacity his audience was formed.—Recollecting himself, he turned to Elliott and said,

"The history of this Flim-flam, my honest host, I rank among the worst symptoms of the present times."

"Why, sir, as to the present times, I don't much understand these things myself; folks always talked of bad times, ever since I can remember."

SCENE III.

"Bad times — Bad times!" echoed the little Secretary Yates, who came skipping into the parlour:—"That's an old tune, Master Elliott, — Grumble — grumble — grumble — always grumbling —As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever will be, Amen. Bring me a tankard of ale with a toast and some sugar, a little nutmeg, and a pipe, and a paper of tobacco,

and I'll make myself as happy as I can in these bad times, instead of—grumbling—grumbling—grumbling."—

Elliott withdrew.

"You are of opinion then, Sir," said Lyttleton, "that the cause of popular complaint is nothing more than a habit of grumbling, which was in the beginning, is now, and ever will be, Amen?"

"Don't exactly say that—Sir—perhaps you think otherwise—and—I don't wish to be rude—But I ask pardon.—May I beg to know, with whom I have the honour to converse?"

Anxious to glean all the local knowledge he could, he relaxed still further from his usual dignity, and said: "My name is Lyttleton—Sir—I am a stranger here;—my destination is Moreton Hall, which, I understand, lies across the heath."

"That small spire—Sir—is the church, which nearly adjoins the Hall.—My name is Yates, Sir; and in that church I have

officiated in the under desk, some five and twenty years, or more.—As you are going to the Hall, perhaps you know the new purchaser of the estate, Sir.—We, in these parts, have been anxious to ascertain our new lord;—but we all suppose old Clinton, to whom money is no object, must be the man."

"No, Sir, old Clinton is not the man—but one to whom, on such an occasion, money would have been indeed no object."—Lyttleton, thrown off his guard, uttered these words with dignity and feeling.

The little clerk shrunk within himself, and drew the chair on which he sat some paces further from the speaker.

"Perhaps, then, Sir, you are acquainted with the nobleman or gentleman, who—"

SCENE IV.

At this instant, Elliott returned with the tankard and toast; and was followed by no less a personage than the Rev. Arthur Easy himself.

The clerk was on his legs in an instant, bowing most profoundly to the Vicar.

" Good evening, Master Yates," said the Vicar; and bowing to Lyttleton, he took his seat.—

Elliott, according to custom, handed him the county-paper, while Betty brought him his usual refection of a tumbler of wine and water.

" Come, Yates,—here's good news for us—and it deserves a hearty toast.—" Our new Lord; health and happiness to him, with many blessings, for this first proof of his benevolent heart.—Lord St. Orville—Here's Lord St. Orville."

Lyttleton with difficulty repressed a smile.

" What, his Lordship has got it then? That accounts for his driving by in such a hurry," said Elliott.

" Here's my Lord St. Orville, Mr. Easy, with all my heart;" said the clerk, raising the tankard to his lips; and having honoured the name by a hearty draught, con-

tinued—"I hope he will bring comfort and peace among us all."

"To judge of the future by the beginning, doubtless he will," said the Vicar. "Did not you see, Landlord, who were the inside passengers while he drove on the box?"

"No, 'faith, your reverence; for to say truth, I was so disappointed, at his passing the house, and giving the go-by to the Moreton Arms, that I did not notice any one else."

"Then let me tell you.—You know the story of Flim-flam and Clinton's oppression of farmer Willis?"

"To be sure, your reverence—the whole village was in tears when Clinton employed lawyer Flint to put a distress into the farm, and followed Farmer Willis up to London with his malice, and thrust him in jail at so many miles distance from his poor old dame and children."

"Well then, perhaps you did not

know, that when Lord St. Orville was here last, he behaved so kindly, and talked so condescendingly to all the tenants, that Bill Willis determined to go up to London to try to get his Lordship to interfere with Clinton for his father.—He tramped all the way there on foot—but now this moment, as I passed, who should I see in the inside of this good young lord's carriage, but old Willis and his son.—God Almighty return to his Lordship's heart, in peace and joy unspeakable, the happiness which he will convey to the family of poor Willis!"

Lyttleton, who had listened with tears but half suppressed, to the good clergyman, now started as from a reverie—and snatching his hand, exclaimed,—"*You* cannot be a hypocrite — *you* can have no interest to practise on the chords of a heart you know not; therefore, reverend Sir, let me clasp your hand; for such a heart as your's has magnetism's power upon mine."

The reply of Mr. Easy was an almost bashful acknowledgment of what he termed an undeserved honour.—As he concluded it, the vehicle of Lord St. Orville returned in sight. The Vicar, the Clerk, and the Landlord, all sprang with surprise towards the window.—

"The carriage comes for me," said Lyttleton. "Pardon me, that even for a moment, I have worn a mask—Lord St. Orville merits the tribute you have paid to his benevolence; but he is not owner of this estate.—Moreton Hall and its domains are mine."

The Vicar bowed—the Clerk skipped backwards — the Landlord dropped his hands and seemed a statue—and wonder seized them all.

"To you, worthy Sir"—continued Lyttleton, addressing Mr. Easy,—"I beg leave to introduce myself. I am called Lyttleton, and I shall derive a heartfelt gratification if I can prevail with you to honour Moreton Hall, by once more gracing its table

with the presence of a genuine Christian Chaplain.—Wealth, you well know, has the power of magic ; I have a purse ample as your benevolence can wish ; and I am confident that in investing you therewith, form a *good* Magician.—Let us combat these Clintons and Flim-flams, with their own weapons, and they shall find that, however powerful the magic of which they are the masters, the spirit of benevolence shall encounter it with success."

" Landlord," turning to Elliott, " your hand — You have done honour to the Moreton Arms—You must come to the Hall and go over the stories of old times as you point out old spots and places to me.—The story of Augusta, and all the family history I must be made acquainted with—bring your club-book with you, and we will finish the list—and by the influence of your worthy Founder here, I hope for the pleasure of being enrolled a member, that I may judge for myself

between "the wine glass and the silver tankard."

The Vicar's heart glowed, and John Elliott's bounced—but Master Yates popped his nose forward in vain.—There was something of character in each of the former; which could not escape the discrimination of Lyttleton; but in the non-entity of mind which the Secretary betrayed, there was nothing to attract his applause or his censure, and he withdrew without noticing the jerking bows, that were aimed at his attention.

The vehicle of St. Orville conveyed to Moreton Hall its new Lord, and the scene that had just passed was rapidly recounted from gossip to gossip throughout the whole hamlet of Moreton.

CHAPTER IX.

SCENE I.

ONE of the best of the few brick houses in the village of Moreton, belonged, as is the case in most villages and towns, to the lawyer. A fore court, with a gaudy plantation of tulips, pinks, and sun-flowers, a carriage sweep with a swing gate at each end, a green-painted door, a brass knocker, and a brass plate, with Mr. FLINT in large letters engraved thereon, were the outward and visible signs of the greatness and grandeur of this man of law. The interior was no less striking. One of the parlours was fitted up as an office for the clerk or occasional clerks of the great man; and the other as a state apartment, or hall of audience, where this village ora-

cle received the simple worshippers of his mysterious power.

In the former, besides the desk and stools, were sundry *insignia legalia*, calculated to inspire awe and terror. Over the fire place was an engraving, on a large scale, framed and glazed, of a front view of the County gaol, whose grated windows, and iron doors, ornamented with ponderous fetters, chains, and knotted scourges were admirably adapted to convey to the mind of the rustic clients, who awaited their turn of admission to the presence, the importance of that legal guide, who was capable of conducting them either to or from the gates of such a mansion.

On each side of this cheering object were appropriately hung scores of long slips of parchment, with bits of red wax at their ends, which had been used as billets upon this mansion, and are vulgarly known by the name of writs. Tables of terms and returns — sittings in Lincoln's inn — the

circuits of the Judges—a list of gentlemen in the commission of the peace—notices of quarter sessions, and days of appeal—with various other formulæ, bespoke the quality of Mr. Flint's important avocation: and its quantity was meant to be imaged by piles of deal boxes, which, though as empty as those on the shelves of Romeo's Apothecary, were artfully painted, 'Letters, No. 1 to 20 —Deeds—Bonds—Leases—Papers, 1770 to 1812:'—while some of larger size bore the names of several noblemen and other landed proprietors in the country, all intended as broad hints, of the great business and connections of Mr. Flint.

In the back parlour, the most imposing object was Lawyer Flint himself.—He was a man of large stature; lusty, but well proportioned, with a countenance composed of the most flexible features, frowning or conciliating at his pleasure.—His constant dress, was a coat of fine black cloth—silk waistcoat, breeches, and stockings—high shoes with

silver oval buckles—a tail wig, well powdered with two curls at each ear—a fine full frill at his bosom, and long ruffles at his wrists — and six out of eight fingers ornamented with diamond and gold rings.

His high stuffed back chair, covered with red Morocco leather and ornamented with gold nails, appeared in the eyes of the inhabitants of Moreton a throne, which made a King of him who filled it; while the knowledge, which they imagined he must have gathered from the huge volume of the "Statutes at large," and a hundred other books ranged round the room, magnified him in their conception to a God!

Superadded to these impressions on their simple minds, was another, at least as powerful in favour of Mr. Flint — he was the law agent of Mr. Flim-flam; whose portrait, hanging over the fire place in this room, reminded almost every one who entered it, of rent-day in the person of their landlord.

The morning after the arrival of Lyttleton at Moreton Hall, Mr. Flint was in this room, in the act of looking over some papers relative to the affairs of Farmer Wilson, whom he had prosecuted at the suit of Mr. Clinton, when the name of Mr. Lyttleton was announced. Flint started, and the red tape he was tying round a bundle of letters slipped from his trembling fingers.

Why does he tremble at the mention of a name?

Last night Farmer Wilson had been with him, and had described to him the character and conduct of Lyttleton, by whose bounty he had been liberated from prison, and restored to his family: he also by his orders informed him, that Lyttleton himself would wait on him in the morning to hear from his own lips the story of the law-suit that had ruined him. The fame of Lyttleton's wealth had also, through Flim-flam and Clinton, reached his ears;

and no one knew better than Mr. Flint the magic power of wealth in effecting good, or perpetrating evil.

Lyttleton entered—

The lawyer put on his best face. — Every effort to conciliate the good opinion of the new Lord of the Manor was practiced; and such an air, and speech, and manner, were assumed by Mr. Flint, as, without subjecting him to the imputation of obsequiousness, would have gained him the imputation of "a most obliging civil gentleman," or "a monstrous good sort of creature," with nine-tenths of mankind.

The man, however, before whom he now exhibited himself, was one to whose observation surfaces of characters were nothing more than varnish, which he made it his invariable practice to remove, before he formed his estimate of their value.— Politeness he generally returned with a corresponding politeness; and therefore met

the complimentary ceremonies of Mr. Flint with a suavity of manner, that ill agreed with the Timon-like roughness which he had been taught to anticipate by the clerk, who had met with so mortifying a repulse at Garraway's.

They were seated:—Lyttleton, having placed himself near the writing-table, leaned his elbow on it; and was silent for a minute, while his eye accidentally rested on the portrait over the chimney.

Flint, supposing that he was contemplating the phiz of his chief client and great patron, observed—

"That is esteemed a very fine painting, Sir; I gave Lawrence fifty guineas for it. It was in the exhibition a few years ago, and very highly admired as a mere work of art;—but the likeness is astonishing—some of the clowns who come here are positively ready to bow to their landlord."

Lyttleton. "Is it the portrait of Squire Oldways then?

Flint. "Oh! bless me—no—ha! ha! ha! —Squire Oldways would as soon stand in the pillory, as wear his hair combed without powder; a blue frock coat, white waistcoat, and buskins—O dear! no, Sir,—a character of quite another cut—It is Flim-flam, the great banker; you have no doubt heard of him. He is immensely rich—immensely rich.

Lyttleton. "I have heard he is rich—yet, his father was a country shopkeeper."

Flint. "What signifies what a man's father was, who can buy up the fathers of all the old families in the county? Sir, I can assure you, that Oldways himself, one of the last to knuckle under, would not be sorry if my wealthy patron was to propose his son for Miss Oldways—It was thought of at one time; but I rather think, between you and me, that a certain heiress of the first notoriety, who is at a certain watering-place not a hundred

miles from this village, has given a degree of encouragement to a certain bold dashing young fellow I know, which has put to the blush certain Ducal, not to say Royal rivals—but I can say nothing at present; the thing is known only to myself and the family, and I beg you will think nothing of what I have hinted.—But without the immense additions of the rich Miss Alton's fortune, you will find the Flim-flam, the wealthiest, and of course most respectable family in these parts: and that the Old-ways, the Moretons, and the Beaumonts, that once had the sway in the county, are no more thought of now than a Lord Mayor of London on the eighth of November: — men and things are quite different in England, Sir, to what they were forty years ago.

Lyttleton. "They are indeed, Mr. Flint; or I should not have witnessed Moreton Hall and estate going, going, a-going, to the best bidder at a public auction.

Flint. "One almost wonders that the ghosts of the Moretons did not rise at the tap of the auctioneer's hammer."

Lyttleton. "'He jests at scars, who never felt a wound'—the mushroom can have no fellow feeling with the oak."

Flint. "Hem — hem — meant nothing offensive."

Lyttleton. "Nor have you offended. To me, the mushroom and the oak are alike objects of contemplation,—and though I may prefer the grandeur of the one, why should I take offence at the insignificance of the other? Nature has decreed that they should both exist; and it is neither the fault of the latter that it is the thing of an hour, nor the merit of the former that it exists for ages. Sir, we are not agents in our own formation, and, therefore, nor shame nor glory can attach to accidents of birth and station; but being somewhere placed, we know not how—our deeds, and not our titles, must proclaim us.

Flint. "Very true—very just, Sir—nothing can be more true.—And I think, really, that people begin to look at things now-a-days, through a juster medium. It is not, now, so much, what is such a one's title? but, what is he worth? The distinctions of rank are gradually losing their influence, and the ascendancy of wealth daily acquires new homage. I am sure that there is not a plough-boy in this village, or twenty miles round, who does not feel more reverence for banker Flimflam, than for the Duke of Leanlands."

Lyttleton. "Your remark may be very true—but if you mean it as a parallel to mine, I must inform you it is a curve.—With the reverence of a clown for the landlord of his father, whether Duke or Banker, I by no means find fault. I only hope that the feeling you so designate, is rightly compounded of respect and love—that it is the offspring of gratitude for benefits bestowed; and not the effect of fear begotten by tyranny and oppression.

Pray, Sir, do you know the family of Farmer Wilson."

Flint (*confused*). "Farmer Wilson!—did you say Wilson—do I know—did you say Wilson—Oh! yes—certainly.—Very indifferent character, I am sorry to say."

Lyttleton. "Poor—I suppose?"

Flint. "Beggarly—starving—wouldn't get credit within ten miles, for as many pounds."

Lyttleton. "Their forefathers, I believe, were not so poor. Is their present condition the consequence of imprudence, or misfortune?"

Flint. "Imprudence is too soft a word, Sir.—Old Wilson is one of the worst characters I ever had to deal with."

Lyttleton. "Indeed!—Is he a drunkard?"

Flint. "No—I don't think he drinks hard."

Lyttleton. "A lazy fellow, perhaps?"

Flint. "No—you can't call him lazy."

Lyttleton. "Is he a bad husband, a bad father, or a quarrelsome neighbour?"

Flint. "No—the man is fond of his wife and children, and contrives to be on civil terms with his neighbours."

Lyttleton. "A factious, discontented, or disloyal subject?"

Flint. "No—I never heard him charged with any thing of that sort."

Lyttleton. "Extravagant, perhaps, or speculative—some transactions in his dealings not quite so honest as they should be—eh?—

Flint. "Upon my word, I can't say that of the man; I never heard his integrity called in question.

Lyttleton. "Positively, then, you puzzle me to guess of what base qualities the bad character of the farmer is composed. You do not deny that he is sober, industrious, a good husband and good father, a loyal subject, and an honest farmer;—how can I conceive such a man to merit your

assertion—that he is one of the worst characters you ever had to deal with?"

During the last speech of Lyttleton, Mr. Flint had sat rather uneasily in his chair of state; he had stroked down one ruffle, and then the other, and over and over again put the plaits of his frill in order. He found himself in a situation to which he was little accustomed; and his temper had to sustain a trial to which it was very rarely exposed. Aware, however, of the importance of obtaining, if possible, the good opinion of Lyttleton, his discretion triumphed over his anger, and he endeavoured to conceal the chagrin which this catechism had occasioned.

He rose from his seat, and, walking up and down the room, still fingering his ruffles and frill, he replied—

"Sir—Mr. Lyttleton—it would ill become me to take up your time with a long history of village contests, squab-

bles, and broils;—and really, Sir, without going into a detail of matters of this sort, I cannot exactly explain what I mean about Farmer Wilson, who, though he is certainly all that you have described, is, nevertheless, one of the most unpleasant, troublesome,—and—and—and—self-willed fellows, I ever had to handle."

Lyttleton. "So, so—that, then, is his crime—self-willed!—Oh! the rude varlet's self-willed!—What, one of your old school of English farmers!—The fellow has not suppleness about him—eh!—I warrant me now, that he would set himself to judge of right and wrong—pretend to know when he obeys, and when he breaks the laws—struts on his freehold as if he were not accountable to his wealthier neighbour for his air and gait—and, fancying himself protected by the charters, for which his fathers bled, from tyranny's caprice, and from oppres-

sion's grasp—pays no more homage to lords or lawyers, than mere good manners would demand from you or me.—Why, who can wonder such a knave is poor?—I understand the debt for which he was imprisoned, amounted to no less a sum than fifteen hundred pounds, of which, no doubt, the moiety at least was brought upon his shoulders by the arm of law, in beating down the stubborn opposition resulting from his self-willed views of justice.—Was it not so?"

Mr. Flint was not unconscious of the irony of Lyttleton's address. It was not to his purpose, however, to acknowledge it, and he framed his reply accordingly.

Flint. "It is really painful; (whatever the world in general may suppose,) it is really painful to the profession, to witness the extremities of trouble and expence, to which the obstinacy and self will of individuals will lead them. In this instance, the cause of contention

did not involve property to the amount of a hundred pounds. You must know that Mr. Flim-flam has expended above ten thousand pounds, in erecting a villa here, and embellishing it with pleasure grounds, which every one acknowledges deserve to be ranked among the *chef d'œuvres* of the most celebrated of rural architects. But, Sir, the whole effect would have been marred, and the taste and labour of that inimitable designer thrown away, if this obstinate Wilson had succeeded in his suit."

"How so, pray?"—

"Why, Sir, in order to enrich a view from the back of the villa, the artist had cut off a rivulet, which watered a meadow of Wilson's, called Oak Acre, from a very ancient oak, that stood in the centre of it; and diverted it into a part of Mr. Flim-flam's plantation.

Lyttleton. "Was it done without Wilson's consent?"

Flint. "I must confess, without his consent, and therefore it was what we call a wrong in law, and it ought not to have been done; but when it was done, you know, Sir, it was too late to ask leave. However, Mr. Flim-flam did all that a gentleman in his circumstances could do. He offered any reasonable pecuniary recompence: no, nothing would please the self-will of Master Wilson, but the turning back the rivulet into its former channel—which would have destroyed the whole effect of the view; and besides, was a disgrace which Mr. Flim-flam's pride would not submit to."

Lyttleton. "Go on, Sir; I grow impatient!"

Flint. "In short, Wilson was headstrong enough to bring his action. It was my duty to defend it as well as I could—and I may speak to you as a man of the world, Mr. Lyttleton:—aware that we had no defence in law, the only

game, for my client, was to hold out threats of delay and expense.—All to no purpose,—Obstinate beyond all precedent, this would be village Hampden — neglected his business, sold his crops at a loss, and even contracted debts to carry on the suit. His former neighbour, old Mr. Clinton, bought up a large portion of those debts: and no sooner had him in his power, than he turned his wife and family out of the farm, and sent him to goal."

Lyttleton. "And who was Clinton's Lawyer?"

Flint. "I was employed by Clinton; and, however much it pained me, I was, you know, compelled to follow the directions of my client; and acting thus, in both suits, against this foiled farmer, it may appear, that what my duty compelled me to do, in this obstinate man's affairs, was cruel tyranny. You, Sir,

have come forward in his behalf, doubtless with good intentions; but you must be aware, that it is madness for such a ruined wretch as he to contend with Flim-flam, who has in his own hands, as we may say, the creation of money. Such, Sir, is the history of this Wilson. Did you ever hear of such an obstinate and self-devoted victim?"

Lyttleton. "Victim!—no—he is not yet sacrificed—nor shall he be. Great as is the power of Flim flam's wealth, he may yet be taught that it is not omnipotent. Sir, your most obedient: — the purpose of my visit is thus far accomplished; — you have given me a clue, which it will be my future business to unravel. In the interim, as a guide to your own future conduct, I apprise you, not as a boast, but as a caution, that the owner of Moreton Hall considers himself Lord of the Manor of Moreton; that he has the command of ten times

the wealth of Mr. Flim-flam, ten times told;—and, sensible of the power which in this country, and in these times, that command invests in him, he ventures without much temerity to throw his gauntlet to this mighty modern *Crœsus:* and be you, Sir, if you will, the herald of his proclamation. In every act of Mr. Flim-flam, which has for its object the good of his country, or the welfare of his fellow creatures, he must expect to find in Lyttleton a zealous and ambitious rival; and in every attempt to debase, enslave, or injure them, let him prepare to meet in that same Lyttleton, an antagonist, whose means and energies for such a combat, are so immeasurably superior to his, that mercy prompts this previous display of the power, which henceforth justice wields in and around the domains of Moreton."

SCENE II.

Mr. Flint felt like a criminal reprieved, when he heard the door close after Lyttleton!

"What strange people there are in the world!" said he to himself—"Who would have dreamt that such a romantic champion as this would start up for the Wilsons?" — But after all it may be mere bluster—nobody knows who he is, or what he is — Lord of the Manor of Moreton he undoubtedly is, by possessing the Hall—but then as to his command of "ten times the wealth of Flim-flam ten times told!" pooh, stuff—impossible —for he has not got a Bank of his own." I have been frightened at a shadow!— And yet, he must be rich—rich enough at least to bring us into chancery!— Curse that court of chancery—I hate the very thought of it:—I can never get through with a business where those abo-

minable imps of enquiry, masters in chancery, start up like blue devils upon the imagination !—What's that !"

It was a tap at the door which alarmed him.

" Who's there?"

" *Mee,*" exclaimed a squeaking small voice.

" Come in."

SCENE III.

There entered a tall lean figure, with a face and garb that would have admirably suited the tub of a methodist preacher, in ancient Moor-fields.—It was Saunders, the confidential fag of Mr. Flint—This miserable creature was so completely in the power of Flint, that he scarcely dared to draw the common air into his hollow cheeks, without his previous approbation.

Flint. " What do you want?"

Saunders. "Several people are waiting."

Flint. "Who are they."

Saunders. "There's Stokes the blind miller—come again to know if Mr. Flim-flam will do any thing for him: for since the water has been turned into the park, the mill stopped and he is starving."

Flint. "Starving, is he? why didn't he make Wilson submit then! and in that case Mr. Flim-flam would not have let him starve;—in some way or another he would have set his mill a-going. But he is as self-willed as his son-in-law, so let him starve for his folly.

Saunders. "Might I be so bold as to speak my thoughts on what I overheard the miller say to Master Yates, who is also waiting, I should say, I fear much trouble will be brought upon you, Sir, by this new Lord of the Manor, who was here just now; for blind Stokes told Yates, that Wilson told him, that he

means to turn the whole hamlet topsy-turvy."

Flint. " Look ye, Saunders! you'd better not provoke me."

Saunders, " Me!—the Lord forbid it! —I only speak for your warning, Sir."

Flint. " Saunders you know who I am, and you know what you are."

Saunders. " Most surely, Sir, I do—I know my life is in your power."

Flint. " Cease your croaking, then, you lean old raven, or I'll hang you yet.—Go and send Yates to me, and tell that blind old miller to seek redress of Wilson; or his romantic friend and deliverer."

Saunders " I fear much he will do so."

Flint. " Croaking again — Beware!" Away crawled the trembling Saunders, inwardly cursing the fates, that fifty years ago bound him apprentice to a law stationer in London—but for which

he never would have been tempted to forge a will!

SCENE IV.

"So, Master Yates," said Flint, as the Parish Clerk entered—"here's a pretty revolution we are threatened with! Pray do you know any thing about this queer fellow, who has got Moreton Hall—and comes to set himself up as a sort of Don Quixotte among us?"

Yates. "Hem! hem! To say truth, Mr. Flint, I happen to know a good deal. This morning's post brought me a letter from London as long as a sermon;— and all about this strange old gentleman."

Flint. "Pray take a chair, Master Yates—pray be seated—How is it you haven't looked in upon me lately?—We used to be more neighbourly—Do pray sit down"—(ringing the bell and opening the door)—"Saunders! Saunders—

Let those good people that are waiting, know that I can't see one of them this morning:—And, Saunders, tell Mrs. Hawkins to bring up the tray with the cold chicken and ham; and, do you hear, draw a little ale—and mind I am at home to none but the Squire or his family."

The appearance of a tankard of the Lawyer's best ale, with the other contents of the butler's tray, brought dimples in the cheeks of the little clerk, and put his lips in a smiling position. He picked the chicken, he quaffed the ale, and then he began to talk;—for not all the probing powers of Garrow himself, transcendant as they proverbially are, could have extracted from the lips of Yates, half so much as the Lawyer's potent ale.

Flint. "And so some friend of your's in London knows this Lyttleton?"

Yates. "Sir, you shall hear.—You must remember my poor dear mother, Mr. Flint?"

Flint. "Remember Mrs. Yates? Oh, very well indeed. A very worthy woman; she used to live in one of that row of pretty cottages at the corner of the green, which were pulled down last spring, when Mr. Flim-flam's rural architect wanted the space to erect a new ruin upon—I remember her very well—and you had a sister, a very pretty girl, who used to live with her."

Yates. "The very same. Well, Sir,—Here's my hearty service to you—most excellent ale, indeed! You must know, Sir, Sister Susan, after my poor mother's death, went up to London, married an upholsterer of the name of Mason, and does very well in the world; but as every body has their troubles, so have Mr. and Mrs. Mason. They have several children, but my sister's pride was her eldest boy, who was a fine infant at the birth. I was in London that year, and stood godfather—he grew up a lad of parts, and is

now, as I understand, a very handsome young man—but, Sir, with all their pains, they could never make him buckle to business; having been flattered about his talents as a scholar, and all that, it seems that he turns up his nose at his father's business, and supports himself, as he styles it, by his pen. Sister Mason reckoned on his being Lord Mayor, but it seems his hobby is scribbling in newspapers, and picking up gossip about great folks. But his own letter shall speak for him.

"DEAR UNCLE,

"It is not without a fear, that you will attribute my present letter to mere selfishness, that after so long a silence I now address you; as I am sensible too long a time has elapsed since my last, which acquainted you with the good state of health of my mother and father, and all the family; with my mother's best thanks, which she begs I'll repeat for the turkey and chine, and the

basket of apples.—I beg leave to assure you, my dear uncle, that your kind advice about sticking to some trade or other for a permanent livelihood, I take very kindly; but you can have no just idea of the prospects, which my present pursuits hold out to me, because from your retired situation you must be altogether unacquainted with the nature of my avocation, and the immense fortunes which have been made by persons in the same line. I do not wonder that you should suppose a writer, or, as you call it, a scribbler in a newspaper, is a low character, to which even an upholsterer's journeyman is superior; but that's your mistake, as I trust I shall have it in my power to convince you, when I see you; which I expect will be in a few days after the receipt of this letter; if you will confer the obligation upon me of receiving me as your occasional guest for a few months. Again I must express

my fears of being deemed selfish even in this intention; as I candidly acknowledge the purpose of the visit, is to avail myself of an opportunity which I conceive I can turn to my own great advantage.

"But to the point. Before this reaches your hands, there will have arrived at Moreton Hall, a very singular gentleman, who has purchased the estate and manor of Moreton; he will be accompanied by the young Earl of St. Orville, brother-in-law to the celebrated Countess St. Orville, whose name you must often see in our London newspapers, as one of the leaders of what is styled '*the haut-ton.*' The minor St. Orville, for his lordship is not yet of age, is extremely well liked by the town; though rather eccentric in his manner; and I have been so fortunate as to meet with many flattering attentions from his lordship, in return for some trifling

newspaper civilities which, in the way of my profession, I have had the power of bestowing.

"The last interview I had with his lordship, was at Garraway's coffee-house, on the morning of the sale of the Moreton estate.—I had turned in there, to learn what was going on among the auctioneers, when my particular attention was excited by the appearance of a stranger, whose peculiar dress, and dignity of appearance and deportment, were exceedingly striking.—To my surprise I found that the stranger was in company with a person of the name of Crisp, an apothecary; I should have said, an obscure apothecary; but that he is the proprietor of a cosmetic which makes his name, through the medium of the press, sufficiently public — indeed, our acquaintance arose from my being introduced to him by a friend, to draw up his

advertisements.—My surprise was increased, and my curiosity excited when I came further to learn from Crisp, that this stranger was an inmate of St. Orville House; a guest to the celebrated Countess St. Orville.—Higher still did my surprise, and curiosity rise, when soon afterwards, I found him a competitor against the minor St. Orville, for the Moreton Hall estate; and I was worked up to a pitch of absolute frenzy of curiosity, when I saw St. Orville, Crisp, and this Mr. Lyttleton, leave the room together, after the estate had been knocked down to the latter; and overheard part of a conversation, that included the heterogeneous topics of 'workhouse, Fleet prison, St. Orville house, and a visit to Moreton Hall.'—From that hour to this, I have not relaxed in my efforts to unveil the meaning of this odd combination, and the result of my enquiring labours is, my dear uncle—that by your

kind assistance I shall make my fortune by the affair! How it is to be done, and what it all means, I will explain when I see you. Suffice it at present that I put you in possession of the following facts: Among a number of acquaintances to which my profession, as a writer for the papers, and daily critic of Plays and Players, of Books and Authors, of Painters and Paintings, and Sculpture and Sculptors, introduced me, one of the most interesting of all the characters I ever met with, was a young gentleman of the name of Lancaster. This person, if ever there was such a thing, was, I pronounce it, a true genius—and like most of the genii tribe, he thought too little, or rather thought not at all, of the means of existing in this eating and drinking world. In plain words, he out-ran the Constable—got deeply in debt—was attacked by sickness, confined to his bed; was abandoned by his relations, deserted

by his friends and acquaintance, and at last consigned to the workhouse by his pitiless landlord, on the very day that this eccentric Mr. Lyttleton arrived in England, and hired apartments at the very house from which Lancaster was an outcast!—Now comes the marvellous part of the story. The stranger learns the situation of Lancaster—flies after him to the workhouse—and there meets a pretty girl, an inmate of the house where Lancaster lodged; who was so deeply in love with him, that she could not resist following him to that abode of the unfortunate and wretched.—He instantly takes this young female under his protection;—and not satisfied with that eccentricity, actually brings away with him also the old paralytic porter of the workhouse, who had told him some pathetic tale of woe; and had taken it in his head to fancy a likeness between the pretty girl

who followed Lancaster, and a daughter of his own, who had been dead many years. As if this was not eccentric enough—and as if this strange mortal had been bent upon achieving miracles; he has actually prevailed upon the celebrated St. Orville, herself, a lady of the highest fashion, to receive as part of her household this old porter of the workhouse gate, and this pretty milliner from Cheapside! St. Orville, who is almostas eccentric as he, has carried off from the Fleet Prison, some old farmer belonging to your place, and I learn they mean to play the very devil with the lawyer who put him in confinement.

Flint. "Read that again, if you please—*mean to play the very devil!*"

Yates. "Yes, those are the words, 'mean to play the very devil with the lawyer who put him in confinement.'"

Flint. "Do they so?—then the devil

must assist them,—Go on Sir,—This is an interesting piece of news."

Yates. (reading), "Having picked up thus much of the proceedings of this Lyttleton, I paid a visit to Crisp, from whom I learned that in a few days Lancaster and he are to follow him to Moreton Hall.—Already is the Countess of St. Orville, with her new *protegée* on the wing for Beaumont Hall; and thus, you perceive, in less than a week, all these characters will be within ten miles of the village of Moreton.—Well, and now I think I hear you say—What has all this to do with any opportunity that my mad nephew can turn to great advantage?—Now then, uncle, for the secret—Don't you know that within ten miles of Moreton, and not one from Beaumont Hall, there is a new and rising watering place, created, as it were, by magic, out of a few fishing huts, by the power and wealth of a certain rich banker of

your county?—And don't you know that at this season of the year all the fashionable world are flying from this metropolis, as if the plague had broken out; and further, don't you know that several of the richest unmarried heiresses in the empire, have fixed upon this new watering place as their retreat for the summer; and that, therefore, for that, and other reasons, as well as its novelty, Flimflamton will be the most thronged with Fashionables, of all the marine refuges of fashion?—Well, but what's that to you, you say. Now, here comes the key to this conundrum of a letter.—I am employed by the proprietors of two of the leading prints to cater for that department of their journals, which custom has made an indispensable branch of a newspaper—which records the *progresses* of the fashionable world.—In winter this task is easily performed; the Opera,—the Parks—the Theatres—Routs—Gala

—Fetes—Courts—Levees—Clubs—Parliaments—and Masquerades—furnish ample materials to the industrious gleaner; but *Summer* Fashionable News is not so easily collected — Margate is too hackniéd to furnish a single new paragraph; Brighton is,—not as it has been—many other places once in vogue are gone by; but Flimflamton will be perfectly new, for this season at least. The history of the Flim-flams will be highly useful. You must get their pedigree if possible—Do you think the banker himself is *comeatable*—Would he patronise a Flimflamton Guide with a dashing dedication to himself—is there any rival interest that the press might attack—is Flimflam liberal—is his agent a man of sense and generosity ?"

Flint. "Upon my word, master Yates, but this Nephew of yours is a most impudent dog—no fool, though, it must be owned; I should like to see the fellow,

and talk to him; his letter has opened some views worth further looking into—Do you expect him at Moreton?"

Yates. "Yes,—He has downright quartered himself upon me for the Summer, as you shall hear, in the conclusion of his confounded long letter.

(Reading.) "To conclude, my dear uncle, unless you forbid me within the period of two posts, I shall take a place in the mail, and trouble you with myself, and a small trunk, for the Summer—as your village is just an easy distance from Flim-flamton; and will be a sort of watch-tower from whence I may reconnoitre the motions of the people at Moreton Hall—and at Beaumont Hall, as well as the numerous Fashionables at their new dipping place. One of my projects is to obtain the patronage of the mysterious Lyttleton, through the means of Lancaster. Money is no object to him,

and if I can but persuade him to go into a scheme of a Newspaper, which I have long had in contemplation, I shall make an immense fortune; perhaps be gazetted in some future batch of baronets, or at least, retire as justice of the peace, and convince my good uncle, that in this publishing and suppressing age, to command the press is a readier way to wealth, than any trade to which I could have been apprenticed. Between Lyttleton and Flim-flam, I shall, however, decide upon a nearer view, and close acquaintance; and after you, my dear uncle, shall have imparted your advice personally to

affectionate Ne

id my newsmongery. aster Yates, I take this confidence most kindly of you.—Come, taste the ale again. With respect to this Lyttleton, whatever

be his wealth; I think we shall out weigh him:—but, at all events, my worthy friend, I enlist your nephew on our side. —That lease of your's whi... ...arter, shall be renewe... ...r expense, and Mr. Flim-flam ... some employment for Mr. Mason at Flim-flamton, worthy of his ...

By this time the lawyer ... master Yates a ... ... with ... treated h... to notice at the Moreton Arms ... th... vicar, and even the humble landlord were honoured with his ...ions of the people at ... "Sir,—Mr ... nd at Beaumont Hall ... s more numerous Fashionables at th... of this place. One of my projects ... patronage of the ... that a... Hall, or the ... through the me... ness that shall convince them all I ... determined man.

marked attention

plead—said Yates

I am decided!

Flim-flam—I sh...

...Moreton Hall

...nor House,