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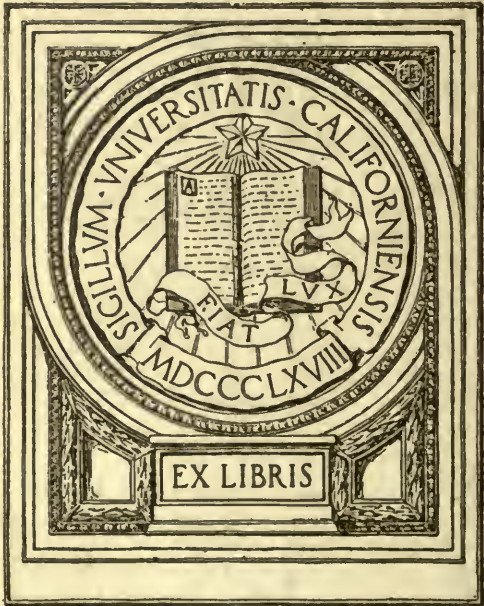
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THE  
S T O R Y  
OF A  
ROYAL FAVOURITE.

BY  
MRS. GORE.

“No scandal about Queen Elizabeth I hope.”  
CRITIC.

IN THREE VOLUMES:

VOL. III.

LONDON:  
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,  
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MDCCCXLV.

THE STORY

ROYAL FAVORITE

CHAPTER I

A young man of noble birth, who had been educated at one of the universities of Great Britain, and who had spent some years in the study of the law, had just returned to his native country, and was about to enter upon the study of the law at the Inner Temple.

His father, who was a nobleman of high rank, had been one of the most distinguished statesmen of his country, and had been twice Prime Minister of Great Britain. He had a large family, and the young man was the eldest son.

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THE STORY  
OF A  
ROYAL FAVOURITE.

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CHAPTER I.

*L' alte non temo, e l' humili non sdegno.*

TASSO.

I ABHOR stage-effect;—a thing happily exploded in Great Britain, unless in the monthly magazines and the national theatre called Sadler's Wells.

Eschewing Jenkinsism, therefore, or Willisism, or any other literary schism, I proceed to state as prosaically as might satisfy the requirements of Mr. Coroner Wakley,

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that, though Maurice was the first to insist on the police being sent for, he was equally prompt in lamenting, like Macbeth, that

The expedition of his violent love

Outran the pauser, Reason,

the moment the *procuratore fiscale*, having carefully examined the body, and surveyed the fearful gash in the throat, the manifest cause of poor Lucy's death, pronounced it—oh! heavy hour!—to be of her own infliction.

She had no enemies. No robbery had taken place. Not a single object in the chamber was disturbed. The nature of the wound and direction in which the long-bladed penknife with which it was inflicted was found upon the bed, left not a doubt that such was the case. And though the poor girl's conduct throughout the preceding day and up to the last minute in which she fulfilled her duties to the duchess and was seen by her fellow-servants, appeared wholly at variance with any project of suicide,



yet when the body, at the suggestion of the police, was professionally examined, it came to light that a quantity of opium had been swallowed previous to the perpetration of the last rash act;—a large quantity,—though insufficient for her terrible purpose!—

In a workbox, (the key of which was found under her pillow,) was a small vial, containing dregs of laudanum; and in the same box were heart-rending indications, affording only too sad a clue to the motives of her crime. Three well-worn letters, in the handwriting of her cousin Ralph, setting forth the obstacles that rendered their union impossible, seemed to infer that a secret sorrow had long been preying on her young heart;—and when these letters had been perused by the duchess, and explained in substance to the *procuratore* charged with the *procès verbal* of the affair, no further doubt was entertained as to the origin of her rash and sinful act. *Felo de se* was as unanimously decreed, as though by a Marylebone inquest on some

poverty-stricken wretch taken out of the Paddington Canal.

To the vehement vociferation of the household, which had continued so long as there appeared any possibility that the English *cameriera* was the victim of assassination, now succeeded a death-like silence. Lucy was so beloved in the house,—her gentle manners and dove-like eyes had so endeared her to those of whose language she could pronounce only the few phrases essential to her service,—that not one of her fellow-servants was able to utter a syllable of condemnation. Enough for the fate of her miserable soul that she was a heretic ! Those who had broken bread with her and been familiar with the sweetness of those eyes which, like Cordelia's, did, "comfort and not burn," recoiled from contemplating the guilt of the suicide.

Self-murder is a crime of rare occurrence in countries where the brightness of the sky suffices for joy, and the fruits of the earth for food ;—

and but that the English maiden who had perished by her own hand was pronounced by those best acquainted with her history, to have died for love,—the true love, whose course, as Shakspeare tells us, “never did run smooth,” they would have considered it inexplicable that so soothing an atmosphere as that of Italy was not enough for happiness.

Much as I disliked the Surcingles, I was thankful to them on the present occasion for insisting on the removal of the duchess and her infant from that death-stained house; and on condition that the earl, who, from his repeated visits to Rome had some influence with the authorities, should undertake to secure the interment of the unfortunate Lucy in the English cemetery, my afflicted mistress consented to become their inmate till the family repaired to the Marino, on the arrival of the duke. For now that Lucy was gone,—now that dear, *dear* Lucy was gone,—to leave my poor lady and her babe alone in a houseful of Italians, was,

*after what had happened,* too fearful to be thought of.

Even after our instalment at Lady Surcingle's, in the Piazza di Spagna, I felt as though I could never creep close enough to the duchess, whether by day or night, or make my watch over her safety sufficiently vigilant!

Fain, however, would I have quitted her for one short hour, had it been in my power, to ascertain at what hour the reliques of the murdered girl were to be laid in the dust;—that I might have moaned my moan beside the grave of the daughter of the people, to whom contact with the great had, in life and death, been so disastrous.

But as it was only by stealth that a funeral service could be performed over her remains, the clergyman who, for the sake of his silk scarf as domestic chaplain to the Right Hon. the Earl of Surcingle, had consented to gratify the duchess's earnest desire, had appointed sunset for the ceremony; and when the poor English

girl whose day-dream it had been to lie beneath the yew-trees of Ashfield, so that her cousin Ralph might pass beside her headstone every sabbath on his way to divine service from the old farm, was laid beneath the soft green turf where rises the lofty pyramid of Caius Sextus, and the tombs of English genius and English beauty,\* for which Italy had reserved so cruel a fate—none were present—but *Maurice!*

And I swear to you, good public, that when the fellow made his appearance at Lord Surcingle's to announce to the duchess that all had been accomplished with quiet and decency, and every respect conceded to the unhappy victim over whom the earth had closed for ever, he rendered his account without so much discomposure as the winking of an eyelash!—The house-steward at Wigmore Castle had exhibited ten times more emotion when he came to announce to *his* duchess that old Fido was laid under the sod!

\* Shelley, Keats, Miss Bathurst.

The details he communicated were instantly added by the duchess as a postscript to a letter, (every line of which she had bedewed with tears,) which was to meet the Duke of Normanford at Marseilles, and spare him the shock of learning, on the threshold of his deserted abode, the dreadful event that had taken place. Certain as I felt that, previous to despatching it, Maurice would carefully scrutinize the contents, I could not but apply to my mistress's description of poor Lucy's untimely end, the words spoken of Protogenes, who completed his picture during the sack of Rhodes: "*pinxit sub gladio.*"—What—what might not have been the consequence had she expressed the faintest surmise of the convictions which lay like lead upon MY heart!—For alas! the stiletto of Maurice was still restless in its sheath!

In one of those letters of Pascal, which are by most people considered a repertory of the soundest wisdom, he declares that popular errors are often an advantage; such, for instance,

as the prejudice attributing influence to the changes of the moon, over the state of the weather, of human health, of mental irritation.—“Such convictions,” says he, “satisfy people’s minds, without further inquiry, on points where inquiry is useless; and leave them leisure to devote their intellects to subjects of greater moment.”

For my part, I perceive a similar advantage in the reluctance which most people experience to talk or think of the dead.

“Spare me,” exclaim the trembling survivors, “the subject is too painful!”—

And having fled from the aspect of the corpse, they recoil from the discussion of the death-bed!—

The fact is, that, were the end of every departed mortal as deliberately considered as the purchase of railway shares, or as elaborately discussed as the Maynooth grant, it would probably come to light that, between the blunders of physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries,—the

blunders of sick-nurses or servants,—the blunders of friends and relations,—and finally, the blunders of undertakers,—more than half of those who are consigned to the grave should be made the subject of coroner's inquests!

But it is a far shorter way to exclaim, "Spare my feelings!" The "blood-bolterd Banquos" done to death per favour of the lancet, are never known to return and make a fuss about it; and it is as easy as convenient to avoid idle discussion.

Even I, sincerely as I was attached to Lucy Mason, and secretly convinced that she had been basely and cruelly murdered,—even I was desirous that no provocation should be offered to Maurice by indications of mistrust; and when the Duke of Normanford arrived in Rome, and, instead of being content to thank Heaven on his knees that it was the attendant of dear Jane rather than herself who was lying beside the pyramid of Caio Sexto, chose to examine with the utmost minuteness into evidence which



had satisfied the *procuratore* of his Holiness,—to peruse anew the letters supposed to account for the despondency of poor Lucy's mind,—besides confronting the different servants of the establishment in their accounts of her last moments, and the exact position in which the body was found,—I confess I heartily wished the *Firefly* and its crew safe back in the harbour of Marseilles!

What business had he to come troubling the waters that were stilled?—What business had he to aggravate the mind of a man who, with whatever crimes the development of his organs of destructiveness might have previously betrayed him, was *now* leading a peaceable domestic life,—slaying nobody, but virtuously living, and letting live.—Had not the duke enough to occupy his solitudes in his sister's affliction?—Had he not enough to occupy his memory in the demise of a father whom he *knew* himself to have hurried into the grave?—But no!—He must needs go stirring up the poisonous sedi-

ment precipitated to the bottom of our domestic cup!

For all this intermeddling, however, nothing transpired.—The affair had been so thoroughly laid on the shelf by the police, that they did not care to be again troubled on the subject; and by the time the family was able to remove to Belaria, (so nearly adjoining Cività Vecchia that the Firefly was at hourly command,) the duke began to be as well aware as myself that it was more urgent to attend to the health of his wife, than the fate of her *suivante*.

In her most robust state, a timid, nervous creature, the successive shocks undergone by poor Jane in the sudden death of her aunt, her father-in-law, and Lucy,—to say nothing of the previous disappointment of her early predilections and the recent torment of her jealous fears,—had completely overpowered her. Lady Ellen Howarth, who had come prepared to be soothed and solaced by her sister-in-law, discerned in a moment that Jane was, of the two,

doubly in need of comfort; and with generous sympathy, dismissed all thought of her own sufferings to exert herself for the sake of her brother's wife. There was something wild and haggard in the young duchess's appearance that indicated a serious and a deeply-seated injury.

“ You must get her away from Rome,—you must get her away from Italy, my dear fellow !” was the exhortation of the blunt but really good-natured Lord Surcingle.—“ Try an excursion to Malta,—or a voyage in the Archipelago !—Nothing like change of air and scene !”

But the duke, who, expecting papers of consequence from England for signature, had determined to spend the ensuing month at Belaria, declared it impossible at present to hasten their departure.

“ You understand your own affairs best,”—interposed the malicious Lady Surcingle. “ But in *my* opinion, the duchess will never be well

till she is beyond reach of all reminiscences of Rome, or idle reports from Naples!"

But this Parthian dart fell short of its aim. The duke was too full of the hurry of departure, or too absorbed by previous cares, to inquire into her meaning.

The day preceding our departure from Rome, (the duke and his sister with their suite being lodged in the Albergo-Reale, to avoid increasing the inconvenience of the Surcingles,) Maurice was despatched with the rest of the establishment to Cività Vecchia,—leaving only Gianetta in attendance on her grace and the child.—The fourgon of heavy baggage had gone with the servants; and on the morrow we were to start.

"Give me the key of your jewel-case a moment, dear Jane!"—said my master,—having entered the dressing-room where the poor duchess was lying with her little girl in her arms, while Gianetta proceeded, awkwardly enough, in her task of packing the imperial.—  
"I want to look at one of your bracelets."

o His *real* object, he did not choose to explain. —A magnificent locket of brilliants, purchased in England, to contain their child's hair, and intended as a surprise to the mother, had, amid the conflicting emotion of his arrival, completely escaped his mind; till, on turning over his dressing-box previous to his journey, in order to deposit a few hundred ducats in the well, he had chanced upon his *cadeau*, which he was now desirous of appending, unobserved, to the duchess's diamond necklace.

My mistress's first impulse was promptly to comply. But when, at her desire, Gianetta brought the little ivory box containing her three golden keys, having suddenly recalled to mind that, the last time the jewel-case was opened, was by the hand of poor Lucy, who, on the day of her untimely end, had placed it in complete order for travelling, — she turned deadly faint. — Instead of delivering the key to the duke, she was forced to ask for a glass of water.

“I am better now!” faltered she, a moment afterwards; adding, as if in reply to her own reluctance;—“and since, sooner or later, it must be opened, as well now as at some future time!”

Ignorant of the antecedents of the case, the duke appeared a little surprised. Taking, however the keys from her cold and tremulous hands, he proceeded to unlock the box; while his agitated wife concealed in the mantle of her babe her streaming tears.—Having possessed himself of the object in request, he relocked the box; intending to complete in the adjoining room the fastening of the locket to the necklace ere he offered it to the acceptance of his afflicted Jane.

Some accidental derangement of the workmanship, however, rendered the task less easy than he expected;—and having a commission to execute in the Strada di Toledo, where Milanollo’s shop is situated, the duke put both necklace and locket into his pocket, resolved to

have them perfectly arranged before he alluded to his present.

I longed to advise him to defer the attempt till some more auspicious moment.—All the diamonds in the world would not just then attract her notice, or the richest gift insure her gratitude. Her soul was touched to the quick by the doom of the poor girl whom she had been the means of withdrawing from her native country and quiet sphere; nor could she disguise from herself the fatal influence which the Duchess of Wigmore had exercised over the destiny of the mother, or the evil she had herself unwittingly wrought for the child. So deeply indeed did this double consciousness prey upon her spirits, that I foresaw the most fatal results, should any unforeseen accident render the duchess as mistrustful as myself, that the worst of evil dealing had befallen that hapless girl!

Judge therefore, dear public, what were my feelings, when, half an hour afterwards, just

as Lady Ellen Howarth, who was to dine with the Surcingles *en petit comité*, entered the dressing-room to inquire whether her sister-in-law felt equal to join the family party,)—the duke made his heated and hurried appearance, to inquire to what hands the duchess's jewel-box had been entrusted, since the death of Lucy Mason?—

At this direct allusion to an event to which poor Jane had never yet found courage openly to revert, every vestige of colour forsook her face, and a convulsive movement contracted the muscles of her mouth. But not a syllable escaped her lips in reply.

“I am sorry to distress you thus, dearest,” resumed the duke; “but an answer is indispensable. Who has had the care of your diamonds?—Where have they been of late deposited?”

“In this room,—which I have never quitted!” was her abrupt reply.

“And which no stranger has entered?”



“Not a soul — except the Surcingle and Gianetta.”

“Most extraordinary!” — ejaculated the duke, as if speaking to himself. — “And do you happen to remember,” continued he, — “how long before Lucy Mason’s decease, you saw your diamonds in safety?”

“On the very day of — but why talk to me of all this?” — faltered the duchess, covering her face with her hands, and bursting into an agony of tears. “Only to hear her name is torture to me! — And yet, for the sake of a few paltry diamonds, you have the cruelty to distress me thus!” —

“I can scarcely call them either few or paltry,” rejoined her husband, somewhat piqued. “In the first place, they are heir-looms, — a trust bequeathed by my fathers to be conveyed to my children. In the next, they were worn by my mother, — the mother of whom I have so much reason to be proud.”

“Most true!” interrupted my poor mis-

ress, "yet even for a thing I valued six times as highly as you prize those jewels, would I not willingly cause you a pang such as you are wantonly inflicting."

The duke shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Let us drop the subject then!"—said he. "But at least entrust me another moment with your key; that Milanollo's man, who accompanied me hither, may determine at a glance whether my suspicions are well founded, that *all* your diamonds have been abstracted as well as the necklace; for which a paltry counterfeit has been adroitly substituted!"

The key was immediately promised.—But while searching for it on the sofa, where the little bunch had been carelessly thrown when restored by the duke, Lady Ellen, who had been listening in the utmost surprise, suggested in a low voice to her brother that this audacious robbery might have perhaps in some degree influenced the late melancholy event.

“By heavens, Nelly, you are right!” interrupted my master.—“The diamonds were in Lucy’s charge.—Lucy must have connived in it!—All,—*all* is explained.”

“Accuse Lucy, —accuse my poor faithful innocent Lucy?”—cried the duchess, starting up with an impetuosity produced by previous irritation of mind.—“No, no!—I would stake my *existence* on her honesty!”—

“Compose yourself, Jane, compose yourself!”—said her husband,—astonished by her excitement. But exclusively interested just then in elucidating the mystery, he hastened with the jewel-box and key to Milanollo’s partner, who was in waiting in the lobby; and, in the course of a few minutes, returned with the astounding intelligence that the whole of the valuable contents of the casket had been abstracted!—

“Diamonds, many of which had been in our family for centuries!”—said the duke, agitated by strong emotion; — “diamonds valued at three-and-twenty thousand pounds!”

But he discoursed to disregardful ears!—  
During his absence, the duchess,—overpowered  
by his harsh allusion to the poor girl in whose  
excellence she had such perfect trust, had  
fallen into one of those fits of syncope which,  
since the shock she had experienced in that  
fatal event, had been only of too frequent  
recurrence;—and Lady Ellen was trying to  
restore her to consciousness by the use of  
powerful aromatics.

## CHAPTER II.

*L.* You ask why I am sad.—Give ear to me!  
 When I was young I was a fool—and married.  
 The girl I wed was like a bright June morning,  
 Fresh, fragrant, dewy-lipped, and azure-eyed,  
 And floated onward with a cloud-like motion.  
 And when she owned her love for me, her cheek  
 Outblushed the burning sun at midsummer.—

*A.* And yet, you were a *fool*?—

*L.* Ay! a mad fool!—

PROCTOR.

THE moment the secret of the Duke of Normanford's discoveries transpired in Lord Surcingle's house, its inmates vied with each other, as is usual on such occasions, in aggravating his vexation.

Though it was his object to keep the affair as quiet as possible, both to facilitate the inquiries of the police and spare the feelings of the duchess, (so deeply interested in the good name of poor Lucy !) — *rumoresque serit varius*; Lady Surcingle was loud in protestations that, as the discovery had taken place under her roof, and her servants were compromised by the fact that the plundered jewel-case had been ten days within their reach, she must insist upon every member of her establishment being subjected to the strictest interrogation.

“ Such things were *too* disagreeable! — It was the first time any event of the kind had occurred in her household; and justice must be done to her poor servants.—She must insist on having the matter cleared up.”

And once touched on the tender point of character, every domestic in Lord Surcingle's house united to demand the amplest investigation.

“ Our character is at stake!” — cried the

waiting gentlewoman of Lady Surcingle, who was no other than the fantastical Mrs. Lewson.

“Our honour is compromised!”—exclaimed the courier,—a fellow whose mustachios would have stuffed a mattress, and whose chivalry was proportionate.

“Our good name is dearer to us than our lives!”—muttered the English butler, whose shining nose bore testimony to far different predilections.

“Our character,—our character,—our character!”—shouted all the other menials, in chorus,—down to the foolish fat scullion herself, with whom the word passed for some English luxury in the style of ketchup or Cheshire cheese, to which she was trying to reconcile her abhorrence.

“But, my dear Surcingle,” mildly pleaded the duke,—“I accuse nobody,—I suspect nobody.—The suspicions that have arisen rest upon *my* servants;—and I particularly wish

to avoid at present all public discussion of the business."

"I know it, my dear fellow, and fully agree with you,"—replied the good-natured earl. "Nothing can be more injudicious than all this premature outcry. But you know Harriet's confounded temper,—(or rather you do *not* know it,—for no one does but myself, or I should have more friends in the world!) and when once she has taken a crotchet into her head, I defy the whole college of cardinals to knock it out again!—For all our sakes, therefore, I fear she must have her way."

"No—no!" — remonstrated my master. — "For heaven's sake persuade her to leave the business in the hands of the police, who have their eye on all the parties concerned; and have begged me to raise no alarm!"

: "*Persuade her?* — *I persuade Lady Surcingle?*—Why it only needs for me to express a wish for her non-intervention, to send her with four horses to the top of the Pierian Hill,



to proclaim the story with a display of fireworks and per sound of trumpet !”

“ On the duchess’s account then ! — Poor Jane is in so very delicate a state that the slightest emotion — ”

“ But why should the inquiry occasion emotion to *her* ? ” — inquired the earl. — “ The diamonds are gone, which is, I conclude, the most distressing part of the business — ”

“ I beg your pardon. — The only thing likely to distress my wife is the aspersion on the poor girl to whom she was so much attached. ”

“ Very extraordinary ! ” — muttered Lord Surcingle ; wondering whether, *for once*, there was some truth in an assertion made by his wife ; — who protested that the duchess knew more of the abstraction of the diamonds than was at present suspected.

But having assured the duke anew of the impossibility of tranquillizing either the mind or tongue of his charming Harriet, now she

had obtained so promising a theme for gossip and mischief-making,—we were forced to submit to a formal visitation from the *Capo Ufficiale* of the Papal police; by whom the depositions of all the parties interested, including Milanollo, the duke and duchess, were taken with the most searching exactness.

To the latter, this formality was singularly trying.—In her present state of nervous depression, *any* thing resembling a legal process assumed such terrible importance!—

And now, thought I, like a silly little beast as I was,—*now* the fatal secret will out!—We shall be released from our dangers. — The villain will be discovered!— The vigilance of the police once excited, nothing escapes their preternatural penetration.

What therefore was my vexation on finding that, thanks to Lady Surcingle's officious interference, the affair had so soon got wind as to appear at full length in the *Diario di Roma*; affording to Maurice ample leisure to embark

in one of the vessels sailing at all hours for the various ports of the Mediterranean. By this time, *he* was probably on his way to Bastia,—or perhaps to Alexandria, or Tunis.

But in this surmise, I was again mistaken. Maurice, though apprized by the newspapers of what had transpired, never budged from Belaria.—In writing to apprise the duke that all was in perfect readiness at the Marino for the reception of the family, and that Ramsay, the master of the *Firefly*, had twice been over from Cività Vecchia for instructions, he simply expressed his amazement at the strange circumstances related by the *Diario* as having occurred at Lord Sureingle's.

“If your grace's excellence,” wrote Maurice, “thinks I could throw any light upon the matter by affording my testimony to the police, I could be in Rome and back again in the course of a few hours, so that my absence would occasion no inconvenience; and your excellency's grace will I am sure enter into

my feelings of mortification,—as an honest father of a family having made my way in the world by probity and industry,—that such a subtraction should have taken place while I was attached to your grace's excellency's household; more especially under the further aggravation of the desperate act committed by my late unfortunate fellow-servant.”—

“Poor fellow!” exclaimed the duke, — after perusing the letter, as plausible as one of the speeches of Peel, in proposal of a new tax.— “It is hard upon him! It is hard upon us *all*,—and as unaccountable as painful!”

Then turning towards his sister, he began for the twentieth time to express his regret that he had been tempted to visit Italy!

“From the first, an involuntary repugnance seemed to warn me against the journey!”—said he.—“You may remember, Nelly, my telling you at Normanford, more than a year ago, it was the only drawback on the happiness of my marriage!”

“Your presentiments have been indeed sadly justified,” replied Lady Ellen.—“But unless, dear Algy, you had complied with my father’s wishes, nothing would have satisfied him that poor Ulva’s head had been laid respectfully in the grave!—Infirm as he was, I am persuaded that, had you refused to visit Genoa, he would have made an attempt to proceed there.”

“Better, perhaps, had he done so!”—replied her brother, in a tone of deep despondency. “The exertion *might* have benefited his health; and the sequel *could* not have proved worse than it has done. I, at least,” added he, in a lower voice, “should have avoided the cruel consciousness of having hastened his end!”—

“On that unhappy subject, I beseech you to dwell no longer!” cried Lady Ellen, affectionately embracing her brother. “No repinings of ours will recall the past; and poor Jane’s condition exacts all our attention.”

A profound sigh was the only rejoinder of

her brother. For the gloomy omens which had predisposed him against a journey to Italy were again recurring. Inexplicable fears seemed to whisper that from the loss of property he had recently sustained, a thousand direr evils were to arise.

“You will pity my weakness,” said he, again addressing his sister, (whom both his grace and myself had been accompanying in a walk in the Borghese gardens, and with whom we had returned to the Albergo, previous to rejoining the invalid,) “when I own my wish that I had never discovered the loss of these jewels! Ignorance is bliss! The trash left in substitution would have served every purpose, as regards Jane’s satisfaction in them; and I feel as if my hand were upon some fatal clue.”—

“A mere chimera, my dear brother!”—remonstrated Lady Ellen. “Think no more of those unlucky diamonds. We are taught not to be over solicitous for the things of this world.”

“ You do not surely suppose it is the intrinsic value of the diamonds that moves me ?”—interrupted her brother.

“ Heaven forbid !”—was her proud reply. “ Though Lord Horsham, while exhorting you last night to show more philosophy, kept inquiring of me the exact number of carats in the necklace, and the water of the brilliants, and calculating on the back of his visiting card the specific amount, I am convinced *you* have never made the computation !”

“ I *know* it, but merely from the valuation made by Emanuel when they were reset,” observed the veracious duke.

“ And, (as Lord Horsham’s foolish brother observed,) appreciated them only for the gratification they afforded to the loveliest of her sex !”—added Lady Ellen, attempting to smile ; “ though that is little enough. For I never saw a human being more indifferent on such subjects than Jane.”

Again did the duke respond by a heavy sigh.

But just as he was proposing that they should proceed together to the Piazza di Spagna, he was informed that Giuseppe Dodagnano, the *uffiziale* appointed by the police to follow up the affair of the diamonds, requested an interview.

“Show him in!” was the order; nor did it appear necessary that Lady Ellen, acquainted as she was with the whole details of the affair, should quit the room.

“I ventured to entreat the favour of being admitted to an audience of your excellency *alone!*”—observed Dodagnano; glancing respectfully towards the young lady, who, accepting the hint, immediately withdrew. (Luckily, no one thought it necessary to observe that Rattle might as well follow !)

“I presumed to suggest that the ladies of your excellency’s family had better be spared the pain of what I am called upon to relate,” observed the official, with somewhat less than the cool self-government becoming his calling.



“For I understand, my lord, that the Duchess of Normanford has already suffered severely in health, in consequence of the inquiries that have taken place.”

Methought he fixed his eyes scrutinizingly on my master as he spoke. At least I have no other mode of accounting for the embarrassment perceptible in the looks of the duke; whose fair complexion became tinged to the very hair-roots by a crimson flush.

“It is needless for me to remind your grace,” resumed the officer, “that, in the important inquiry delegated to me by the government of his Holiness, I cannot allow myself to recoil from details, however delicate to examine,—however terrible to substantiate—”

“I am aware, sir, that your duty is imperative!” said the duke bluntly. “Let me beg you to proceed without demur.—I have engagements that demand my attention.”

“In one word, then, my lord, I have obtained evidence that two servants belonging to

your excellency's establishment, — two confidential servants of the Duchess of Normanford, — one of whom is lately deceased, under suspicion of poison—”

“ One of whom, (if you allude to my wife's maid,) lately committed an act of self-destruction in my house !” said the duke firmly, — though scarcely able to articulate.

“ We refer, at all events, my lord, to the same individual, — whatever the cause of her demise. I have obtained evidence, I say, that this female, as well as your lordship's *maggior d'uomo*, entertained relations with one Leti, commonly called Brabbo il Brigante, a notorious receiver of stolen goods, — a Jew of the Ghetto.”

“ Impossible !” interrupted the duke. “ The girl in question understood not a syllable of Italian, and scarcely ever quitted the house ; — never, in fact, unless in execution of commissions for her mistress, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Via Tordenoni. I

could almost venture to swear she had never set foot in the Ghetto."

Dodagnano shook his head.

"Half-a-dozen witnesses, with your excellency's pardon, are ready to make a contrary oath. Twice was she seen at nightfall to enter this fellow's abode."

"I have great difficulty in believing it;"—replied the duke, with a harassed and irresolute air.

"You observed just now, my lord, that she never quitted the Palazzo Strozzi, except to execute the commissions of her grace.—May I presume to inquire, (with all deference, but in the discharge of a peremptory duty,) whether the Duchess of Normanford was likely to be in want of ready money?"

"*My wife?* — The duchess in want of money?"—cried my noble master, with eyes so vividly enkindled, that, the windows being open, I was thankful the jalousies were closed

and clasped so as to secure the offender from receiving summary punishment.

But the *uffiziale* stood firm and unabashed ; as though no less prepared to justify himself, than for the outbreak of indignation.

“The Jew in question,” resumed he, thankful that the utterance of the English nobleman was suspended by his rage, “follows, under the name of jeweller, the trade of usurer and broker ; and previous to bringing him before the bar of justice, to explain the origin of his dealings with your excellency’s household, I was desirous to ascertain whether there existed a possibility—however remote—of their *superiors* being compromised by their declarations ? The honour of a family like that of the Duke of Normanford is of too high account for me to venture on its endangerment, without previously securing the consent and sanction of your excellency.”

“You have it !” cried the duke. “Pursue your investigations without reserve !”—

Dodagnano seemed far more abashed by this frank unreserve, than by the previous violence of the duke.

“The deceased young woman,” persisted he, with marked emphasis, “was confidentially treated, and has been singularly mourned by the Duchess of Normanford!”—

“*Singularly* mourned?” repeated the duke, with some hauteur. “Are people in this country, sir, so devoid of the common feelings of humanity as to perceive anything *singular* in the sympathy of one young woman for another,—who, half an hour after being in personal attendance upon her, is prompted by a temporary attack of mental excitement to put an end to her life? In England, let me tell you, it would be thought far *more* singular if a woman, whatever her rank in life, evinced under similar circumstances, a cold-blooded indifference!”—

“There is a medium in all things—as I can scarcely presume to remind your excellency.

Far be it from me to ascribe other than the most humane motives for the state of distraction which the Duchess of Normanford is said to have exhibited at the moment of the fatal event; or of the condition in which I myself beheld her yesterday, when making out in her presence, with the Signore Milanollo, the list and valuation of the jewels said to be missing. Nevertheless I once more submit to your excellency's opinion the discretion of summoning before our tribunals the survivor of the two servants inculpated, if the faintest possibility exist that, in this apparent malversation, they acted under the authority of their lady?"

"It was my intention to quit Rome, with the remainder of my family, early to-morrow," replied the duke, with firmness. "But after the hints you have thrown out, Signore Dodagnano, I not only sanction, but *insist* upon your interrogation of Maurice, the courier.—Arrest him, if you think proper.—Lose no time!—By despatching your people instantly to my

house at Cività Vecchia, we shall have him here without inconvenience to my plans.”

At that moment, I jumped into his grace's lap, with such triumphant demonstrations of joy, as *ought* to have convinced him of the wisdom of his decision.—Instead of which, in the irritation of his feelings, he resented my importunities by a smart blow,—the first I had ever seen him bestow on a dumb animal,—which sent me whining to the furthest extremity of the room.

That evening—that night,—appeared to me the longest I had ever spent!—The hours, I fancied, would *never* wear to an end.—And so, I suspect, did the duke. Wise by experience, he had not uttered a syllable to his wife and sister, or even to the Surcingles, touching the new features of the case; so that our departure for Belaria still stood fixed for the morrow. Nay, I was even more restless and impatient than his grace. For with all my genius for in-

sinuating myself through doors left ajar, and remaining an unseen spectator of the most secret occurrences of the house, I foresaw some difficulty in making my way into the tribunal of the secret police, where the examination of Maurice was to take place.

Doubly trying therefore was it, to my feelings,—while occupying my usual post at the bedfoot of my gentle lady,—to perceive that her wasted strength was becoming hourly more exhausted. A fearful weight appeared to hang upon her spirits; and on the morning in question, she had scarcely the power to smile even when her pretty babe, bright and sweet as an opening flower, having been brought to her bedside, extended its little arms as if to take flight from the rough caresses of Gianetta to the bosom of its mother.

Before our usual time of rising came Lady Ellen; and though her inquiries after her sister's health were uttered with all her usual



gentle tenderness, I fancied I could discern, through the folds of her crape bonnet, that her eyes were swollen with weeping.

“ I have not seen Algernon to-day. He has probably business at Torlonia’s, previous to leaving Rome,”—said the duchess, after a languid assurance to her sister-in-law, “ that she was better—quite, *quite* well !”—

“ But I hope he will be here soon,” she resumed, on receiving no reply ;—“ for I cannot tell you, dear Nelly, how I should regret being detained here another day. It was never by my own will I came to this house ; and though the Surcingles have been most kind, I feel that I am in the way.—And, oh ! how I want to be quiet !—Oh ! how I want to be at home !”

Lady Ellen leant over her sister-in-law, kissed her white forehead, and pressed her feeble hands within her own.

“ I was going to propose to you, if not inconvenient or disagreeable,” said she, “ to occupy my rooms at the hotel for a few days, till

my brother is able to get away.—For it appears that he will be unable to get off for a few days longer; and I am aware, dearest Jane, how much it bores you to remain here.”

“Detained for some days longer?—But why does not Algy come and tell me so himself?”—faltered the duchess.

“He has business—*law* business on his hands.—He has been with the English consul.—He has perhaps received executorship letters from England,”—murmured Lady Ellen, in detached sentences, as her sister-in-law fixed her eyes upon her face, with an air of incredulity that seemed to demand fresh re-assurances.

“You are not telling me the truth, Nelly,—or at least not telling me the *whole* truth!”—said the duchess:—“What is the matter?—I am stronger than I seem,—I can bear anything painful you may have to say!”

“Indeed I have nothing to say,” replied Lady Ellen, — though tears came stealing down her cheeks, “except that I wish you

would let me help you dress, and come and take possession of the cool, quiet rooms I have got ready for you."

And while my mistress, with the docility of a child, prepared to obey, I crept quietly out of the room, and, passing through the nursery, where Gianetta was already hurrying our preparations for departure, stole, with the hang-dog look I had worn ever since the undeserved blow inflicted by my master, towards the apartments occupied by Lady Surcingle.

Had I entertained any doubt concerning the locality, I should have been readily guided by the shrill tones of her unfeminine voice, engaged as usual, in altercation with her lord.

"If Lady Ellen can persuade the duchess to go, so much the better!"—cried she. "For heaven's sake do nothing to detain her!—I am sure I have been plagued and tormented enough from the hour she came into the house!"

"It was sorely against *her* will she entered it, poor soul; and it will be sorely against mine

she leaves it!" retorted the earl.—"When this unfortunate business gets wind, we shall have the appearance of ungenerously turning our backs on her, the moment suspicions were entertained!"

"And under suspicions of such a nature, *who* would *not*!—I will not pretend to deny that I have less patience when a poor yea-nay thing like *that*, who has always affected to start at straws, is found guilty of every sort of enormity, than with the faults of a woman whose vices have never worn the mask of virtue."

"*Found guilty!*—Harriet, Harriet!—Because a confounded rascal of a Frenchman attempts to whitewash himself by transferring his guilt to her shoulders, do not show so little of your sex's spirit as to be the first to throw a stone at her!"—cried the good-natured earl.

"I throw no stones.—I merely say that since there is a proposal for her removing to Lady Ellen's, I offer no objection. — Besides, so

long as she remains here, I can fix no day for our own departure."

"You well know we are not going these three weeks!"—pleaded her lord.

"Well then, if I *am* to speak the truth," continued her ladyship,—as though truth-speaking were an unusual effort,—“I *must* say it will be most unsatisfactory to me to find our names mixed up in this affair in the English papers, as they are sure to *be*!—The jewels were made away with under our roof; and as it was undeniably through *you* that money was openly sent by the duchess to her friend Sir Seymour, it will perhaps be reported that *your* assistance was also obtained in disposing of the diamonds!”

“A most shameful—a most scandalous inference!”—cried Lord Surcingle, with honest indignation. “Because the duchess, who has the kindest heart in the world, offered to unite with me in alleviating the distress of her husband’s friend ——”

“ Her *husband's* friend !”

“ This infamous fellow, of whom I have the worst opinion,” added Lord Surcingle, “ has strung together all he has overheard while waiting at table, into a plausible romance; to the authenticity of which the police give, or *pretend* to give, undue credence.”

“ Admit at least that, *se non è vero è ben trovato!*” cried the countess. “ The Jew persists in declaring that the English maid sold him the jewels in the name of her lady, whom she stated to be in want of money.—The courier declares that this unfortunate girl applied to him for the address of some person likely to purchase broken trinkets given her by her lady, on which he takes her to the house of Brabbo Leti, and discreetly leaves her at the door;—while half a dozen different witnesses confirm the fact of having seen them proceed there together.”—

“ And you literally go the length of believing that the duchess caused these jewels to be

sold,—and was ingenious enough to have the facsimiles made, without even taking others into her confidence?” cried Lord Surcingle, out of all patience with the malevolence of his wife.

“There were *two* persons in her confidence;—your friend Sir Seymour, to whom a few thousand pounds came so opportunely.”

“When you *know* that a few hundreds covered the claim upon him,—and that the sum was repaid me as soon as ——”

“The Duchess of Normanford furnished the means!—Certainly!”

“No, Harriet!—As soon as return of post brought him a renewed credit from his English banker.”

“At all events, the *maid* was in the duchess’s confidence: and *her* silence, poor soul, was secured by a dose of laudanum!”—

“Harriet—Harriet!”—

“I repeat only what you tell me was suggested by the police.”

“ By the police, who know not, as we do, the simple-heartedness of the poor girl; or the genuinely amiable and virtuous character of her mistress.”

“ As virtuous and as amiable as you please,”—retorted Lady Surcingle, with malignant bitterness; “ but I protest I would as soon have Madame de Brinvilliers under my roof; and must again beg you will oppose no obstacle to her departure.”

“ You will repent your unkindness when the truth of this business is, sooner or later, brought to light !”—cried her lord.

“ I hope I may. Nobody would more rejoice than myself at poor Jane’s exculpation. But, till then, you must give me leave to have my own opinion on the subject; namely, that she has turned out a worthy disciple of her aunt, the Duchess of Wigmore.”

I could listen no further; half suffocated by my endeavours to repress my emotions.—And if *I* felt deeply the infamous asper-



sions cast upon my dear and suffering lady, judge, dear public, what was the horror of her husband! — Though during the time Lady Ellen was effecting, with the most judicious and soothing care, the removal of her sister-in-law and the child to the Albergo, she accounted for her brother's absence by leading the duchess to suppose that business had called him away to Cività Vecchia, he had not quitted Rome.—It would have been as impossible to tear himself away, as, in the present state of feeling, to appear in presence of his wife.

While, with the submissive languor of indisposition, she resigned herself to the removal, and even exerted her best efforts at parting to acknowledge the hospitality of her hosts, her husband was concocting measures with one of the first *avvocati* in Rome, his adviser throughout the business, for the withdrawal of his complaint to the police!—

“Your grace has decided wisely!” was the discreet suggestion of the lawyer.

“ Maurice Thibaut has established a favourable opinion of his veracity in the minds of his interrogators ; the evident reluctance with which he gave evidence tending to incriminate his lady, being no disservice to him. A stranger in Rome, his conduct during his sojourn here has been irreproachable ; while his antecedents are vouched for by the high recommendations he appears to have brought to your grace.”

“ Too true ! ”—replied the Duke of Normandford. “ I have myself the highest opinion of him. His assertions prove him to have been throughout the dupe of the infamous girl whose death has defeated the ends of justice.—*She*, doubtless, transmitted to England, or elsewhere, the proceeds of her breach of trust.”

Of this, the shrewd lawyer seemed less positively convinced than his clients.

“ At all events, the recovery of the jewels is hopeless,” added he in conclusion ;—“ and as the person you regard as the offender has escaped you, publicity would be as pur-

portless as painful. Some mysteries had better always remain obscure; and from the hints afforded me by Giuseppe Dodognano, I feel convinced that the police are in possession of information which renders highly judicious your grace's determination to inquire no further into this affair."

I never exactly ascertained the sum paid by Maurice Thibaut to Giuseppe Dodognano, to secure his confederacy in the business. But considering the success of his mysterious hints, it *ought* to have been handsome.—I fancy, however, that the whole administration of justice in the Papal states might be secured for half the money it costs, even in these reformed times, to purchase a seat in the House of Commons.—

## CHAPTER III.

O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,  
 Our thoughts are boundless, and our souls as free.—  
 Oh ! who can tell save he whose heart hath tried  
 And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,  
 Th' exulting sense, the pulse's madd'ning play,  
 That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way !

SAYS Lord Byron ; while his friend Thomas  
 Moore exclaims on the same subject, in lyric  
 ecstasy,

Is not the sea  
 Made for the free  
 Land for courts and chains alone ?  
 There, we are slaves,  
 But on the waves  
 Love and liberty's all our own

And the little dog now on his legs, says ditto to  
 Tom Moore and Byron.—

For, when we quitted Rome, between the state of the dear duchess's health, of the duke's mind, and the insidious manner in which the villain Maurice obtained his *cong e*, and departed undetected, on pretence of incompetency to perform his duties on a sea-voyage, (the period for which his services were engaged by the Normanfords being more than accomplished,) I was as thoroughly out of sorts with the world, as though champagne and lansquenet had done their worst upon me ; and lo, as we drove through the Porta del Popoli, " I gave a sigh " to my past happiness, and looked on myself and the Duke of Normanford as miserable dogs for life !

*His* domestic happiness, indeed, had received a blow from which recovery was impossible ; and as a faithful dog, I was bound, for the remainder of my days, to wag my tail in pensive adagio. The memory of poor Lucy, moreover, haunted me like my shadow.—I constantly started from my sleep, awoke by hear-

ing snatches of those quaint old English ballads in which she delighted, breathed softly and preternaturally into my ear. I could hear her well-known footstep steal across the floor. I am convinced that she was often with us.—How ! incredulous reader !—

*Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,*

*Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala rides ?—*

Wait till you are murdered yourself, and see whether you will rest in your grave !—

We had not, however, been four-and-twenty hours out of sight of land before I felt a totally different animal !—It was Lady Ellen's judicious suggestion that, the establishment at Belaria being broken up by the departure of the maitre d'hotel, we should embark at once ;—and a few score of ducats having released us from the villa and its dependencies, we did not pause to take breath till that of the Mediterranean was full in our departing sails ; at which exhilarating moment, hope entered into my soul !—

No longer haunted by frightful reminiscences, Rattle was himself again!—

At hunting dinners, the memory of Nimrod, the father of the chase, is often “in our flowing cups, freshly remembered.” And the very first bumper of fresh water into which I plunged my feverish nose on board the *Firefly*, did I mentally dedicate to that of Noah, the father of yachting!—In my opinion, the sovereign who offered some sovereigns reward for the invention of a new pleasure, ought to have been recompensed for his public spirit, by surviving in story, not as the conqueror of the East, but the founder of the R. Y. C.—Yachting for ever!—the poetry of practical life!

A luxurious boudoir, qualified as by magic (like the enchanted horse that traversed the earth's surface on the turning of a peg) to outstrip the wind,—comprehending every enjoyment of patrician existence, without the deterioration of that vulgar publicity which converts a palace into a crystal cage; a luxu-

rious boudoir, floating on the bluest of summer seas,—

No eye to watch, and no tongue to wound us,  
All earth forgot, and all heaven around us,—

realised in our favour all that the most imaginative dog in the universe could dream as the paradisaical reward of his virtues!

As Moustache would have said under the same circumstances, and as the Idler would translate, “I was now at the top of my vows,”—*au comble de mes vœux!*—Every knot we sailed, took me further from that fatal Rome and that hateful Maurice, to whom it only grieved me that I could assign no knot in return. And no sooner did I behold the hues of health come back to the cheek of my dear lady, like the rosy tints which gradually overspread at daybreak the pallid twilight sky, than I felt sure all would go well!—There needed only strength and spirits for explanation between two such honest hearts and honourable minds as those of Algernon and his wife, to re-



cement their union into an understanding more perfect than before.

It is true that, for the first three days, or rather nights, the duke resembled one of those unquiet spirits

Doom'd for a certain space to walk the night ;

with so perturbed a step did he traverse the deck of the Firefly, long after all, save those engaged in the watch, had turned in. But he had every excuse.—Summer moonlight, reflected on such seas as those we were traversing, serves to convert the common air and earth and water, into elements unknown. Nor could Ciceri have invented a more fanciful scene for a new ballet,—or Grieve for a Christmas pantomime,—than the sheet of mother-of-pearl, rippling here and there into opals and aqua marines, on which we were floating.—Not a sound, save the tinkling plash of the waves; not a speck upon the infinite ether dividing us from—*what?*—from infinite ether!—the im-

measurable atmosphere of the uncreate Creator of all things,—the horizon of “the day without yesterday or to-morrow.”—

Thus isolated from the vulgar herd, thus detached from the clamours of mankind, the full-orbed moon, pendent as it were midway in those unclouded realms of space, seemed to have approached us nearer. The one sole object visible besides ourselves was that radiant queen of night, with whom we might have almost fancied ourselves to be enjoying a neighbourly tête-à-tête.

Under the influence of those halcyon hours, my gentle lady was gradually restored to herself. At first, indeed, her renovated beauty and renewed tenderness of manner, excited a recoil of horror in the heart of the miserable man who had been forced into conceiving such terrible suspicions on her account. But this could not last. Innocence has a voice of its own, no more to be simulated than the soft treble of a child. Impossible to behold her.

perfect serenity, or witness her unaffected piety, in that vast solitude of nature, where nothing interposed between her actions and the searching eye of an all-seeing God, without certitude that her conscience was clear; and the heavenly sweetness of her smile as she held up her infant to receive its father's caresses, or solicited for it his nightly benediction, pleaded more eloquently in her favour than the most lachrymose Q. C. to be had for love—or money!—

I have seen women of all nations and languages,—all features and complexions,—black, brown, and fair, nay, *blue*,—and am ready to attest that the nearest approach to an angel vouchsafed by the bounty of providence to this nether earth, is a well-conditioned Englishwoman;—not too girlish to be serious,—not too serious to be cheerful,—whose sole weakness is in favour of puppies of my species,—and whose orbit as undeviatingly true as the best behaved planet of the solar system, to the attractive centre of home.

Such, dear public, such was the Duchess of Normanford ; and I leave you to decide whether her husband was likely to be long deceived into a belief of her unworthiness. Before we quitted Rome, indeed, a letter from Sir Seymour Manners to himself, acknowledging the kind offices tendered by the duchess through Lord Surcingle, and declining them in terms the reverse of gracious, as having arisen from a false and malicious report of his situation, somewhat relieved his mind ; but by the advice of Lady Ellen, who, like all really good people, was full of trust in the goodness of others, he determined to refrain from inquiry till his wife was sufficiently restored to health to hear all she had to hear, and explain all she had to elucidate. Scarcely can I express my joy, therefore, when, a few days after our release from dry land and its troubles, the duchess, cheered and strengthened, was the first to advert to the past.

“ It is like a hideous nightmare,” said she ;

“ a frightful dream I would give worlds to forget !”—

And her words, alas! were truer than she thought for!—The unremitting vigilance I had exercised over Maurice during the last days of his attendance, had enabled me to discover that slight narcotics were administered by his cunning hand to the duchess, in all her potations; so as to render her incapable of a clear answer, either to the interrogations of the law, or the questions of her friends. It was, in fact, the release from this insidious influence which had so speedily restored her to herself.

“ But of this I am as certain as of my existence,” continued she, encouraged by the eager attention of her lord, “ that my poor Lucy was as innocent of the act of dishonesty imputed to her, as of that of self-destruction. Lucy knew no more than a child of the value of diamonds. But the value of her own soul, she understood as became a Christian !”

“ But *who*, then, do you suspect ? ” inquired Lady Ellen, somewhat embarrassed by the apprehension that her brother might too suddenly acquaint her with all that was imputed to her.

“ How should *I* attempt to expound a mystery, my dear sister, which even the police are unable to unravel ? ” replied the duchess, in a mild tone of remonstrance. “ All I know is, that I would as soon suspect myself, as Lucy ! Nor can I help hoping that, in process of time, the truth will come to light. In robberies of such importance, there are usually many accomplices, who, at their first quarrel, indulge in mutual recrimination ! ”

“ It is true that few great robberies have ever escaped detection,” observed her husband, — in a more cheerful tone than he had assumed since his return to Italy.

“ I have even heard,” observed the duchess; “ that diamonds of such magnitude as the *solitaires* which were among those stolen from

us, are so rare, that their weight and description would cause them to be recognised by any jeweller in Europe. Surely, therefore, it would be prudent to signalise them, through the police of London and Paris, to the chief diamond merchants? I do not suggest it from any selfish desire of recovering them; for alas! after what has passed, diamonds will appear to *me* for the rest of my life to be stained with blood. But I would give much to have the memory of poor Lucy redeemed from undeserved obloquy."

HAVING beheld with my two eyes as many of the unset diamonds as Brabbo Leti was unable or unwilling to purchase, (including more especially the two *solitaires* in question,) coolly deposited under the roots of a small myrtle-leaved orange tree, which Maurice begged from the gardener at Belaria, and carried in his arms on board the felucca in which he embarked, viâ Barcelona, for Bordeaux, on pretence of "wishing to cultivate in

his Louissette's little garden on the Garonne, some memorial of Italy and the most liberal and indulgent of masters,'—(justly calculating that a tree in a flower-pot would puzzle the scrutiny of both *dogana* and police,)—I could not say “Amen” to her grace's proposition.

The duke, however, amended my omission; and promised to write from Malta, on the subject, to his Paris banker and London solicitor. Then, as if afraid of pursuing the subject of the lost jewels, lest the pleasurable emotions which the frankness of his wife had conjured up should be destroyed by some unlucky allusion, he turned the conversation upon the most celebrated diamonds extant in Europe,—the Pitt,—the Sancy,—the Grosvenor.

“I believe we are scarcely aware,” said he, “to what extent these baubles are used in the way of bribery and corruption. Diamonds appear to be the current coin of diplomacy, as cowries of the negroes. The diamond snuff-box that seals a treaty or signs a protocol, in-



deed, is a legitimate perquisite. But I remember hearing from my father, who was intimate with the celebrated Mrs. Billington, that, when in the full bloom of her beauty and power of her voice, she sang to the First Consul, during the long conversation which followed the honours of her presentation, Bonaparte kept groping in his waistcoat pocket; from which he at length withdrew, and placed in her hand, an unset brilliant of considerable value.

“ ‘ I am happy to have at my disposal to-night,’ said he, ‘ a jewel worthy of being offered to you. The contingencies of my position render it necessary for me to be at all moments provided with such things,—bribery in its most decent and portable shape! I rejoice that, for this single occasion, the care of my interests has favoured the requital of my pleasures.’ A more polished way of doing business,” added the duke, (with the first smile I had seen on his countenance for months,) “ than to have to apprise the minister you want to propitiate, that

A hundred oxen at his levee roar,—

or that

Spain has sent a thousand jars of oil !”

“ I wish I could hope to recognize our unfortunate *solitaires* sparkling in the raven tresses of Grisi, or even in the shirt-frill of a lord of the admiralty !” replied his wife. “ I should have some pretext for entreating you to devote their value to the erection of a monument in the English cemetery at Rome, attesting the innocence of poor Lucy Mason.”

An exulting glance was exchanged between Lady Ellen and her brother ; and I almost flattered myself that a full explanation was at hand. But they probably felt as reluctant as I to hazard even a breath calculated to disturb the harmony and delicious quietude pervading that dreamy atmosphere, and under that cloudless sky. The slumbrous serenity of the scene was as though sleepy midnight had forgotten itself, and

strayed into the light of day. Had any Idler been there to give one of his or her patent "sighs," amid the general stillness of nature, it must have been *felt* as well as heard! Why, *why* was Claude Lorraine never decoyed beyond the mole of some Mediterranean port;—that he might have immortalised the radiant and ethereal lassitude of a southern calm, as Vandervelde and Callcott have perpetuated the chill and languid marine platitudes of the north?—

For my part, being a dog above all sympathy with

the luxurious slave,

Whose soul still sickens o'er the heaving wave,

swell or calm, are to me equally delightful. I like them in alternation, as people enjoy still and sparkling champagne; and how delicious, after "softly slumbering on the ocean,"—dreaming away one's noon in a shady cabin, adorned with choice engravings and well-stored

bookshelves, over a novel like Violet, or Ellen Middleton,—or poetry like Tennyson's,—or a clever number of a sterling review, combining the piquant opposites of a *mayonnaise*,—olives and capers,—acid and oil,—the crisp lettuce, savoury anchovy, and delicate *blanc de volaille*,—to come forth on deck and meet, as by preconcerted rendezvous, the evening breeze that sends you scudding along the cool waters;—while the trim deck, bleached into still purer whiteness by the meridian glare, is thrown into shapely relief amid the blue of the surrounding waves, “deeper and deeper still” as the declining sun withdraws its lustre from their glassy translucence; till, like the freight of a Bombay brig, or one of Mr. Buckingham's lectures, all is indigo!

If love were not a disorder extirpated (like the plague and sweating sickness) from the kingdom of Great Britain, and I were under the necessity of running away with the object of my affections, especially if a ward in Chan-

cery,—it should not be in a chaise and four,—or even by a special train;—but in a yacht of 250 tons, like the Firefly, — swift as the Merry Monarch, — steady as his jockey, — stored with patent sofas, Lemann’s biscuits, white Curaçoa, new periodicals, and Moët’s champagne!—

When Ramsay, the master of the Firefly,—who appeared to *me* as fond of applying his glass to his eye when there was nothing to be seen, as a dandy of the omnibus box,—suddenly exclaimed, like Diogenes, when a prosy story inflicted upon him by a bore seemed verging to an end, γῆν ὄρω! I wished him at the bottom of the sea.—Fain would I have sailed on and on, like the ship of the Ancient Mariner, to the ends of the earth; and never had I felt more inclined to exclaim, like Themistocles, “Let the sea be mine; and confound the rest of the world!”—

Yet the land he espied was good land:—even that melliferous island, tri-cornered as the

hat of a Chelsea pensioner, once designated as the granary of Rome; and which, in the time of Pliny, returned cent. per cent. to the husbandman, like a share in the Great Western.

Scarcely had I set foot upon its shore, before I revoked my objections; and never since I became a travelled dog have I ceased to regret that Byron, instead of maundering away his life in Venice, the putrescent corpse of one of the foulest of human tyrannies, did not set up his rest in Sicily, where, indeed, rest was to be found.

There, the natural bitterness would have exuded from his nature, like turpentine from the pine. There, his heart would have softened, responsive to the genial suavity of surrounding objects.—It is true that the aspect of Greece — like the sun's rays awaking the mysterious harmonies of Memnon—touched glorious chords in his bosom.—But the sight of Sicily might have called forth those softer measures that bear its name; and thenceforward, the pastoral would

have lost its mawkishness, and the naïveté of Longus been revived with still more touching truth, by the infusion of the milk and honey of Enna into the veins of the gifted misanthrope ; till he brought forth idylls, like daffodils, in due season.

I once heard the Duchess of Wigmore relate that, having inquired of Bellini “ *where*, young as he was when he composed the ‘ *Pirata*,’ he had found the impassioned phrases of tenderness in which its music abounds,”—he replied, “ Under my father’s roof in Sicily ;—from whence, though nestled in a green and smiling landscape, we discerned afar off the burning shores of Africa !” —And what might not the more gifted Byron have extracted from such a soil ?—What floods of unimaginable tenderness would have flowed from his pen !—What lofty conceptions of fossile demi-gods and spectral divinities, may have awaited him in that haunted land !—

For Sicily is a volume of romance containing

pages of every century. *There*, every dead language has its echo,—every forgotten creed, its altar. Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Normans, have inscribed their hieroglyphics on its stones. From the days of Eneas to those of Cœur de Lion, wandering warriors have sought shelter in its ports ;—and from Sicily, both the King of the Infernal regions and King of the French, carried off the gentle partners of their thrones.

It is true, that in the present day, the midshipmen of her Majesty's Mediterranean squadron are apt to speak disparagingly of the Cyclopean island,—declaring its wines to be too thin, and its women too fat. But to such detraction, we turn an ear as deaf as that of Dionysius in its old age ;—nor shall all the Masdeu or Marsala that ever poisoned a race-week ordinary tempt us to overlook the beauty of its fertile vales, or the sweetness of its gentle clime. Lying as it does, like a spoiled child, at the foot of Italy, sunned by her auspicious smiles, and reciprocating them a thousand-fold,



a dog must be a brute,—I mean a man,—to regard it with indifference.

My enthusiasm was probably enkindled in the first instance, because it was on Sicilian land I beheld a first foreshowing of the palmy foliage of the East.—To me, there appeared something Biblical in the massive foliage of its verdant fig-trees.—After beholding them, I could understand the expression of a man sitting under their shadow ;—all Greek in England,—where they are generally nailed in some ugly corner of the stable-yard, the fruit being held too nasty for even the hungriest tiger to prey upon. The dwarf palm-trees, with their Canaanitish harvest of manna, (the produce of every tree yielding in value an ounce of gold,) the twisted pomegranate, whose beaded fruit is doubly associated with the fate of Proserpine and the lyrics of Solomon,—the green olive, dear alike to king David and Minerva,—the carob-trees, whose fruit is sometimes surmised to be the locusts of the wilderness, which

afforded food to John the Baptist, — the aloes and Indian figs, whose turgid leaves seem to present a mockery of vegetation,—the graceful pistacio and lofty cork-trees, affording shelter from the noontide heat;—all these, alternating in glorious fertility with plains of golden corn or verdant plantations of vines, and here and there a shrubby eminence sheeted with the azure blossoms and musky foliage of the rosemary or feathery lightness of the tamarisk, afforded a pleasing relief to eyes accustomed only to the scrubby herbage of Hyde Park, which would prove *nux vomica* to a grasshopper; or to the solemnity of the damp woods of Wigmore, —merely to think of which, gives me a twinge of the rheumatism!—

As to the “show of fruit” in Sicily, I have seen at a glance oranges, lemons, citrons, chestnuts, pomegranates, grapes, almonds, and pistacio-nuts, sufficient to make bankrupts of half the Jewish orange merchants of St. Botolph’s Lane; and one ceases to wonder that, with

such abundance evermore issuing from her teeming breast, the island should have afforded to endower less favoured countries.

From *her* hand did Europe first receive the luxurious produce of the silk-worm, naturalized by pilgrims from Damascus in the vale of the Conca d'Oro; while the honey of Hybla having rendered her indifferent to the coarser sweetness of the sugar-cane, it was banished from her shores to the tropical plantations of the West. For herself, of all her Oriental produce, Sicily reserved only the papyrus;—perhaps as a bitter jest,—so few of her unlettered nobles being able to write or read!—And being a land of dukes and princes, — and *majors*, as stiffly submitted to the law of primogeniture as the United Kingdom of Great Britain,—there is every hope that its ignorance may be perpetuated;—the heads of her aristocratical families being too rich for learning,—and the junior branches too poor!

I have heard the beauties of Sicily described

with poetical fervour and classical discrimination by the most amiable of English dukes,—who travelled there as grand seigneur-ially as I would have done myself, had I been *Can Grande*, instead of the most minute of my species;—and as prosaically as by a Presbyterian ex-ciseman, by the Monk Lewis of France,—who travelled there as cut-throatishly as I might still do, were I an inditer of doggrel instead of a Royal Favourite.—But neither of them did it justice.—Prose and poetry are alike at fault. Into his tragedy of *Tancred and Sigismunda*, *Jemmy Thomson* of the Seasons introduced certain highly unseasonable tirades upon its charms, as *Voltaire* into his tragedy.—*Rossini*, in his *Tancredi*, had his crotchets concerning them; while innumerable are the school-boys who, afflicted with a fifth-form tendency to blank-verse, have festooned the *Sicilian Vespers* with their maiden laurels.—Yet I swear *I* could have written better in honour of the *Isle of Dogs*!—

In order to describe the valley of the Conca d'oro or the Feast of St. Rosalie, your professional scribbler thinks it necessary, like the Golden Ram, or Diodorus Siculus, to *commencer au commencement*, with Anchises, Agathocles, and the Dionysiuses, down to Tancred and Manfred; (tyrants enough to stock the melodramas of the Surrey for as many years as playgoing will be tolerated in civilized Great Britain!)—which is much as though the complete Railway Guide were to preface its description of Primrose Hill, with an account of King Egbert and the Saxon Heptarchy!—

But if travellers in the descriptive line, who visit professionally those stupendous ruins of Girgenti,—those green vineyards of Syracuse, —those fragrant orange groves of Santa Croce, —would only condescend to see them as the sun shines upon them, without troubling their heads to circumstantiate the luxury of Sicilian civilization five hundred years before the

vulgar era, their pages would not be quite as hard to get over as the roads they write about!

The only *very* interesting fact recorded by Diodorus Siculus of the gorgeous citizens of Agrigentum by the way, these bookmakers seldom trouble themselves to notice: viz. that, previous to Hannibal's famous siege of that city, the public ways contained not only the stately tombs of the wealthy Agrigentines but the marble sarcophagi of their favourite birds—*and lapdogs*;—thus beating by a neck the modern *Sépultures de familles*, in the cemetery of Père la Chaise, or the Kensal Green mausoleum of the immortal Andrew Ducrow!—

## CHAPTER IV.

Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,

Hic nemus, hic toto tecum consumerer ævo.

VIRGIL.

As we were loitering on our winding way

Through orange flowers, and jasmine, and so forth  
(Of which I might have a good deal to say

There being no profusion in the north  
Of oriental plants, *et cætera*.

But that of late, your scribblers think it worth  
Their while to rear whole hotbeds in their works.)

*(The verse I quote is Byron's every line,  
For God's sake, reader, try to think it mine !)*

As we were loitering, I say, on our winding  
way, by Jupiter Atabyrius ! what a luxurious

life we led of it! Ye noble coast-guards of the R. Y. C.,—ye *fainéans* of the checked shirt,—content with the amphibious joys of the Solent and flounder-like existence of Cowes or Southampton,—bethink ye, as ye tack and gyrate on the brackish waters of the Channel, between St. Helen's, Spithead, and Calshot, round and round again, with no object in view save the Needles, Haslar Hospital, grim and sullen in the distance, or Angleseaville, mounting guard in spruce vulgarity on the shore, like a priggish militia officer during the invasion panic,—bethink ye, of the delicious freedom and freshness of a Mediterranean cruise, and the beauty of the landscapes that await you on landing; and lose not a moment in getting under way!—

Hang the regatta!—At Taormina, you may see the remains of the Roman *Naumachia* where regattas were held under Verres,—when Cæsar was commander-in-chief, and

Jove, in his chair,

Of the sky Lord Mayor.



While circumnavigating the charming island „Wo die Citronen blühen,, whenever the Firefly found moorings near a spot we wanted to explore, our party used to return at nightfall to its comfortable berths. For the *fondache* and *locande* of Sicily are so beset by vermin, of human and all other kinds, that no tourist ought to arrive in the country untitled, by letters of recommendation, to the hospitalities of the Principe of Castel This, or the Duca di Something or other, in every town and village he designs to visit;—by the resident agent of whom, he is forwarded on from estate to estate, like a misdirected letter despatched from post-office to post-office, till it reaches its destination in safety at last.

Against this arrangement, I would fain have rebelled; having long set my heart upon lodging in some Benedictine monastery or brigand-haunted castello, to beget a few extra-extraordinary *Impressions de voyage* in the style

of Alexander Dumas. But I might as well have looked for adventures at the Peacock at Islington!—When we strayed too far from the Firefly to return at night, the *campieri* engaged by the duke, by way of protection, used to secure us lodgings at some clean *fondaca*, to which the mules took their way as naturally as the Lord Chancellor to his wool-sack; and I soon saw that, unless the Normans were tempted to yacht across the Atlantic, I had little chance of hitching into my modest pages anything sufficiently earthquakeish and Texasian, to create a sensation.

The only romance within reach, in fact, was travelling in my master's waistcoat pocket! Amidst the most classic scenery of that garden of antiquity, was I fated to learn from the lips of a duke of ten descents, tidings of poor Jem Sims;—and since the day when the fountain of Arethusa rose in Sicily, like a ghost through the trap-door of Drury Lane, after

running to earth in Greece, never had any thing turned up there more unaccountably.

It was one day, after visiting the ruins of those glorious fanes—of Jupiter, — of Juno Lucina,—of Concord,—of Hercules,— which render Girgenti like Broadlands, a nest of Temples, that our tent happened to be pitched near the Temple of Esculapius in the plain beyond the *Porta di Mare*, still called *Campo Romano*, in honour of the feats performed there by the Romans during the Punic war; on a shrubby rise, where the ground was so overrun with fennel and parsley, that, under the grilling sun, one felt as if being dressed *à la maître d'hôtel*.

Refreshed by a slight repast, becoming the hour and climate, washed down by one of the aromatic wines of the country, at present uncontaminated by the puffs and placards of London importers, we were enjoying our siesta, extended on the thymy herbage; looking to-

wards the ridge of hills, comprehending the principal Agrigentine ruins, and terminated by the precipitous site of the Temple of Vulcan; and enjoying the *dolce far niente*, never more *dolce*, by the way, than during the process of digestion, under a stout awning, in an atmosphere capable of ripening a Providence pine.—

My own siesta, was a siesta indeed; for the duke, who had been cramming from the Sicilian work of the Abbé de St. Non, the Count de Forbins' *Souvenirs*, Auguste de Sayve's *Travels*, and Ferrara's *Discorso per la Storia di Sicilia*, began to lay it on exceedingly thick concerning the Pelasgians and Byzantines,—the Carthaginians and Phœnicians,—with other dead nations and languages which ought never to be mentioned out of a folio volume;—and thoroughly overset me at last, by translating a long and prosy extract from Polybius, to prove to Lady Ellen that the rivulets we heard tinkling onward to the sea, were once navigable

rivers; and that in the days of Empedocles, the city which she now saw reduced to a few scattered fanes and filthy modern streets, contained eight hundred thousand inhabitants.

I slept, in short, as soundly as I used to see the Duchess of Wigmore, after a copious dose of Handel on a Sunday evening; and was roused only by the voice of his grace, calling to Felipo, one of his *campieri*, to make the best of his way to Marina di Girgenti, (the ancient *emporium Agrigentinarum*—ahem!)—with orders for Ramsay; who, with the yacht, lay at anchor among the Speronari and Brigantines of that wretched port; which would serve no earthly purpose were it not for the sulphur trade,—a squabble concerning which with the brimstone-consumers of England and Scotland, was, a few years ago, so near bringing the two nations to the scratch.

The duke's orders were written on a page torn from his pocket-book; and while Felipo

started his mule for the discharge of his commission, my master continued to turn over the remaining leaves, frowning or smiling significantly to himself over each, according as

Plus aloës quam mellis habet,

as certain records of neglected commissions or unanswered letters, recalled them unexpectedly to his mind.

No stronger proof that his confidence in his wife had spontaneously reconsolidated itself, (like the heavenly forms of Homer's deities when severed by a wound,) than that he kept addressing to the duchess, in scarcely articulate murmurs, his comments upon these secret items of rememberment.

“How coolly some people make one's time and money their own, when one comes abroad,” said he; “and how tenacious are others, even about the smallest pecuniary obligation!—Here is a memorandum written when I was in London by Vernon's own hand, to ascertain

on my return to Rome what I had paid to La Gherarda, the enamellist, for a copy I got made for him of a picture in the Lucastara gallery."

"You had a copy made for Mr. Vernon of a picture at the Palazzo Lucastara?"—stammered the duchess, almost speechless from surprise.

"A miniature after the famous Giorgione, which he fancies an exact resemblance of a lady in whom he is much interested."

"The Princess Garofala?"

"No—an Englishwoman. (I doubt whether Vernon knew the Garofala when he was in Rome!) The lady in question is one whom, in the event of Lady Elizabeth's death, I am almost afraid Vernon will make his wife."

"Why *afraid*?—Is she not an amiable person?"—

"*Most* amiable!—But it is a match George Vernon would repent as long as he lived!"

The duchess, whose heart had suddenly be-

come as light as a feather, did not at that moment seem to think that a marriage of *any* kind was likely to afford matter for repentance!—

“It is a long story,—and one I cannot exactly tell you at this moment,” resumed her husband, glancing expletively at Lady Ellen, who was reclining near the door of the tent, poring over an Admiralty chart of the coast of Sicily, which lay open beside her on the ground; while near her, Gianetta was hushing the infant to sleep by the low murmurs of a Milanese lullaby. “But for the last three years, George has entangled himself in a way fatal to his prospects in life. The sweetest woman upon earth!—Gentle, affectionate, devoted,—but of the lowest extraction, and —”

“I trust, dear Algy, your ‘*and*’ is to lead to some far worse disqualification?”—exclaimed my mistress. “Surely ignoble birth is a slight counterpoise to so many sterling qualities?”

‘There is a difference between ignoble and



*infamous!*” rejoined the duke. “Should George ever make poor Mrs. Vernon his wife——”

“Mrs. Vernon?”—murmured the duchess, a little surprised.

“The proof of his being ashamed of the match,” resumed her husband, “would be that, so long as his mother survived, nothing would have tempted him to break Lady Elizabeth’s heart by such a connexion.”

“She is his *mistress*, then?” said *mine*, with a deep blush, in some measure arising from the remembrance of the tears she had wasted on this imaginary Princess Garofala.

“A woman, nevertheless, of the most unexceptionable manners and habits,” added her husband, after an affirmative nod.—“A woman who, if presented in our society, would appear entitled to the first place in it!”

“And by what accident has she fallen into her present degraded condition?”

“I am afraid most people would pronounce that she had *risen* to it!—She owes the advan-

tages of her education, however, to the Duke of Wigmore——”

“ To my *uncle* !”—

“ By whom she was shamefully inveigled from her family. If, therefore, George should ever be infatuated enough to make her his wife, judge what would be his feelings as a husband, in Wigmore’s presence !”—

“ Surely his own consciousness would at all times suffice for misery !—What a wretched prospect ;—attached to a woman whom he loves too well to abandon, and cannot enough respect to make his own for ever !”—

“ Abandon ?—No, no !—He would be a brute and a scoundrel to abandon her !” replied my master, whose memory for the last five minutes had been insensibly straying back to his days of Algernonhood. —“ Poor Mary, — poor Mrs. Vernon !—I lived a great deal with them both, at one time, —that is, at the time a certain Lady Jane Barnsford did me the honour of sending me to Coventry.”

“ Was it at Coventry, then, you found this unfortunate Mrs. Vernon ?”

“ Precisely !—But believe me, I left many worse women in Grosvenor Square. Though ostensibly belonging to the same class with her whose birthplace was made so strange a matter of boast to us, the other day at Hiccara,\* the object of George’s attachment would have distinguished herself by her virtues, if of gentle birth. I was witness, by-the-by, to a most heart-rending scene in which she was concerned, in London, a couple of months ago,” added the duke—stretching his head forward to ascertain what had become of Lady Ellen ; who, on finding their conversation take a confidential turn, had closed the chart, and strolled out among the pistacio-trees, in the centre of which our tent was pitched.

“ Having engaged myself one day to dine with Vernon,” continued he, “ (as the only way of obtaining a chat with him over some family

\* Laïs.

difficulties that arose about proving my father's will,)—I found, on arriving at the small house they occupy in Curzon Street, that my friend was unexpectedly detained at the House of Commons."

"By which you were forced into a tête-à-tête dinner with this paragon of fallen angels!"—interposed dear Jane, with her nether lip a little rounded.

"No indeed,—I wish I had!—For (without disrespect to Nelly) I should have felt as if dining with a sister.—But on entering the drawing-room, I found poor Mrs. Vernon in such a state of mind as I had *then* never seen exhibited by any other woman!"—And an involuntary sigh betrayed, at that moment, his mental recurrence to the terrible scenes of the Piazza di Spagna.

"'Is your carriage gone?'—cried she, as I entered," resumed the duke.—"'Oh! stop it,—stop it!'—And ringing the bell, she gave orders

to the servant in time to prevent my brougham from leaving the door.

“ ‘ When you drove up, I was on the point of sending for a hackney-coach !’ said she : and the haggardness of her countenance and redness of her eyelids, gave her so wild an appearance, that I was half afraid she had had some quarrel with Vernon, and was going, in a fit of frenzy, to seek him at the House of Commons.”

“ What !—your quiet, well-conducted *protégée* ?”

“ While I was puzzling myself in what terms to inquire and remonstrate,” resumed my master, “ ‘ You must come *with* me !’ cried poor Mrs. Vernon, suddenly seizing me by the sleeve, ‘ George is absent,—I am afraid to go alone !—You *must* accompany me !’—And in her agitation, she kept calling me Lord Algernon, the name under which I had been more intimately known to her.”

Again did the pretty lip of dear Jane assume a pouting expression.

“ Accompany you *whither?* ”—cried I.—  
“ *Where* is it you want to go?”

“ To the Charing Cross Hospital.”

“ Now?—Before dinner?”—

“ Instantly!”—cried she, throwing on her scarf, and rushing without a bonnet to the carriage; thus placing me in a state of consternation which I could not wound her feelings by manifesting,—at the idea of having so beautiful a woman seen in my brougham: concerning whom, if interrogated by my lady friends, I could not answer a word!

“ But poor Mary’s tears, (I beg your pardon, my dear Jane,) poor Mrs. Vernon’s tears and despair, admitted of neither hesitation nor compunction; so jumping in after her, I bad the coachman drive to Charing Cross;—wishing only that all the rigidly righteous wives of all the county members of my acquaintance were at that moment safe, with them, in the House of Commons.”

“ And *did* you meet any one?”

“ *Non so!*—I was too absorbed in the emotions of my unfortunate companion to take notice of anything else.”

“ A very pretty story, upon my word.”

“ You would not have thought so, if you had heard it !”—was the grave rejoinder of the duke. “ In driving rapidly home to dinner, Mrs. Vernon had run over a child,—a match-boy, or beggar, or something of that description,—who had been taken up crushed almost to death and carried senseless to the hospital, while she, almost *as* miserable, was conveyed home; and when I arrived in Curzon Street, she had just contrived to ascertain the fate of the poor little fellow.”

“ And when you arrived at the *hospital* ?”—

“ The surgeons were in consultation whether amputation would be indispensable. The child had been taken into the accident ward, and received all the aid that could at present alleviate his agony. But in spite of all I could urge, nothing would content that poor woman

but to visit him in person, and inquire how and where his family could be apprized of his accident, and in what way they might best be comforted and assisted."

"Poor thing!—Poor *things!*"—faltered the duchess, becoming deeply interested in his narrative.

"I implored her, as you may suppose, to leave everything to me, and return home, and warned her of the horrors by which she would be appalled at such a place,—in such an atmosphere!—But she would listen to nothing but the dictates of her own heart. In a moment, she was out of the carriage,—the people staring open-mouthed as she passed at the beautiful face round which her dishevelled hair was playing so wildly.—You heard the moans and murmurs of the ward cease suddenly, when the rustling of her rich silk gown was heard as she glided hurriedly past those beds of torment!"

"And the poor boy?"—

"Was unluckily in the furthest bed! Be-



fore Mrs. Vernon reached it, she stopped short, and involuntarily hid her face,—as if afraid to witness the anguish she had innocently occasioned ; and I, who *had* ventured to look at the poor little fellow, scarcely wished that she might recover courage to follow my example !”

“ He was dreadfully hurt, then ?”

“ Dreadfully ! Yet such was his frightful weakness and emaciation, that one felt it had been only a release from wretchedness, if the carriage, instead of wounding him, had crushed him to death !”

“ But he *was* seriously injured ?”—

“ More seriously than I can bear to think of.—The bone of the leg was broken in two places—the spine fatally contused.”

“ Poor creature,—poor little creature !” cried the duchess, unconsciously turning round to comfort her eyes by the sight of her pretty little Jane, asleep in the arms of Gianetta, at whose feet I was lying.

“ He had the fortitude of a stoic !”—added

the duke.—“Not a moan or complaint did he utter! I have often made more fuss about a toothache, than that child while they were agonizing his poor little mangled frame by their examination. There was a cold dew upon his hollow temples, indeed, and the nurse was holding ether to his nose——”

“What a trying moment for poor Mrs. Vernon!” interrupted the duchess.

“Before I could restrain her, she was on her knees by the bedside, imploring forgiveness of the poor little boy,—who seemed, however, in charity with her and everybody,—so thankful was he for even a glass of water held to his lips by one of the assistants of the ward. There was something heart-rending in the contrast between Mrs. Vernon’s snow-white, polished hand and the sallow, wasted forehead and pinched features of that poor little starveling, as she gently and carefully wiped away the rising moisture.”

“Dearest Algy,—how terribly must such a scene have affected you!”

“ It was nothing,—it was nothing,—*all that* was nothing, compared with the horrors that were to follow !—”

“ Good heavens !—she did not surely require you to stay during the operation ?”

“ She was kneeling, as I told you just now, so close to the pillow of the poor little patient, that I could not distinctly hear the words exchanged between them,—

“ ‘ I am very, *very* sorry.—I will do all in my power to make you easier.—Forgive me, forgive me for having been the cause of your sad accident !’—was all I could gather.—‘ But surely you must have friends to whom I could make known what has happened ?—surely you must have friends ?’—

“ ‘ I have *parents*, my lady,’—murmured the enfeebled voice of the child,—as if to *him* the names were not exactly synonymous.

“ ‘ And where do they live ?—I will send for them,—I can *go* to them.’—

“ ‘ They always bid me never *tell* where they

lived,"—faltered the boy; and already, it appeared, he had declined, when brought to the hospital, to give his address.

“ ‘ But on such an occasion, my poor little fellow, you will be rendering *them*, as well as yourself, a service. Nothing but kindness is intended them ! And *you*,—suffering as you are, you must want to see them,—you must want to be comforted by your mother ! ’—

“ The boy answered not a word. Perhaps, because his deadly faintness increased with his sufferings. But the tender-hearted woman, who knew that she was the cause of those unmerited tortures, felt, I verily believe, more than he did. Placing her cambric handkerchief tenderly under his pale face, she held his little callous, meagre hand in her own, as if marking with terror its gradually-relaxing pulsations.

“ ‘ At least, tell me whether there is anything in the world I can do, to please or comfort you ? ’—whispered she, the tears streaming

from her eyes, when she saw that she had come to witness the last moments of the expiring boy.

“ ‘ If I die,’—said he, in broken accents, ‘ I hope, my lady, some kind person will be pleased to see there is a prayer said over me.—I—I—have not been a bad boy—and I should not—I should not like to—’ a throe of anguish suspended his faltering words.—‘ They sold Bill Hoddings’s child to the dissecting-house,’ said he, his lips so quivering with agony that he could scarcely pronounce the words;—‘ but if it is not too much to ask, my lady, I should be glad of Christian burial.’—

“ ‘ You shall need no burial prayers!’ cried the distracted Mrs. Vernon.—‘ You shall be taken care of,—you shall be saved,—you shall never know a want again!’—

“ The little wasted hand she held, almost ventured to press her own; and the hollow, eager eye fixed itself askingly on her weeping face,—perhaps in wonder that a friend should

be vouchsafed at last,—only to render it difficult to die!—

“ ‘Tell me your name,’ said Mrs. Vernon, —‘tell it me, that I may pray for you, and—’

“ ‘I was going, my lady, to make bold to ask yours?’—murmured he, with an expression of countenance I found it difficult to explain,—adding, in scarcely audible accents, ‘for your voice is so like the voice of my poor sister Mary!—*My* name is Jem Sims.’

“ ‘May it never be your misfortune, dearest Jane,’ continued the duke, ‘to hear such a scream as burst at that moment from the lips of my unfortunate friend! The surgeons in attendance at an adjoining bed insisted on having her removed from the ward, lest the uncontrolled emotions to which she was giving way might prove injurious to the other patients.—For she was literally distracted! And well she might!—It was her own brother who had been crushed under her carriage wheels;—her own poor, ragged, starving little brother!—

Oh! if you had seen what kisses she imprinted on his poor little cold face, after he was gone;—if you could have seen how she clung to him,—poor wasted creature!

“ ‘The child that I saw born!’ said she, burying her fair face in his shaggy hair,—‘ my brother,—my own flesh and blood.—My poor little Jem, who, before I disgraced myself, used to kiss and love me,—my poor little Jem, that—’

“ Do not let us talk of it!”—exclaimed the duke, interrupting himself, and the expression of his face evincing the inward struggle of his feelings.—“ While assisting Vernon (whom I was forced to fetch, ere we could separate her from the mangled body) to remove her from the hospital, I promise you that I would have given a year’s income to have escaped the sight of her anguish and remorse!”—

Dear reader!—I am not afraid of opening my heart to you. None but a good fellow will have accompanied poor Rattle thus far into the third volume of his memoirs; and I

have consequently no hesitation in avowing that, while listening to this painful narrative, I wept as though my heart would break!—Throughout my “green and salad days” at Wigmore Castle,—throughout my vanities and follies in London,—and despite the process of petrification I have described as resulting from immersion in the stream of fashion,—the friend of my puppyhood had never been dislodged from his sanctuary at the bottom of my heart!—My own dear Jem!—My own *poor* Jem!—

And I was never to see him again!—never more to watch the pulses beat for joy at sight of me, in his wasted temples!—never see his hollow eye brighten, in acknowledgment of my tokens of affection! I had always looked forward with security to some future meeting; when I might prove to him that I was not proud, and receive anew those warm caresses, concentrating the fervour of a loving heart which had nothing *else* to love!—How different



from the exaggerated but hollow phrases of fashionable languor!—How different from the listless petting of the duchess!—My own, *own* Jem!—

And now, alas! I found that I was not to enjoy the solace of even visiting his grave! I should never discover where they had laid him. When we returned to ostentatious London, with its pomps of church-burial,—its St. Paul's,—its Westminster Abbey,—and those hundreds of parochial churches which, from Greenwich hill, resemble a forest of spires,—*who* was there to point out to me the last resting-place of that miserable little outcast of human nature, who had passed through life without a joy, to a grave without a name,—unloved, unsolaced, unmourned,—though abounding in all the most endearing qualities of the heart!—

“What *can* be the matter with Rattle, that he is whining so piteously?” cried the duchess, who had so sympathized with her whole soul in

the narrative of her husband, as to take no heed of what was passing in the tent.—“ He will certainly wake the baby !”—

“ Have you hurt or scolded the dog ?” demanded the duke of Gianetta, in Italian somewhat choicer than the *patois* in which she assured him she had neither touched nor addressed me. But though the child *did* at that moment wake up, with the wailing cry of an infant interrupted in its sleep, I was not to be chided out of the indulgence of my piteous moans.

“ I am certain something is the matter with him,—or *us* !”—cried the duchess, starting to her feet, and carefully examining every corner of the tent. “ Dogs have such extraordinary instincts, that I am certain Rattle is trying to apprise us of some danger at hand.”

“ By Jove ! one need not go far in search of the cause of his discomposure !”—cried the duke, who, having stepped out of the tent, was looking up through the foliage of the pistacio-trees,

towards a lurid sky,—between which and the Campo Romano a species of mephitic atmosphere, as from the vapour of hot ashes, had suddenly interposed. The electric influence seemed indeed to take away one's breath, the moment one ventured out of the sheltering tent; and phosphoric points of light seemed every now and then to issue from the sharp leaves of the lofty aloes, abundantly dotted over the plain. “Ramsay told me yesterday, before we left the yacht, that there was a fearful storm brewing at no great distance. Nelly!” shouted he, putting his hand to his mouth to form a speaking-trumpet, “come back, come back.—We are off in a moment!—Saddle the mules!” cried he, to the second *campiere*, and his men. “Quick—quick,—that we may reach the gates before the storm comes on!—You can strike the tent, and follow us!”—

But the mules, who were loose, and grazing in the plain, affrighted, as animals are apt to be on the approach of a storm, were not so easy

to be caught; and *when* caught, exhibited as great a repugnance to be saddled, as if their lives were not habitually spent under those heavy housings of sheepskin. In his impatience to get his child and wife under shelter before the rain came down, the duke began to assist in person in the operation; handling the brass buckles and greasy straps with a readiness I should never have anticipated from the perfumed, ladylike Lord Algernon whose acquaintance I made at the Athol!

Before, however, he could contrive to get his troop into the saddle, or rather, before the baby was fairly established on its mother's knees, and I, in its place, on those of the indignant Gianetta, sudden streams of light had begun to pour from the louring clouds into the sea, and heavy drops of rain became audible on the leaves over our head; *as* audible amid the fearful hush of nature, as the tapping of the woodpecker in a lonely forest.

“Not a moment to be lost, if you would

gain the town before the explosion of the storm!" cried the duke to his loitering sister; and in another second, we were on the full trot across the plain, quickened rather than impeded by the terrible roar of the thunder, that sounded as though some beast of prey were in pursuit; and not daring to pause for the contemplation of the outlines of those glorious temples, standing out in majestic relief against the threatening sky; every now and then illuminated by a forked flash, which seemed as though that sky were cleft asunder to reveal with fearful portents the will of the divinities, to whom the altars of those desecrated fanes once offered up their incense!—

The storm, which, at first condensed in a dark mass of clouds, had seemed to arise like a giant out of the sea, recalled to my mind the double-eyed Polyphemus portrayed in the Guarnacci collection at Volterra. It was easy to understand how the notion of a Cyclop was first engendered in a Sicilian imagination by

the threatening aspect of these masses of lurid vapour. ,Even I—though neither Hesiod, nor Flaxman, nor Fuseli,—could have almost fancied Polyphemus himself stalking after us along the valley of Girgenti, in his seven-leagued boots ;—huge of body as the *torso* of old Jupiter Tonans, five-and-twenty feet high, which was lying its length hard by in the area of his ruined temple.

I can jest about it *now*.—But while we were shrinking under the storm, with the lightning flaring every moment in our faces, as in that of Semiramis, when the scene of Ninus's ghost is overacted at some third-rate theatre,—I was more than half dead with affright. The thunder deafened me,—the lightning blinded. During the ten or fifteen minutes of our *trajet* to reach the *locanda* of the *Leone d'Oro*, the rain, which pelted down in far more copious streams than the modern edition of the Agra-gus, had so completely drenched the soi-disant macintosh of the duchess, (one of those wea-

ther-worn cloaks in which yachters take as much delight as a sportsman in an old hunting coat,—according to the Italian adage of “*bandiera vecchia, onor di capitano!*”) that I heartily wished my *own* coat caoutchouc-ed.

No sooner, however, had I set paw on the *puzzolano* floor of the *locanda*, than I began frisking and flourishing about as much as to say—“I trust no one has been uneasy?”—and as though the storm had been mere pastime;—like the Genoese noble, who, on crawling out of the cabin where he had concealed himself during a naval engagement with a Tunisian pirate, kept exclaiming, “*Siam presi?—o abbiamo preso?*”—

While my dripping companions betook themselves to their beds, till, the storm having roared itself to rest, they were able to obtain a change of clothes from the yacht, I was the only one of the party who seemed inclined to overlook the deficiencies of the *Leone d'Oro*, and do justice to a supper imposed as peremp-

torily on the travellers as the Abbate's monologue used to be on the duke, at Villa Verdasti; or as the duets of the Ladies Semitone used to be inflicted on the shuddering amateurs of Rome.—

Just, however, as I was repairing to table,

A change came o'er the hunger of my frame.

Reminiscences of the miserable story narrated by the duke, “said ‘Eat no more!’ to all the house.” Not even when I heard my credulous lady protest that I had “made proof of a sagacity beyond praise,—that my powers of instinct were equalled only by my zealous fidelity,—that, but for the wonderful manner in which I had apprized them by my moans, of the impending storm, they should have remained talking, unconscious of their danger,”—not even these deceptive flatteries could make me forget that I had lost my earliest friend!—Broad hems and indifference are for human survivors.—The little dog mourns in his accustomed coat.—

While the duchess and Lady Ellen kept mu-



tually congratulating themselves on their escape, by the light of a fire of vine-stalks, which, in spite of the weather, they had caused to be kindled on the hearth by way of purification, and frightening away visitors of an ignoble nature,—*I* crept into a corner unnoticed,—to comfort myself by a fresh tribute of tears to the memory of Jem!—

## CHAPTER V.

Around me are the stars and waters ;  
Worlds mirrored in the ocean,—goodlier sight  
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass !  
And the great element, which is to space  
What ocean is to earth, spreads its blue depths,  
Softened by summer's warm mellifluous breath.  
The high moon sails upon her beauteous way  
Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls  
Of holy fanes and sea-girt palaces.

BYRON.

NEVER did my Marylebone-itish imagination conceive a distinct idea of the Garden of Eden, till I had beheld the environs of Palermo;—Palermo, which, for two thousand years, has retained the epithet of *felice*!—

I have seen the Paradise of that dreamer of gorgeous dreams, Martin;—I have seen the Paradise of Van Eyck, the herbage and foliage of which resembles the mould of a cheese viewed through a powerful microscope;—and that of Albert Durer, the first instance on record of the use of the orange-flower as bridal vesture. But my mind remained unenlightened till I beheld the thickets of oleander that surround Palermo, tufted with their bloom of vivid pink and white, like the complexion of a Suffolk dairy-maid,—the hedges of myrtle and jessamine,—the trimly citron-trees, with their heavy fruit in process of transmutation, like the back of a dying dolphin, from green to gold,—while above arise, like minarets, the acuminated verdure of the cypress and triumphal lightness of the palm,—fostered by the shelter of Monte Pellegrino, and refreshed by the Greco or Mediterranean breeze, which hovers over a bay resembling that of Naples, as a less developed younger sister resembles some noted beauty.

Truly indeed does Sicily—and above all Palermo, (a dimple in its lovely cheek,) deserve the name of the favourite of nature! Other countries, when crushed by the hand of tyranny, assume a wan and squalid look!—Other lands, whose breasts have been wounded by the hoofs of usurping legions, exhibit a series of hideous scars.—Other beauties, who have unveiled their charms to successive adorers and submitted to successive masters, become a mark of pity and contempt. But Sicily is exceptional. We behold her adorned with the gifts of her divers conquerors,—inheriting her cities from the Phœnicians, her palaces from the Saracens, her churches from the Normans, her costumes and pastimes from the Spaniards;—without a moment overlooking that for the charms which exposed her to the addresses of these successive victors, she is indebted to the supreme hand of Providence.

We pardon her enervation,—it is the fault of the climate. We forgive her superstition,—

for in that fertile soil, even religion acquires an exuberant growth! Crowned with her palm-trees,—bathing her languid feet in the blue waters of her gulf,—she has a thousand pretexts for her luxurious indolence.—“*Felice!*—*FELICE!*”—Twenty centuries of care and coil have revolved round the work-a-day world,—bringing forth factories and power-looms,—railways and war-steamers,—Princeton-guns and parish-unions,—all that is hardest and most angular and difficult of parturition; while the fortunate city which, when Amilcar, the Carthaginian, encamped in the adjoining valley, was discovered smiling and basking in her green meadows, as if intent on the conquest of her conquerors, has done nothing *but* smile, from that day to this;—stirring neither hand nor foot throughout two thousand ineffable years of self-indulgence.

When the Phœnicians took possession of the adjacent coast described by the old world as *pulchrum littus*, at a time when antiquity was

still only a middle-aged gentleman,—the first institution they attempted, after establishing corn-mills and ovens for the support of life, was an Archæological Society for the preservation of the public monuments bequeathed to the old city of Panormus by its Chaldean founders, (according to Fazellen, emigrants from Damascus 3,360 years before Christ!) and till within these few hundred years, stones bearing ancient inscriptions in the Chaldean characters, (which nothing but the mummies unrolled by Dr. Pettigrew or some fossile man from the Caucasus would be competent to expound,) were preserved in the Tower of Baych, for the edification of travellers.

But all these primitive distinctions were forgotten as soon as the Saracens established at Al Cassaer their misbelieving court,—striking the foundations of those costly palaces which have since afforded shelter to the Norman and Angevine kings of Sicily,—the princes of Arragon, and of Bourbonized Naples. Under the

Mahomedan rule, Palermo became anew the prosperous and meretricious capital of an island whose daughters supplied to Zeuxis models for his Juno, and whose soldiers (according to Diodorus) were entitled in mounting guard, to mattrass, coverlet, and pillows !

In the gallery of the Palazzo Nuovo, by the way, which the descendants of Robert Guiscard superadded to the old Al-Cassar,—just as George IV. added Buckingham Palace to that of St. James,—to prove that a new palace *could* be built as ugly and incommodious as the old, — are still to be seen the famous couple of brazen rams, transported half a dozen centuries ago from Syracuse; where there existed four, corresponding with the points of the compass, so organised that the prevailing wind, blowing through their hollow bodies, proclaimed itself by a sullen roar; even as in modern times, the shifting of the breeze of politics betrays itself by the roaring of the opposition.

These curious quadrupeds, these bellowing

rams scarcely less fearful than the battering rams of the olden time, have, alas! been forced to pay tribute to the morbid condition of modern taste. While subject to the authority of the Conte di Forcella, (the Nash of Palermo,) the poor brutes were painted sky-blue;—a sacrilege to which a sigh might be given, without blame, by even the sky-bluest of Idlers!

It was not sky-blue, however, but true blue, that chiefly occupied our attention at Palermo. We whiled away the month of August partly at Messina, and partly at a charming mansion of the Prince of Biscaris, at Catania, called Villa Scabrosa, hollowed out of a sea of lava, and exhibiting a wilderness of flowers;—now, exploring the mountain solitudes and chesnut groves of Ètna;—now, scampering across the country to visit the ruined temples of Segeste;—now, devoting day after day to an exploration of the antiquities of Syracuse.

I was almost afraid, indeed, that his grace was about to undergo a relapse of his anti-



quarian fever. But being happily destitute of a Maurice Thibaut to turn it to account, and the *cicerone* who had undertaken us being unaware, without the aid of some such interpreter, that the fair young man in a pea-jacket, to whom he was doing the honours of the ruins of Ortygia, and the Acradina, had four times as many golden ounces annually at command as the Viceroy of Sicily, we escaped with the purchase of a *scyphus*, or votive cup; such as the ancient Ancient Mariners used to cast into the sea on losing sight of the shield of Minerva cased with gold, (visible for leagues on the lofty summit of her Ortygian temple,) to insure prosperity to their voyage; and a few medals,—several of them of the reign of that problematical queen, Philistidis, known only by numismatic commemoration, and the inscription

ΒΑΣΙΛΑΣΣΑΣ

*Regine*

ΦΙΛΙΣΤΙΔΩΣ

*Philistidis*

still visible on the western side of the theatre in the Neapolis quarter of the ruins of Ortygia, as though the foundress of the building.

Those who are curious concerning the sovereign lady thus singularly immortalized, may consult Castellus on the subject; especially as it seems unlikely that any modern queen will excite the interest of posterity by a similar endowment.

For my part, I had enough and to spare of the ancients; and exclaimed more than once, when my projects of *siesta* were deranged by one of his grace's paroxysms of classicality,

Qui me délivrera des Grecs et des Romains !

For *was* it worth while to have that balmy atmosphere breathing around one, and those verdant acclivities or purple horizons extending before us, if we were to lose the summer's day groping in a washerwoman's well, because it went by the name of the Fountain of Arethusa; —or traversing the pestilential marshes which decimated the Carthaginian army, in search of the fountain of Cyane !

Sicily, however, was to be our portion till the month of September;—the duke having given rendezvous at Palermo, for the feast of St. Rosalia, to his cousin, Lord Hebberton, and a yacht's company of fashionable friends; and, lo! when we hailed the heights of Monte Pellegrino, the Sunbeam and Water-lily, of Solent renown, had just dropped anchor in the port!

But what nation or language was *not*, at that moment, represented in the port?—What flag of what sovereign was not flying?—We had Eagles, single-bodied and double,—black, white, and red,—the tri-colors of France and Belgium, and seven stars of Yankeeland. We had the ensign of a navy lately pamphletized into insolence; and, floating opposite in saucy derision, from the mast of one of the finest frigates in our service, the flag which has

Braved a thousand years,  
The battle and the breeze.

(*Ed.* I adhere to this popular mode of designating the union jack; though what may have been the state of the British navy in the reign of Edgar, or of St. Edmund king of the East Angles, I leave it to the superior information of the honourable secretary of the Admiralty to determine.)

And what a confusion of costumes upon the quays!—Jullien's masquerades are tame and monotonous of jacket-and-trowser, compared with the Neapolitan, Genoese, Corfuote, Tunisian, Corsican, Majorcan, Danish, Spanish, Prussian, Russian, Albanian, and Caramanian, specimens of the sons of Neptune, exhibiting their iron frames and copper faces on that red-hot quay!—

The comfort to my feelings was unspeakable, when, amid the general confusion of "*Corpo di Cristo!*—*Corpo di Bacco!*—*Hunder Tausend Sacrementen!*—and *sacré mille tonnerres!*"—I recognised a full-blown British

oath, such as Wapping or the Cómmon Hard need not have blushed to own!—

Let it not be supposed that it emanated from one of our crew. The Firefly, as became its ensign of the R. Y. C., was accustomed to swear only by its Commodore. It was a jolly tar of H. M. S. Acanthe, that spoke so unceremoniously of his own eyes;—and a minute afterwards, I could scarcely trust the evidence of mine, when I saw approaching me, with a gait which, if that of an old admiral, would have entitled him to a naval government safe on shore, like a three-decker cut down into a hospital ship, but which, when connected with the knowing costume of a fashionable yachtsman, might be considered that of a man *entre deux ages*,—a tripsome old gentleman, on whom the gout had set its seal, and the throne of England a ducal coronet,—even his grace the Duke of Wigmore!—

Already, I had gathered from conversations betwixt my master and mistress, that, ever

since the death of the duchess, “the bereaved duke” had been casting his wrinkles, as the serpent sheds its skin; and that he had taken to champagne, tennis, lansquenet, and yachting, as though his life were only now beginning: his attachment to Lady Rosamel and his grand-children being said to afford the sole antidote against a second marriage. But I confess I was not prepared to meet my dilapidated old master so *very* far from Wigmore Castle, in so *very* tail-less a jacket, and so very broad-brimmed a Bolivar,—as part and parcel of the noble crew of the Water Lily!

“My dear Jane, how are you?”

“My dear uncle,—what a pleasant surprise!”—satisfied me that I was not mistaken. But the excitement over of greeting and exhibiting her little daughter to one of her nearest connexions, I saw the duchess become confused and embarrassed; the thought of “poor Mrs. Vernon” being uppermost in *her* mind, as in my own.

How overjoyed people are to meet in a foreign country, who, in their own, would not cross Grosvenor Square to secure an interview! —Lord Hebberton and the two dukes, and Sir Henry and Lady Bingley, who were passengers with the latter in the Water-lily, appeared as delighted to see each other, and shook each other's hands as enthusiastically as though they had come all the way to Palermo on the Eve of Saint Rosalia, for no other purpose; and fellows who would have bowed to each other stiffly and stupidly in the park, seemed of opinion that their lives were not worth having, nor Sicily worth seeing, till they had swallowed a certain number of bottles of Terra Mota in each other's company.

They messed together therefore on board the Water Lily; as a pretext for making the ladies dine together quietly on shore and await their coming at the opera, where the Duke of Wigmore's factotum had secured a box.

Two or three patriotic Sicilian nobles having

undertaken the *impresarioship*—an office so certain to lead to bankruptcy in all countries, that none but noblemen ought to meddle with it,—the music of their own Bellini was nightly mangled at Palermo, with a degree of barbarity to which it had been familiarized by the usage of the Ladies Semiton. My Italian experience indeed leads me to declare that Italian music, like flowers and fruit, is only to be enjoyed, in full perfection, in London!—

I suppose the duchess and her pretty sister-in-law were aware of my contempt for the Palermitan opera; or Lady Bingley was already renewing her former slights. For I was left at home to take mine ease in mine inn; where I was roused from my slumbers, shortly after sunset, by the sound of two noisy individuals, reeling into my master's chamber!

Disguised as they were (in champagne) I fortunately recognised them ere I gave the alarm. For, after all, it was only the duke, bringing Lord Hebberton to undergo the pro-



cess of ablution externally, with cold water, and inwardly with Seltzer, in the hope of enabling him to see only three ladies instead of half a dozen, in the box to which they talked of repairing; though if all their movements were as zigzag as those by which they made across the room for the bell, I doubt whether the Strada Nuova had much chance of being traversed before midnight. Lord Hebberton evidently thought me *twice* the dog he ever had at Wigmore Castle.

His disebriation would have concerned me little, but for my suspicion that Lady Ellen Howarth was the white Galatea who had allured him to the Sicilian coast. During the theatricals at Wigmore, I remembered his being pointed out by the young ladies, as a Romeo bespoken; prevented only by Lady Ellen's dutiful attendance on the old duke, from pretending to her hand.

“ I'm afraid Andrea has made proof of his

national propensities by going to the opera," said the duke, in answer to Lord Heberston's demands for Willis's mirific, and *Ess bouquet*, to smooth his complement extern into shape.—“And those fellows have such a confounded habit of locking up one's things, that I scarcely know what I can get for you. Here is a case of eau de Cologne, however, if *that* will do?”—cried my master, attempting to knock off the end of the box, somewhat to the peril of the bottles within.

“By the way, my dear duke,” said Heberston, who, having seated himself on the bed, evidently mistaking it for a sofa, and, mistaking also the room for the cabin of the Sunbeam, kept holding tight by the coverlet on which I was lying, as if to prevent it from sailing away, and leaving him behind,—“what w—was the name of the r—rascal I re—recommended you, last year, as co—co—courier?”

“Maurice.”

“ Maurice,—*et puis ?*”

“ Faith, I forget his surname, unless I were to look in my desk for his receipts.”

“ W—was it—Th—Thibaut ?”

“ Something of that kind.”

“ I say w—was it M—Maurice Th—Thibaut ?” persisted the tipsy viscount ; on which the duke, slightly opening the adjoining door, uttered the same question to Gianetta in an audible whisper, in compliment to the slumbers of little Lady Jane.

“ Yes !—Maurice Thibaut !” repeated he to Lord Hebberton,—after obtaining the necessary information from the nurse.

“ Th—then let me tell you, my d—dear fellow,” said Hebberton, who was now scattering the eau de Cologne as lavishly as the Trafalgar Square fountains their dew,—“ th—that you have had a very l—lu—a very lucky esc—escape, not to be—not to be—Confound this e—eau de C—Cologne, it pricks like—a th—thistle !”

“ A very lucky escape from *what?* ”—persisted my master, who was in far more sober case than his noble friend.

“ From h—having your th—throat cut ! ”

“ What the devil do you mean, Hebberton ? ” cried the duke—uncertain whether he knew what he was saying.

“ I mean that M—Maurice Tri—Tribot was neither more nor l—less than a—There ! —the b—bottle come to p—pieces in my hand !—Ha ! ha ! ha !—Those c—confounded eau de Cologne b—b—bottles are al—always—cracked ! ”—

After relieving him from the fragments of glass with which he was not just then very fit to be trusted, the duke resumed his inquiries ; and Lord Hebberton, having now swallowed nearly a *cruchon* of Seltzer-water, fortunately became a little more articulate.

“ Maurice has only left me within these two months,” said my master ; “ and a sad loss in tra-

velling I find him. He was the handiest fellow I ever saw !”

“ Handy enough, no doubt—after serving his time among the l—l—light-fingered gentry !” —cried his companion. “ However, he’s safe enough now.”

“ Yes,—he went straight from me to his family—who are settled at ——”

An incoherent laugh from Lord Hebberton interrupted his grace’s explanation. “ Ha, ha, ha, ha !—His family !—M—Maurice Thiriot’s f—family !—Poor Algy !—poor dear Algy !—Why the fellow was a ga—galley-slave,—a *forçat* !” —

“ A *forçat libéré* ?” —

“ Liberated only because his h—heels were as light as f—fi—fingers.”

“ But how, in the name of heaven, came you to recommend such a fellow to my service ?

Qualem commendes etiam atque etiam adspice, ne mor  
Incutiant aliena tibi peccata pudorem !”

“ Because he imp—imposed on *me* by forged cer—certificates, as well as yourself !”—muttered the viscount,—secretly persuaded that the nausea of which he was conscious, arose from “ poor Normanford’s Latin.”

“ And when did you make the discovery ?”

“ I ?—I made no discovery !”—

“ I mean *when* did you find out Maurice to be a *forçat* ?”—

“ His name was no more Maurice than it was Alg—Algernon, or Heb—Hebberston.—His name was Marco Tovale. He was a C—Corsican,—a Cagliariot.”—

“ But how did you manage to ascertain it ?” cried the duke,—impatient to get at the truth.

“ Through the *Patriote Bordelais* !”

“ A newspaper ?”—

“ Exactly !—The Bordeaux police having orders from Paris to be on the look out for him, just as the Sunbeam happened to touch at Bordeaux, the *Patriote Bordelais* announced

that the fellow had been ar—rested, on board the steamer, at Paulliac.”

“ But what made you recognise the man in question as *our* Maurice?”—persisted my master.

“ Because he was stated by the newspaper to have been lately at Rome, in the service of the English Duc de Normanfaure; which being a tol—tolerable approach to your name, for a French editor, I made further inquiries!”

“ And what was the result?”—

“ That we were off before I got an answer from the police!”

“ A *forçat*!”—ejaculated the duke. “ What an escape for my family!—What a providential escape!—But, poor Lucy Mason!—the diamonds!”—He paused and shuddered; for Lord Hebberton was in no condition to be entrusted with his misgivings; and could afford no further information, except that he rather thought he could find the number of the *Patriote Bordelais*, which contained an account of Maurice’s arrest,

somewhere in his baggage. “ He would look for it in the morning.”

Either because he considered Lord Hebberton still unfit for the society of ladies, or because too much overcome by what he had heard, to expose himself to the questioning of his dear Jane, the duke proposed that, instead of joining the party at the theatre, where it was safe under the protection of his Grace of Wigmore and a Sicilian duke or two,—(the hospitalities of Wigmore Castle insuring princely hospitality in return, in whatever capital of Europe he set his foot,)—they should take a *giro* on the Marina;—whither every carriage in Palermo repairs at sunset, for the enjoyment of the *Greco* or sea breeze.

I had no difficulty in following at their heels. But when we arrived there, the splendid fireworks exhibited before the Palazzo Butera in honour of the Eve of Santa Rosalia, had emitted their last spark; and of the prodigious populace assembled on that beautiful esplanade,



on one side lined with noble palaces,—on the other open to the rippling waters of the gulf,—the majority were pursuing their joyous way towards the Flora, 'or Botanical Garden,—the whole atmosphere astir with the cheerful hum of conversation,—snatches of merry tunes,—and shouts of holiday mirth.—

“ England, with all thy faults, I love thee still !” By Jove, I do ! But, on occasions of public festivity, give me to find myself in the midst of a light-hearted southern population, rather than of thy pugnacious imbibers of British compounds; whose favourite recreation consists in fisticuffs, and whose retort courteous is a black eye !—

On reaching the Flora, however, the throng thickened, and the laughter loudened, so as to be almost too much for my nerves. But what a gay and spirit-stirring scene !—Illuminated lanterns suspended from every tree !—The gardens as bright as day with devices of variegated lamps !—Orchestras stationed in every

flowery thicket, that the feet of the dancers might beat the ground to the lively measures of the Tarentella and Pizzica. The very atmosphere seemed alive with merriment and joy!

“What a me—melancholy spectacle!—What dreadful profligacy!” exclaimed Lord Hebberton, who was leaning hard on my master’s arm, having reached the maudlin stage of his condition, and become as solemn as the chairman of an anti-Maynooth committee. “Think, my dear duke,—think of their unfortunate so—souls!”—

As they stood watching at that moment a couple of tarentellists, whose stamping movements evinced a bitter spite against the ground, my master probably thought a pun was intended. For he laughed heartily; and the merrier he grew, the graver his companion;—who kept preaching much as Friar Tuck may have done after a third flagon of sack, and with such vehement gesticulation, that people at a distance, supposing him to be discoursing by

signs with some persons in the crowd, (in the manner for which the Palermitans have long been famous, and which exceeds in ingenuity of pantomime all the deaf and dumb institutions of Europe,) busied themselves with trying to intercept so eager a discourse.

“Come along, like a good fellow, Heb,—and leave the people to amuse themselves in their own way!”—cried the duke, endeavouring to guide him out of the crowd.

“No, no, my conscience won’t allow me!” remonstrated the young viscount, waiving his hands and head;—“these people are intoxicated!—and since there is no Father Mathew in Sic—Sic—Sicily to repress so beastly a vice, and bring them to a sense of their sit—situation,—I feel called upon to address them.”

His intentions were luckily circumvented by the sudden whirr of a rocket cleaving the air, to afford a signal, by its falling stars, to the city, that the doors of the cathedral were thrown open, and the various confraternities

and companies issuing forth in solemn procession, with the reliques of their several saints.

More hurry,—more noise,—more music,—more laughter;—and amid the general uproar, we reached the chief street, the Strada del Cassaro, illuminated throughout its length with a profusion of lamps sparkling on lofty pyramidal stages.

Already, the various processions were parading their shrines, and banners, and pastoral ornaments of gold or silver, in solemn progress in honour of Palermo's darling saint;—and as soon as the gradual restoration of Lord Heberston permitted, the duke made the best of his way into the cathedral, the illumination of which would have better become a ball-room, than that sacred dome. Chandelier above chandelier,—girandole above girandole, diffused an all-dazzling light in the lofty choirs; exhibiting in rich relief the lacelike carvings of white marble, the stately tombs of porphyry and marble, and

the eighty columns of oriental granite supporting the roof.

How strangely would this midnight blaze of day have startled the Normans, who superposed on a Saracenic mosque that gorgeous temple of Christianity!—

Solemnly sounded the organ, as the processions deliberately wound their way out of the vast portals;—and softly smiled the face of the Madonna bending over the Bambino in the richly-embroidered banners they upheld. It appeared the object of the clergy to sanctify, by parading relics of minor account, the route to be followed on the morrow by the shrine of the thrice holy patroness of Palermo;—for while the various processions traversed the street, their incense embalming the air in rivalry with the flowers thrown before them as they slowly glided along, every window and balcony was crowded with ladies in full dress, and the façades of the houses were ornamented with gay streamers, armorial bearings, or webs of ancient tapestry.

With its admixtures of light and colour, it was a scene for Danby to paint. But it was also a scene for Rattle to enjoy; and when, the last confraternity of Benedictines having trailed their way into the Strada Nuova towards the church of San Giuseppe, the barriers preventing the circulation of carriages were removed, and a general shout proclaimed that the pleasures of the Corso had commenced, right glad was I to jump after my master into the open carriage in which he was to take part in this midnight pastime; which the auspicious nature of the climate and season unite to render a thousand times more exciting than the uproarious but chilly promenades of the carnival.

I have heard that the soil of Sicily produces three crops in the year. Among the productions thus marvellously multiplied, must certainly be princes and dukes. For as we drove along by the vivid light of the illuminations, reflected back more brilliantly from the gay

habits and glittering jewels of the ladies in the carriages, who were all attired in full dress,—not an equipage but was graced with the Sicilian coronet of nobility.

All Europe knows the names of Butera, Paterno, Cattolica, Campo Franco, Terranova, and Palagonia. But each of these noble families must have been multiplied by a hundred, to account for the liveries and escutcheons that enlivened the gay Corso! Salutations from the illuminated windows were answered from the gaudy equipages beneath, by cries of recognition; and on the pavement adjoining the houses on either side, the shopwindows being closed, was ranged a double espalier of the populace of Palermo, in its holiday attire; shouting in honour of Santa Rosalia, or demonstrating by their noisy notice of the passing carriages, the degree of popularity enjoyed by the owner of each.

“*Viva—viva—evviva!*” cried a hundred voices, as the carriage of the Principe di Vil-

ladorata came within view, in which were seated my mistress and her two fair companions, escorted by the Duke of Wigmore; the venerable prince having ceded to his English host of other days, the honours of his equipage.

And while the populace recognised and saluted the well-known livery of one of the most ancient houses of Sicily, my master and Lord Hebberton acknowledged the lucky occupants of the carriage by throwing into their laps huge bouquets of orange flowers, the adroit aiming of which constitutes a chief pastime of the Corso.

It was nearly three hours past midnight when we reached home; for a visit to the *Sorbettiere* for refreshment is indispensable after the noise and glare of the evening. But throughout the night of the 3rd of September, the city knows no rest. The whole population remains astir till morning, each hoping to be the earliest in his tribute of devotion to the Saint of the feast.



I began to suspect that even his grace, my master, was Rosalia-bitten,—so early was he on foot. But having cautiously followed him from the hotel in the Strada Nuova, I found that, instead of directing his steps, as I expected, towards the Duomo, his object was to embark in a shoreboat for the Sunbeam, to ascertain whether any of the crew happened to be in possession of the numbers of the *Patriote Boredelais*, which Lord Hebberton's valet-de-chambre admitted to have thrown aside as out of date.

My master might as well have stayed on shore, for any advantage he derived from his expedition. But I confess I rejoiced to have been his companion, when I beheld the charming effect produced as we rowed back towards the Marina by the joyous aspect of the city, with its flags flying, its façades adorned with flowers, and every vessel lying in the port full dressed, in honour of Santa Rosalia.—It was like nearing the coast of fairyland.—

I could perfectly understand how much it would have enhanced to his grace the pleasures of the day, could his mind have been previously set at rest on the subject of Maurice Thibaut, or rather of Marco Tovale. But it was not to be; and as he had judiciously refrained from agitating the mind of the duchess on the subject, nothing could be gayer or more brilliant than the little party of English and Sicilians assembled in the chief balcony of the Palazzo Geracci, the finest in the Cassaro.

“You will be disappointed, I fear, in the far-famed ceremonial of the day,” observed the venerable Principessa Castelvoturo, the mother of our hostess of the Geracci Palace, addressing Lady Ellen Howarth, who was seated beside her, full of girlish interest in the novelty of the scene. “The piety of Palermo is on the decline, or we are poorer than we used to be: for time was that the car of Saint Rosalia overtopped the churches themselves, and required a team of one hundred oxen to draw it

along ; whereas it now attains only the second story of the houses, and, as you will perceive, is easily conveyed by fifty."

'Easily,' however, was a dowager's myopic view of the case. As soon as, afar off, we heard the shouts of the populace, louder almost than the salvo of artillery which signalized the first movement of the procession, I strained my eyes to the utmost from the balcony in which I had taken up my position on the duchess's knee. And though almost deafened by the noise on all sides, as the car of Saint Rosalia laboured into view, I could not help pitying the case of the fifty milk-white oxen, their horns gilded and their broad foreheads adorned with flowers, like those of beasts led to the sacrifice in those ages when tithes were not only paid in kind, but when priests received their parochial offerings ready roasted ;—for terrible were the efforts necessary to heave into motion a piece of machinery equalling in proportions the car of Jaggernaut,—heavy as the family coach

of a Yorkshire baronet, and serving as an omnibus not alone for a multitude of waxen angels with silver wings, and warriors and saints *en carton pierre*, disposed on its gigantic summit: but for no less than a hundred and fifty full-grown human beings, loaded with heavy draperies and ponderous accessories,—a tolerable load, in short, for a powerful mail train!

This nodding mass of gorgeous decorations, with all its glitter of spangles, brocade, and tissues of cloth of gold and silver,—its histrionic grouping, its rouged faces, its angels of equivocal reputation, and saints hired by the hour,—though sufficiently imposing when viewed advancing from a distance, with the uncovered heads of the shouting multitude intervening, and flowers and benedictions showered upon it from every crowded window, appeared somewhat tawdry and profane as it approached the eye, attaining the second story of the Palazzo Geracci, high above our heads.

A certain saucy Comte de Massonville, who

had intruded into our party with the unctuous sinuosity which makes the utmost intrusion of a Frenchman appear an act of politeness, whispered an audible allusion to the *procession du bœuf gras*, during the Carnival of Paris, which caused the gray-haired princess to cross herself in a panic of devotion; while Lord Hebberton retorted by an equally unseemly allusion to Rag Fair, for which he was gently rebuked by Lady Ellen, whose good breeding was ever manifest in her deference to the customs and prejudices of the land whose hospitalities she was enjoying.—At that moment, I could not help thinking that Ellen Howarth looked almost as pretty as the duchess of my heart!—

I must say I felt proud of them both; and even of Lady Bingley, whose elegance of dress sufficed at least to prove that my fair countrywomen are able to beat the Parisian *élégantes* with their own weapons, when they consider it worth while; and never did three fair daughters of

Albion excite a greater sensation than those milk-white blondes, whom even the sun of the Mediterranean had been moved to spare; contrasted as they were with the raven-haired and gazelle-eyed Sicilians around us, whose swarthy brows unmistakably accuse an admixture of Moorish blood.—To look at my fair countrywomen after dwelling on their deeply-tinted complexions, was like hailing the rise of the silver moon, after watching a copper-tinted autumnal sun retreat below the horizon!—

There was something timid and helpless in their manner, too, as well as a semblance of fragility in their slender forms, bespeaking interest and protection from those habituated to the touch of Africa and Spain that vivifies Sicilian beauty; and it struck me that I had never heard the lisping sibillation of the English language to such advantage, as when thus intermingled with that softer and fuller southern dialect which sounds as if the native language

of Paphos. Both gained by the *mélange*; or, rather, as Horace observes,

*Sermo lingua concinnus utraque*

*Suavior : ut Chio nota si commista Falerni est.*

Nor were ejaculations, in either language, or few or far between, as the huge mass of pious masqueraders nodded on its way, shaking the foundations of the houses as it rumbled along; followed by a massive shrine or casket of silver, containing the sacred relics of Santa Rosalia,—borne on the shoulders of twelve men, who affected a limping movement, in imitation of a well-known defect in the gait of the Sicilian saint.

Scarcely had this rich and venerated object glittered out of sight, (and during its transit every head was devoutly uncovered, and many an aged lip was seen moving in prayer,)—when there advanced a congregation of fifty laymen, bearing the relics of St. Philip and St. James; not with the deliberate step of their

predecessors,—but with a run of a dozen yards, succeeded by a long halt, so as to preserve a regular interval from the shrine of St. Rosalia. This irreverential line of march was stated by the venerable princess to be traditional; adopted some centuries ago, in consequence of the extinction of a conflagration in the city by the relics of St. Philip and St. James, whose shrine happened to be passing at full speed, and has been ever since brought forward, whenever a fire takes place at Palermo; where half-a-dozen Messrs. Braidwood, with half-a-hundred fire-escapes a piece, would not create half so much confidence as a flying visit from the bones of St. Philip!—

Scarcely had I recovered my surprise at this singular foot-race of relic-bearers, when a joyous shout from the multitude,—just such as they had raised the preceding night for the carriage of a Paterno, a San Cataldo, or any other popular noble, announced the coming of a favourite saint; and many less fantastical *entrées*



*de ballet* are seen at the Académie Royale at Paris, or in our own Brummagem Opera-House in the Haymarket, than the group of—I was going to say dancing dervises—but I doubt whether the gyrations of those noisy fanatics are half so absurd as the antics of the group of capering lay brothers, charged with the relics of St. Nicholas!—

Saint Nicholas, it appears, was in his time, (like King Cole,) a merry old soul. The patron saint of children, his name is associated in France with toyshops and sugar-plums, which on his name-day are lavishly distributed by his preternatural agency in all right-thinking nurseries.—The Palermitans, accordingly, do honour to his relics by the most juvenile gambols!—

While this group of jocular fanatics was in the act of frisking past, I perceived the duchess, on whose knees I was stationed, give a sudden start.

“Look!” said she,—addressing Lady Bing-

ley, who was seated near her,—(according to that flounced lady's system of attaching herself, in all times and places, to the greatest person in the company,)“ Look, I entreat you, at yonder window in the opposite house!”—

“It is one of the nun-galleries!”—replied Lady Bingley,—fancying that her grace alluded to a kind of grated balcony, in the form of an old-fashioned cylinder bureau, several of which were observable, attached to upper windows in the Cassaro. “The Marchese di Gargallo has just been explaining to me that several of the half-a-hundred convents contained in Palermo and its environs, have subterraneous avenues to houses in the city which command a view of the religious processions. Poor things! instead of the eternal *clôture* of monastic institutions in other countries, they are at least permitted a little saintly dissipation, to *them*, as exciting as a good opera to us;—though as carefully secluded from observation all the time, as in the cells of their convent.—An additional proof of

the Moorish blood in their veins! These poor nuns are immured precisely on the system of a Zenana."

"It was not to the nuns' gallery I directed your attention!"—replied the duchess, who had been vainly endeavouring to arrest her very superfluous explanations;—"but look to the window below the cornice,—the third westward from the balcony!"—

"I see nothing but a half-drawn muslin curtain!"—replied sister Anne, having directed her *jumelles* in the direction pointed out; during which operation the more important part of the procession being nearly out of sight, the shouting, exulting, laughing populace closed in to follow,—filling the area beneath our windows with an animated mass, which, having nothing else left to huzza, began to "*evviva!*" the beautiful English guests of the Palazzo Geracci.

"Watch the curtain for a moment or two," replied the duchess, wholly unconscious of being an object of admiration to that uproarious

multitude;—"watch it, and you will see a *head* appear there."—

"Without a body?" demanded Lady Bingley,—as if she thought the presence of so many saints could scarcely fail to produce a miracle.

"There!—there she is again!"—exclaimed the duchess, as a very lovely face, which even to me appeared unaccountably familiar, pressed forward behind the muslin curtain, evidently engaged in observing our party.—"It *must* be *her*,—I am certain it is *her*!"—

"*Madame la duchesse* appears to be attracted by an opposite neighbour of my daughter's, who, I fear, is scarcely deserving her attention," observed the venerable princess to Lady Ellen, perceiving the direction of the eyes of her two English visitors, whose exclamations of interest she had overheard. "And yet to *you*, miladi, I ought scarcely to say so; for she is understood to be a countrywoman of your own."

"My sister and Lady Bingley are struck

by a very lovely face, which I had already noticed with admiration," replied Lady Ellen; "but it is one with which I am unacquainted."

"It is a lady who arrived here a few weeks ago from Naples," resumed the princess, "with a younger son of the Duca di Brancalone; an officer in the royal guards, who carried her off during the imprisonment of her husband."

"Lady Manners, perhaps?"—interrupted Lady Ellen, who had not been many days in Rome without hearing from Lady Surcingle and the Semitons the scandal of Sir Seymour's arrest, by the contrivance of Mrs. Jerningham; whom he had incautiously permitted to assume his name and who fancied herself a victim to his jealousy of the young Conte di Brancalone.

"My Sicilian tongue cannot venture to pronounce her English name!" replied the venerable princess, with a smile; "but whatever it may have been, it was one she is said to have

disgraced. The unfortunate boy (for he is scarcely twenty-two) with whom she arrived here, probably determined on the *enlèvement*, not only to frustrate the plans of his father, who, dreading the results of this ruinous and disgraceful *liaison*, had applied to the king to have him exiled to the family estates in Calabria; but in order to profit by the privileges of the chapel of Santa Rosalia."

The countenance of Lady Ellen probably assumed an interrogative expression at this allusion; for the old lady proceeded to acquaint them that neither license, nor contract, nor consent of parents, is necessary to legalize a marriage contracted in the chapel dedicated to St. Rosalia, on the heights of Monte Pellegrino; the identical

Grot where olives nod,

Where, darling of each heart and eye

Of all the youth of Sicily,

St. Rosalie retir'd to God,—

though affianced to King Roger, and daughter of

the noble Sinibaldo, a legitimate descendant of Charlemagne.—A Gretna Green marriage, and a marriage *à la Santa Rosalia*, differs, in short, only in name.

“And the young Count di Brancaleone has been rash enough to form such a connexion with the lady in question?” inquired Lady Ellen, in a compassionate tone, shocked to perceive with what effrontery this only too notorious lady was surveying from her window an English party whom she had good reason to know must be acquainted with her strange eventful history.

“He married her in haste, on the day of their arrival; and has, I suspect, repented at leisure. For I understand his conduct here is of the most irregular nature; and my daughter and son-in-law have already had occasion to overhear the exasperated quarrels of their opposite neighbours.”

Before Lady Ellen could turn to communi-

cate to her sister-in-law the confirmation of her suspicions, the discharge of a salvo of artillery announced to the city that the procession had attained its destination; and that the relics of the saint whose translation suspended the progress of the plague in Palermo, two centuries before, had now put an end to the plague of its unspeakable noise and excitement, by resuming their usual station in the cathedral.

A signal also,—St. Nicholas be praised,—that christian people and their dogs were free to circulate in the streets! and the duchess was consequently enabled to take a thankful leave of the courteous host, for whose kindness she was not altogether indebted to the former hospitalities of Wigmore Castle; and hasten home to the *Leofante*, to preside over those about to be dedicated by her husband to his yachting friends.

My mistress lost no time; doubtless aware how much poor Rattle's attention had been



distracted from the ostentatious show of the day, by our absence from home at luncheon time. For as to according the name of luncheon to the *collazione* consisting of ices and fruits served up Sicilian-wise at the Palazzo Geracci, it would be an abuse of language on the part of a dog accustomed to the hot cutlets, cold fowls, and *pâtés de foie gras*, washed down with stiff sherry and madeira, which enable Great British angels to sustain their ethereal frames between breakfast-time and dinner.

Still, her grace's thoughtfulness was superfluous. My heart and appetite had taken wing to the third floor facing the Casa Geracci.—In Sicily, it is not the custom to trifle with filial disobedience, or conjugal infidelity. For the former there are cachots,—for the latter, convents,—as the annals of the English peerage can attest. And how was I to trouble my poor little head about the merry-thought of a chicken, when, any day of the week, my beloved mother might be banished to the cell of a Carmelite,

or imprisoned among a sisterhood of Black Penitents!—Shade of King Charles forbid that poor Mimi should be compelled to take the wows!—

## CHAPTER VI.

I'm on the sea,—I'm on the sea,—  
I am where I would ever be !  
With the blue above and the blue below,  
And silence wheresoe'er I go.  
I never was on the dull, tame shore  
But I loved the wide sea more and more,  
And backward flew to her billowy breast,  
Like a bird that seeketh its mother's nest.  
The sea, the sea, the open sea,  
The blue, the fresh, the ever free !

PROCTOR.

IT did not strike me, when we landed at Palermo, that much was wanting to complete our happiness. But I was now forced to admit that I had decided like an ass instead of a

dog. For not only did Lady Ellen Howarth seem of opinion that the *partie carrée* completed by Lord Hebberton's arrival was a vast improvement on a group as triangular as Sicily itself; but the duchess openly expressed to her husband her satisfaction that their friend Manners should be released from the woman who had proved the bane of his fortunes.

But although the frankness of her smile while communicating the strange discovery she had made at the Palazzo Geracci, relieved him from all apprehension that his dear Jane was a whit more interested in the fate of Sir Seymour than he could desire, the duke had not courage to acquaint her, in return, with *his* terrible discovery concerning the specious and iniquitous Maurice. He had already written to the *chef de police* of Bourdeaux, acquainting him with the mysterious incidents of the Palazzo Strozzi; and offering a considerable reward in case the prisoner Marco Tovale could be wrought upon to confess the real circum-

stances attending the abstraction of the diamonds and the fate of Lucy Mason; and, satisfied that the providential discovery concerning that individual would render nugatory all future attempts of persons even malicious as Lady Surcingle, or cold-blooded as Giuseppe Dodagnano, to hint the possibility of a collusion between his dear Jane and her attendant, his grace became fifty times more exhilarated than if the whole mass of diamonds, solitaires and all, had been restored to his possession.

What a charming dinner at the Leofante, and what a delicious twilight drive after it, on the Marina!—the sea, alive with boats chasing each other like glowworms, or rather flitting like *luciole*, across the still waters;—the sky vivid with stars, as bright, but more stationary in their glory. The *sorbetterie* were crowded with visitors—laughing, chatting, and above all whispering,—whispering the nothings which, though nightly renewed in that enchanting spot, seem to borrow a novel charm from even

the slightest vicissitude of weather. A band of music was breathing delicious harmonies from the Casino. But music we wanted none!—Joy was beating in our hearts, and breathing from our lips in melodious cadence.

Next morning, we went to visit the Water Lily as she lay at anchor;—and beauty as I had thought this crack yacht of the Medina, when dressed with her flags and signals the preceding day in honour of Saint Rosalia, now that she was unadorned, I thought her indeed adorned the most; or as Aristenetus hath it, in describing a fair woman: “Induitur, formosa est; exuitur, ipsa forma est.”

A light breeze was fortunately stirring, to favour a trial of the three yachts; and the Palermitans, whose existence during the summer heats commences only at sunset, and who seldom even rise from their beds till an hour or two before dinner, exclaimed, of course with pitying shrugs, on hearing of our exploits, “*Questi Inglesi. Corpo di dio! che salamandri!*”

But the news of the sailing match, or rather improvisated regatta, going on in their beautiful bay, soon drew the effeminate loungers from their couches to watch the graceful sweep with which the *Firefly* took the lead towards the Isle of Alciuri, (the winning-post of our match,) like a swan leading her cygnets across some sunny lake.

But the currents of wind in a bay which, though sheltered from the *tramontana* by Monte Pellegrino, as from the *sirocco* by the chain of the Bagheria, is open to the fluctuations of the Greco, or Levantine breeze, were not easy to be calculated upon by our Solent mariners; and the Duke of Wigmore, who had cunningly provided himself with what appeared to be a mass of York tan leather encased in a sack of old bed-ticking and a scarlet woollen nightcap (pronounced by Sir Henry Bingley to be the genuine Phrygian,) but which was in truth an old Syracusan pilot,—managed by artful tacking to get the start of us. To run before the wind,

the Water Lily had a hundred chances against us; and we had consequently the mortification of seeing her scud, like a silver nautilus in the sunshine, towards Alciuri; while the Firefly, thoroughly distanced, seemed pausing paralyzed to stare at her, like Cymon in the forest, open-mouthed and wondering at the charms of Iphigenia.

The Count de Massonville and a tribe of Neapolitan exquisites, who were betting upon our match from the Marina, probably sympathized with the statelier vessel which, like a discomfited courtier, had missed "the tide in the affairs of men,"—and yachts. But as I formed one of her crew, I can attest that we had the best of it. The whole party was united on board the Firefly, and of the two dukes, mine was *l'Amphytrion où l'on dine*; so that, our messman having taken care to stow in ice a few bottles of the choicest Catanian wines, and the exquisite grapes and sweet lemons forwarded daily to the Duke of Wigmore by his



friend Prince Villadorata being duly accompanied by viands fit to throw at a dog, I was content to sail under the losing flag.

While we were refreshing exhausted nature with *galantine* and *Terra mota*, the old pilot of the Water Lily probably found his way to the rosolio-flask. For Ramsay and the masters of the other yachts having put about to make for port, we found, on emerging from the cool cabin to the glaring deck, not alone the Sunbeam a couple of hundred yards ahead of us, but the Water Lily so near upon our lee, as to enable us to overhear the cracked treble of the old mariner piping up a popular Sicilian ditty,—

Via bidicchia,  
 Scocca di rosa,  
 Lo celù volle  
 Ch' io t' amerò!

Piqued by Lord Hebberton's railleries on the subject of his drunken Arion, the Duke of Wigmore instantly issued orders in stentorian tones to his master, which appeared to *me* far

from calculated to make up for lost way. But whoever might win the homeward match, (and alas! for the poor Firefly, the case was no longer doubtful,) we were not the less able to enjoy our approach to that delicious shore, whose land breeze, if enervating as that of Capræa, is fully as fragrant; and whose prismatic hues varied with the changeful sunbeams as we neared the city,—now displaying the Tyrian glories of an imperial mantle,—now, the mutations of an opal,—white, green, or fiery, as the sunlight penetrated the diaphanous surface.

So sweet,—so fair,—no wonder, favoured Palermo, that men still call thee *Felice*!—Whether, as pedants pretend, thy name of Panormus purported in the Greek language only that *all* vessels might find anchorage in thy port,—so that from *totus portus* arose the corruption of *totus hortus*, to which thy garden-like suburbs so well entitle thee,—let the Verdasti Abbate and Teutonic Bearleader of H.S.H. the Prince of Saxe Krautland deter-

mine.—But sooth to say, from Cape Zaffarano, with its Phœnician ruins, to Monreale, with its Escorial-like monastery, thou art as rich by the prodigal dowry of nature, as in monuments of art.

At least this is somewhere about what I heard my master observe to the Duke of Wigmore, as we approached the shore. It is true that he spoke rather thick; which I attributed partly to the excellence of the Terra mota, and partly to his desire of appropriately complimenting the man he was addressing,—one of the thickest in the Upper House.

But however slow his grace, no one could venture to impugn the fastness of his yacht; and the loungers on the Marina found themselves as much puzzled to award the palm to either of the three yachts, as Paris the apple to either of the three goddesses. Each was perfect in its way;—each the swiftest for its tonnage that ever cut through the waters of the Tyrrhene!—

For my part, though defeated, I felt triumphant. A sailing match is so manly a pastime—so delicious an excitement!—I do not wonder that people are deserting the turf—I do not wonder that people are selling off their hunters. All that surprises me is that the British islands have not formed themselves into a monster yacht club. For there is nothing the English love better than to ape aristocratic pleasures; and of those in which, as a dog of the highest fashion and a royal favourite, I have ever participated, give me yachting, as the *ne plus ultra* of luxurious exclusivism!—

The labours of the chase reduce a man to a level with his own huntsman. The chicanery of the turf places him at the mercy of his own jockey. But on his own deck, he is supreme as the Sultan in the seraglio!—The master has all the care and toil; the master's master, the honour and enjoyment. I would not give a fig to be a king, now that constitutional governments are as universal as gas and railroads.

But I would give a whole drum, ay, and of the best Smyrna, to be owner of a fast yacht, with a few thousands a year to do it justice.

In barking the matter over with other dogs of my acquaintance, I always designate the jockey clubs of old England, young France, young Belgium, and, for aught I know, young Turkey,—(which I presume will be called the Turkey poult,)—jockey clubs established for the improvement and protection of whist, lansquenet, embroidered shirts, and champagne,—as Ruination clubs. Whereas the yacht clubs—“the fountain head of every manly virtue,” (hip, hip, hip, hurra!)—will one day or other be hailed by the united governorhood of the united kingdom, as salvation clubs, a polite academy for the budding youth of Britain. True blue, which was made to look so *very* blue by the scarlet fever of Waterloo, would never have been kept flying during the dead calm of universal peace, but for the patriotic naval volunteers of the R.Y.C. (*Cheers.*)

Talking of fast and slow, by the way, I have seldom been more surprised than by hearing Sir Henry Bingley, in one of the toadying orations which he seemed to regard as passage-money due to the Duke of Wigmore for his berth in the Water-lily, enlarge upon the discernment evinced by his grace in his introduction to political life of so eminent a man as Sir Barnadiston Roper. So thoroughly was the thread of my London associations broken, that till then, I was ignorant of Sir Marmaduke being lodged among his forefathers: though, now I come to think of it, I certainly remember, one day in the Piazza di Spagna, hearing the be-furbelowed Mrs. Lewson observe aloud, after glancing over the Times newspaper, "I suppose that fellow, Hill, will at last obtain a reward for his services,"—which I protest I took for an allusion to the ill-requited inventor of penny postage.

It appeared, however, that Roper was not only a baronet, but a star,—a man for whom

the great letters reserved their compound epithets,—as that “justly-esteemed,” or “far-sighted,” or “noble-minded,” or “deeply-read,” or “impartially-judging statesman, the honourable member for Grubridge.” He had acquired what is called a stake in the country, which, in such cases, means, I suppose, a *hedgestake*;—and it is astonishing what people may say and do in the Lower House, who can boast of a stake in the country in opposition to those who boast only a steak in town,—that is to say, at Dolly’s.

It struck me that the duke accepted the honours of this political paternity much as I used to see his late duchess accept a compliment on her charming bloom, or *belle chevelure*,—as if doubtful whether it were ironical; and it was, perhaps, by way of disguising his consciousness that he had been bullied out of Grubridge by his wife, who had bartered it for a lap-dog, that his grace suddenly turned towards my master, observing, “Had *you* any

idea, Normanford, that Roper would turn out such an eagle?"

"I had a great idea that he would contrive to make himself *heard of!*"—replied my master, whose listless mode of letting his words slip out of his mouth, was apt to mislead people into underrating their value.

"How surprised the old general must be to see his nephew acquire so great a reputation," added the duchess. "Do you remember, Nelly, how often General Roper used to amuse us at Normanford with his account of the hope of the family,—who, after being an infant prodigy, had dwindled into a common-place young man,—like a dwarf, who becomes insignificant by growing?"—

"The General never did justice to his nephew!" retorted my candid master.—"Roper was neither a bad fellow, nor a fool; though spoiled by the pretension of his father to make him pass for seven feet high, instead of his natural stature. Sir Marmaduke chose to be



the father of a calf with six legs; and poor Roper was forced to make the most of his four, to gratify the old fellow's vanity."

"*Vanitas vanitatis!*" cried Lord Hebberton. "Roper and I were at school together at Brighton before we were breeched; and, even in his pinafore, the little prig was a spouter of no mean proficiency. At the tea-drinking of Dr. Swigginton, Master Roper was sure to be had in for "His name was Norval," or Hotspur's description of a fop; and by the time I tumbled against him again at Eton, the old baronet had begun to make people believe that his son occasionally condescended to write the leaders of the *Times*!—Exceptionatus Blank declares that he was originally made to play at parliament in the nursery at Roper Hall; the old nurse enacting, of course, the venerable personage of Speaker!"

"There is something almost ungenerous," said *my* duke, "in the *exigeance* with which some parents spur their children to distinctions beyond their right, by exertions beyond

their strength. It is like over-riding a young horse!—What business had Sir Marmaduke Roper to exact parliamentary distinction from his son, when he had neither influence nor generosity to secure him a seat in the House of Commons? Roper was brought up to be a member, as other men are brought up to a profession; and to achieve impossible greatness, was forced into all manner of littleness.—The necessity *de reculer pour mieux sauter* compelled him to be perpetually *à reculons!*”

“A tender mode of describing one of the most flagrant toadies of the day!” said Lady Bingley, full of spleen at the superior success of a member of her own confraternity. But her husband, remembering the Ciceronian precept against speaking ill of those who possess the power of proscription, remained prudently silent.

“I doubt whether *we* are fair judges of Sir Barnadiston’s abilities,” said my master, in reply to a second interrogation of the Duke of

Wigmore, rather than to the snappishness of a woman as shallow as the Mançanares,—“ I should never think of consulting a peasant of Donaueschingen, who has seen the Danube only at its source, concerning the size and importance of that imperial stream; and if we trace half the public men of the day to their origin, we shall find them sad pigmies.—The world measures Sir Barnadiston as he stands before it,—as the ancients worshipped their idols,—without considering how shortly before they were a mass of stone, or log of wood.”

“ Of course every public man must look to being blackguarded by the opposite party,” said the plainer-spoken Lord Hebberton. “ And after all, which of us has not an opposition, which coughs him down? One’s country neighbours—one’s poor relations—one’s mother-in-law—one’s *valet de chambre*—are all ‘oppositions,’ to whom it is impossible to be a hero! Abuse from the few is a per centage people are forced to pay on popularity with the many. I

dare say our crew are calling us names on deck yonder, for being able to enjoy these citrons and this champagne, while *they* have only water-melons and grog."

This was truer than he suspected. I had heard as many oaths lavished on *him* that very morning, as would have furnished a tap-room in the neighbourhood of Greenwich or Chelsea Hospital; and never did I follow the heels of my master, or the Duke of Wigmore, along the Cassaro, without hearing the words, "*Bibranti d'Inglese!*" hurled at them after they had passed, by lips that might have served as models for the Cyclops. Yet what is this but repayment for the expressions of contempt attached in England to any individual, of whatever age, sex, or character, who happens to be born on the eastern side of La Manche, the epithet "rascally" attaching itself as naturally to the noun "foreigner," in the English dialect, as bread-sauce to partridge in our *menu*.

It was a comfort when, amid all this bald disjointed chat, I heard an arrangement made among them for a second visit to the opera.—Poor Bellini!—Having seen the “Pirata” barbarously executed, they had a mind to witness the murder of Norma! Like the Babes in the Wood, when the faithful Walter stabs the bravo in the stage edition of their history, they kept exclaiming, “Kill him again, Walter,—kill him again!”—

No matter to *me*,—so long as they *went*! I had taken accurate notice of the apartments inhabited by the *soi-disant* Contessa Brancaleone on the third floor facing the Palazzo Geracci; and was resolved to make my way thither, the moment my mistress’s back was turned. Like the pious Telemachus in search of Ulysses, I determined to ascertain, before I slept, whether the woman so faithless to husband and lover, were true to her dog. Though convinced that, under my present length of ear

and general irresistibility, even if Mimi *were* still her inmate,

The mother that me bore

Would never know her child,

her child would know *her*, among all the animals of her species extant throughout the royal palaces of Europe!—

But alas! *chien propose, homme dispose*.—By what *clairvoyance* the duke managed to read in my eyes the roaming propensities of my soul, I leave it for Dr. Elliotson to determine. Suffice it that he shut me as fast into the nursery on proceeding to the carriage that was to convey them to the opera, as if he fancied Marco Tovale still at liberty, and that my guardianship was essential to his child;—and thus elected to a place of trust, Rattle was a dog of too much honour to desert his post.

Nor was I at liberty on the morrow.—Four carriagefuls of us issued from the Porta

Nuova,—(at an early hour, considering there were several fashionable specimens of Young Sicily of the party,) on our way to visit the Saracenic forts, on the heights above Palermo, called Ziza and Cuba, after the dark-eyed daughters of the last of the Emirs, by whom they were erected; and prodigious was the satisfaction with which my poor dear master traced within their walls, thrice baked and gilded by the scorching sun of the south, certain mosaics and arabesques, with imitations of which it has become of late years the fashion to decorate our humid stucco of the north.—

Because the Arabs, interdicted by the law of Mahomet from copying the human form, (a stricter form of the second commandment of the Mosaic dispensation!) evaded the law by depicting a mismatched confusion of the things on the earth's surface and in the waters under the earth,—fair ladies terminating in a honeysuckle,—tails of dolphins appended to heads of cherubs,—or legless

birds of paradise, pecking at a beaded scroll,—the English, though, as the walls of their annual exhibitions attest, they have both the law and the profits on their side in the portraiture of their species,—choose to have recourse to the same anomalous mode of decoration;—the boudoirs of the English belles,—and cafés of the Parisian *restaurateurs*, being alike at the present moment “*plus Arabe qu’en Arabie!*”

¶ The Duke of Wigmore, who, in the course of his home-hating peregrinations, had visited the Alhambra, was great on the subject of Moresco architecture; and prosed about an old fountain which we found playing to empty benches in the court of the Ziza, in a style that would have made Washington Irving’s blood run cold, but which did much honour to “the oldest inhabitant” of the Traveller’s Club. But after dispatching the Saracens, he contrived to draw aside my master, Lord Hebberton, and Sir Henry Bingley, when a mysterious whispering commenced among them, which passed



from one to the other, as among the courtiers in Fleur d'Epine; and no sooner were the ladies requested to enter their carriages, and, driving leisurely down the hill, await the coming of their lords, than, conceiving that something was to be seen, from the view of which they were to be maliciously excluded, the spirit of Bluebeard's wife and sister-in-law broke forth in the feminine trio.

But even had not woman been a contraband import in the spot to which the male moiety of the party was on its road, what female of even the moderate degree of sensibility compatible with the atmosphere of May Fair, would have hazarded the appalling spectacle exhibited in the catacombs of the Capuchin convent, — (renowned among travellers' wonders for its powers of mummification,) to which the Duke of Wigmore directed his *calessiere* to repair!

The genuine shudder of dismay with which the duchess, on overhearing his project, endeavoured to dissuade them from so gloomy

a visit, *ought* to have satisfied me to follow her example, and take my place quietly in the carriage, to await at the bottom of the hill the return of our horror-seeking companions. But I suspect I had been bitten by Lady Bingley. For curiosity got the better of compunction; and by following close at the heels of the Duke of Wigmore, I contrived to sneak into the Capuchin convent, under his grace's auspices, as snugly as Roper had done into the House of Commons.

Useless to attempt the flummery of fine writing about what has been familiarized to the public by the coarse writing of the Penny Magazines or Chambers's Journal! Now-a-days, people know everything about everything below the moon—or within it;—and were I only to attempt the simplest description of those singular vaults, or analyzed their faculty of desiccation, I should be twitted by some *commis voyageur* who travels in the Useful knowledge line, with having stolen my conjectures from

Brydone, or the *Voyage Pittoresque de la Sicile*.

Till I visited the locality in question, I had always maintained that the worst taste exhibited on the face of the earth by the sons of clay, was by Jews or Yankees.—I retract.—Those wretched old Capuchin monks who, after reducing the human form divine to the complexion of a smoked parchment and the consistency of the things suspended in a herborist's shop, attire them “in their habit as they lived,”—not alone their brother Capuchins in their greasy cowls and clumsy sandals, but the courtier in his bag and sword, and the beauty in her flowers and embroideries,—have indeed devised a plan for bringing human nature to its level.

“Take physic, Pomp!”—Go see thy dingy and distorted face grimacing after death in velvet and brocade; and admit that the stuffed monkeys in a zoological collection, frisking to

all eternity in cataleptic comicality, have decidedly the best of it.

Fifteen hundred bodies of Capuchin monks, standing high and dry, each with his ticket pinned to his robe, like a doll on sale at the Soho Bazaar;—their withered faces grinning in edentated ugliness, and their black tongues in many instances extending, as though making a grimace at the beholder, are ranged in that horrible vault, which

Is fenced round with fears, like triple brass!—  
 Rocks of despair stand round it. Stony walls  
 Shut out its terrors from the sunny world;  
 And diabolic ghosts (whose care it is  
 And penalty, to keep that silent band  
 Untroubled until doom,) like ghastly giants  
 Stand armed beside rebellious bones, and scare  
 The restless back to slumber.

Above the grisly congregation of monks, are deposited coffins having the appearance of violoncello cases; each with its lock and key and

armorial bearings,—to enable the survivors of the Sicilian dukes and princes whose mummies are contained within, to pay their respects to their leathery remains.

But let me entreat such of my readers as vie with Rattle in impassioned deference for the sex to which, in a physical sense at least, neither man nor dog can deny the epithet of fair,—to refrain from entering that vault of the cruciform catacomb, which is exclusively devoted to the conservation of the patrician females of the “All-garden” city.—Horror of horrors,—what a spectacle!—Brown and skinny arms, extending from sleeves of lace,—court-dresses of silk and satin, falling in easy drapery, around—

Thought shrinks from all that lurks below!

embroidered silken stockings and shoes hanging loosely upon withered limbs; while caps or coëffures of fanciful device appear to mock the fearful faces whose smiles once constituted the

sunshine of some human heart!—I had seen at Wigmore Castle *very* dreadful dowagers,—withered, skinny, and simpering,—attired in all the gewgawery of fashion. But I vow to mercy that the Sicilian *principesse* under their glass-cases in the Capuchin catacomb, were far more horrifying to the senses than the best-got-up assassin of Madame Tussaud's extra sixpenny-worth.

Worse a thousand times, however, than the dowagers (objects in all times and places far from delectable,) are the recumbent forms of the young maidens of noble descent, arrayed in their white robes, with their spotless coronals upon their brows;—while beneath, the sunken yellow temples and distorted lips impart to the accessories of an angel the countenance of a fiend!—My deference for the sex had suffered some dilapidation, I must admit, from admission into the toilet-secrets of the poor Duchess of Wigmore. But after beholding a brown chip of a charmer interred in a crape ball-dress, with a

wreath of roses, her head reposing on a pillow fringed with lace, whom the *Padre Custode* of the museum of death, stated to have been, only three years before, the reigning beauty of Palermo. The loathing that rose in my heart, was such as would have made a woman-hater of Lovelace!

And yet, such is the force of national custom, that these horrible mummies are as capable of calling forth the emotions of a Sicilian bosom, as of a Great British the fairest and most touching bust of Behnes or Macdonald, and this satire upon grace and loveliness was scattered over with the choicest flowers renewed in daily visits by the Romeo of the rappee-coloured Juliet!—

While we stood marvelling at such an abuse of sentiment and quoting from the Man of Feeling, Lord Hebberton; an out-and-outer in sight-seeing,

Erranti, passimque oculos per cuncta ferenti,

accompanied another of the *Padri Custodi* to the vaults known by the repugnant name of *pourrissoirs*, where the operation of mummifying goes on in all its horrors; and his description of the aspect of the human bodies he beheld there, extended over a species of grid-iron, with running water perpetually flowing over their limbs, which are tied with ligatures of wire to prevent the muscles from contracting during a process of six months' duration, turned me so deathly faint, that I was forced to lie down at the feet of the frightful mummy of the beautiful Marchesa di Spataro. And what would I not have given for a whiff of the *cassolette* of aromatic vinegar, with which, in moments of emotion, Lady Bingley was in the habit of refreshing her fastidious nostrils!

If I have failed, dear public, in engaging your interest in the curious specimens of natural history I have been describing, you owe it me to refrain from all exuberance of yawning! For in my Sicilian travels, I have let you off dog



cheap. I *might* have tyrannized over you at Syracuse, in Dyonisius' vein,—or plunged you without mercy into the crater of Etna. Nay, Scylla and Charybdis, “hushed in grim repose,” are yet in ambush, if you evince unreasonable symptoms of captiousness!

Sour, however, as certain of my readers are looking at this moment, I promise them their faces are, (Sicilianly speaking,) as the honey of Hybla, compared with that of the Padre Bonaventura, when, after listening to Hebbertson's narration, which was graced with something too much of the peculiar dialect of the Queen's English termed slang, we applied to *him* for confirmation of the tale of wonder.

“Tell your lady,” said he, addressing an Italian footman, with whom in the interim he had engaged in conversation, and who bore on his arm a basket exactly resembling those in which the Prince of Villadorata was in the habit of despatching to us his grapes and *pas-*

*tecchi*,—"tell your lady that what she proposes, is most profane and indecent!"—

"I have already hinted the same thing to her excellency, holy father, but without effect;" replied the man, devoutly crossing himself with his disengaged hand, but making no move to depart.

"This is consecrated ground," resumed the Padre Bonaventura, (addressing an individual whom he regarded as one of his flock, in a very different style from the irreverential tone in which he spoke to *us* when doing the honours of his mummies.) "Some of the most august personages of the Two Sicilies, repose in our catacombs; to say nothing of his majesty, the king of Tunis, who, in the year of grace sixteen hundred and twenty-two was converted and baptized in our church, and now sleeps in its vaults. And the notion of insulting these hallowed relics by approximation with an unclean animal, — a miserable dog, — is

worthier the darkness of Egypt, or the profanations of the Caaba, than of the decencies of a christian temple !”

Recalling to mind the horrid object which had struck us as we entered the gateway,—the dead body of an old countess who had died of fatigue on the eve of Santa Rosalia, full-dressed, rouged, frizzled, and arriving in a sedan-chair, preceded by a priest and a lay-vicar, to take her place in the *pourrissoir*,—it struck me that the abominations of Egypt were not much more atrocious than the customs of Palermo !—But Rattle was interrupted in his cogitations by the meek rejoinder of the serving man.

“The Signora Contessa would indeed be inexcusable, holy father,” said he, “if she did not happen to be a heretic. But being, as it were, already doomed to perdition, she was perhaps aware that her punishment would be none the heavier for presuming to request the interment of her favourite dog in the sepulture of the king of Tunis.”

“*La sepoltura del suo cane?*” exclaimed the other four of us,—in a state of utter consternation which *I* alone was unable to express!

“English people are taxed as the greatest originals and humorists in the world!” observed the Duke of Wigmore, shrugging his shoulders. “But when brought to proof, I have known whimsies quite as preposterous executed by foreigners! Witness yonder, the palace of the Prince of Palagonia, furnished throughout both house and gardens, with monsters,—shepherds and shepherdesses with the heads of mules or horses, cowed capuchins, with the bodies of tom-cats, double-headed damsels, or octoped oxen,—whose noble proprietor used to tear his hair every time his princess presented him with a girl or boy, because it did not realize one of the monstrosities of his creation!”

“The Prince of Palagonia is indeed a Sicilian, Eccellenza,” interposed the footman, with a deprecatory obeisance; “but the lady I have the honour to serve, and who makes an offering

of one hundred ounces of gold to the church for the privilege of having her favourite dog immured in the catacombs of this convent, is an Englishwoman!"—

"The Countess Brancalione for a thousand!"—cried both Sir Henry Bingley and Lord Hebberton.

"Do me the favour to let me see this wonderful dog," said the Duke of Wigmore, on learning from the servant that its remains were contained in the *bourriche* suspended from his arm.

And in a moment, the man, who seemed to consider that the countrymen of his lady had peculiar claims on his respect, with a reverential hand that dealt far more tenderly than the horror-hardened capuchins with the limbs of the dead, gently undid the basket, and brought forth to view the stiffened remains of — my mother!—

Dear public!—I was about to indulge in the interjection extorted from Mrs. Butler by

the sight of the Falls of Niagara. But lest I be taxed by the reviewers, like that lady, with ending my chapter like a German melodrama, by an oath and an attitude,—I forbear. Yet do not, for want of interjections, denounce your Rattle as a heartless dog.—The moment I beheld that piteous spectacle, my tears burst forth like the Phœnix engines on any house on fire that bears their insurance-plate. My puppyhood in Sims's attic came back into my soul, with all its filial associations; nor, till she was gone for ever, had I fully appreciated the maternal tenderness of poor Mimi!—As I threw myself in utter despair upon the earth, the tender lament of Deschamps recurred involuntarily to my mind:

“ L'âme de la maison,  
 Qui veillait pour nous dans la froide saison,  
 Celle qui prévenait notre moindre désir,  
 Et quand sonnait minuit nous regardait dormir ;  
 Puis faisait ses cent tours, et, toujours en haleine  
 Quand venait le matin, se reposait à peine,—  
 Se repose à présent, et pour toujours !”

The Contessa Brancaleone,—Lady Manners,—Mrs. Jerningham,—(no matter her name or alias,) might be the greatest reprobate of her sex.—By the combination of a lovely face, an empty head, a shallow heart, and an impetuous temper, she might “betray more men,” after having utterly ruined the unfortunate three with whose names I have connected her own. But so long as I have a tongue or tail to wag in her honour, never will I forget the funeral honours she attempted to purchase, at thrice her weight in gold, in memory of her beloved Mimi!

Overcome by my feelings, I should have gone on roaring like Etna, from that day to this, but for some observations that fell from Lord Hebberton.

“One might almost fancy,” observed the Duke of Wigmore, “from the plaintiveness of his cries, that poor Rattle, accustomed to the use of a looking-glass, was aware of the extra-

ordinary resemblance between himself and yonder poor little animal!"

"They are certainly of the same breed!" added my master, after a second survey of those sacred remains.

"Why you don't mean to say," cried the young viscount, "that you think Rattle is howling over the dead body of his 'co-mate and brother in exile,' like Mark Antony over Cæsar?—*Impayable!*—A thousand to one more likely that the poor little beast is going mad.—Hydrophobia is dreadfully about. The police have been throwing poisoned cakes for the last two days on the Marina; and if Rattle, who is usually so lively, should show any symptoms of dulness or sullenness, for your own sake, my dear duke,—for *all* our sakes,—you must have him destroyed."

"*Destroyed!*"—A fellow like Marco Tovale allowed to cumber the earth; and Rattle, because, like Charles Kean, he took the part of his mother, condemned to an untimely death!



Need it be added, that by an instantaneous effort, I recovered my cheerfulness; and that from the lively expression of my countenance any intelligent person would have decided, *not* that I had been left an orphan, but that I had lost my wife!—

## CHAPTER VII.

We may roam through this world, like a child at a feast,  
Who but sips of a sweet and flies off to the rest,  
And when pleasure begins to grow dull in the east,  
We may order our wings, and fly off to the west ;

saith Tommy Moore. By which "ordering of wings," he evidently intended an allusion to the magic facilities of yachting.—

When the duke signified, the following day, his intention of "flying off" to France, to take counsel with the French lawyers and police concerning the best mode of dealing with the miscreant, whose alias was Maurice Thibaut, in the course of an hour or two, we

were on board.—In that land of plenty, provisions were readily laid in for so short a voyage ; albeit the Water Lily and Sunbeam saw fit to alter the course of their cruise, and sail in our company ;—that is, in the company of Lady Ellen Howarth, Rattle, and the Duke and Duchess of Normanford ; for as regards the motive of their change of mind, Lady Ellen was undisguisedly the polestar by which the grey-headed and “ bereaved duke,” as well as the curly-headed Lord Hebberton, were steering their course.

I resigned myself to their company. Bored as one often is by the society of English people at home, where the envious emulation of human nature too often prompts them to vie with each other in being disagreeable,—beyond the intrenchments of exclusivism, they are far from unpleasant. A perpetual *ne exeat regno* seems to prevent their inanity of fine-gentleman-and-ladyism from accompanying them across the channel.

The Bingleys alone were still sufficiently Londonized to feel provoked at his grace's determination to return to Marseilles. Not from grieving after the Levant.—Not because tempted eastward by classical reminiscences, or the aspect of those isles of Greece,

Where burning Sappho lov'd and sang.—

But because *their* notion of foreign travel consisted in a progress from court to court.—Presentation at the footstool of royalty being the hobby of their lives, Lady Bingley had already prepared her pink satin, *point d'Alençon*, and diamond *châtelaine*, to outshine the lovely and gracious queen of Greece; or, after the example of recent fashionable tourists, to outblaze the mid-day sun of the Dardanelles and the charms of the Sultanas; who, cushioned at lazy length in the harem with the thermometer at  $88^{\circ}$  in the shade, are apt to welcome their noble visitors *en chemise*.

To the Bingleys, therefore, delighting as

they did in the empty fussiness of grand chamberlains and ladies of honour, it was vexatious to find themselves among people sick to surfeiting of spangles and gold lace, and far more sensitive to the brilliancy of a glowing sunset or the freshness of the evening breeze. But they were too completely in the minority to so much as propose the continuance of their crown-and-sceptre hunt. *Bon grè mal grè* the pink satin and point were ensconced anew in the imperials; and the letters of introduction from Lord Tom Noddy and the Marchioness of Aldoborontiphoschifornio replaced at the bottom of the writing-desk;—while with drooping crests they took their way towards a city, whose highest constituted authorities consist in such very small deer as a sous préfet and consuls.

Notwithstanding my love of change, I was sorry to leave fair Sicily, with its population of princes, and friars,—“white black and grey, with all their trumpery,”—a species which seems

to fructify there as exuberantly as the carob-trees.—For though so fierce was the fervour of the atmosphere at Palermo, that the thickest critic going, interposed by way of parasol, betwixt one and the sunshine would scarcely suffice for shade,—the beauty of the vegetation, and delicious slipshod-ness of the habits of the land, reconciled me to some excess of caloric.—Moreover, the city of many gardens had endeared itself as the scene of my first conversancy with that exquisite passion, which, if too often it cause a man to feel like a dog, to a right-thinking dog renders this world a terrestrial paradise!

I have consulted my conscience severely, dear reader, previous to admitting you into my confidence on this delicate subject.—Aware that I have the highest warranty for betraying the gentle partner of my folly in order to minister a moment to public entertainment, and that the united chivalry of our six orders of knighthood, and the united morality of the

six great clubs of St. James's Street would be arrayed against me if I demurred about sacrificing the character of the object of my attachment, whether maid, wife, or widow,—I have scarcely courage to plead guilty to my scruples.—Yet I own it is as difficult to *me* to betray to publicity the gentle weakness of her who first accelerated the throbbings of my heart, as it would have been to maintain those pulsations in equable sobriety, with Africa staring me in the face, Spain glowing to the leeward, and my beauteous Adelmia—But no!—in defiance of all example, Crockford's be my witness! that sacred name shall never pass my lips save in the sanctity of private evocation!

Take it for granted then, dear public, that while the duke and duchess and Lady Ellen witnessed from the deck of the Firefly the gradual dissolution of the coast of Sicily into a mysterious haze of emerald, sapphire, amethyst, indefinite as the pictures of Turner or the

sonnets of some right honourable Sappho,  
but

*Mille trahens varios adverso sole colores,—*

I stood “amongst them, but not of them;”—conscious that the brightest joy of my life had departed,—that “the tree of knowledge had been pluck’d,”—that the surface of my destinies had received an indelible scar,—that every knot we sailed, conveyed me further from the happy region where I was at one moment prepared to live and die.

For “*at one moment,*” on second thoughts, read “one moment.”—I will not pretend that my illusion was longer-lived than

A violet in the youth of primy nature  
Forward, not permanent,—sweet, but not lasting,  
The perfume and suppliance of a minute.

But like the violet, even when withered, true passion has its fragrance; and there is sweetness even in its elements, in a love like mine.



Luckily for me, it was not in my power, at *the* moment, to commit a Manners-like act of desperation, and propose elopement. For it would have been unquestionably accepted, and more than one of us converted into a repining wretch for life.—Whereas by a timely act of separation, my first love lives in my memory, like the lost Pleiad, the brighter for her evanishment; and I have the pleasant certainty that not a weary moment tarnished our vivid day of joy.—For passion may survive despair and anguish,—sighs and tears.—But a single yawn is as fatal to its constitution as the drop of hydrocyanic acid I once heard so Nero-ishly advocated by her grace the Duchess of Wigmore.

And so, as gentlemen are apt to say when they assume broad hems for the lost partners of their affections, “Peace be to her memory!”—I mean the memory of my Adelmina.—I have never ventured to inquire concerning the indignation of the venerable Principe di Villa-

dorata, on learning that she had fallen a victim to the seductive arts of his foreign guest, or what became of the tender pledges of our love. A lap-dog is happily exempt from the fate of the vestal; and one or other of my progeny may live to grace the royal halls of Caserta; or perhaps enjoy a still more sublime preferment, on the footstool of his holiness the Pope. — For since the union of Venus and Adonis, never was perfect beauty so thoroughly conjoined, as in the loves of Rattle and Adelmia; and our dynasty ought to establish itself on the ruins of that of Can Grande.

The Duke of Normanford's first project was that the family should disembark at Barcelona; and in their journey to Bourdeaux, enjoy a transient view of Spain. But the approach of September brought with it a sufficient hint of the equinox to convince us that the days were too short, and little Lady Jane Howarth too young, for so rough an expedition; and as my master was unwilling to give up his promised

glimpse of the Pyrennees, it was settled that we should land the duke at Barcelona; and, while he hastened on to the Garonne, pursue (wind and weather permitting) our coastward voyage; — touching in sundry places, to visit Narbonne, Montpellier, and Nismes, previous to repairing to Marseilles, where the Firefly and its crew were to await the return of his grace.

Engrossed too much of late in my own love affairs to take heed of those of other people, I was a little surprised at the alacrity with which the noble yachters adapted their movements to our change of place; and above all, at the assiduity with which the Duke of Wigmore solicited the office of chaperon to a niece whom, previous to her marriage, he was apt to find *à charge*. — But during the four-and-twenty hours we spent in Barcelona, I had occasion to notice the competition between him of the Water Lily and him of the Sunbeam, for the honour of having his arm accepted by Lady Ellen in

visiting the public monuments of the city. I saw that the gallant duke had completely forgotten he was a grandfather; for it was pretty evident that, after eight months of conjugal enfranchisement, he found his widower's weeds sit far more uneasily, than that gentle girl her mourning, as the most devoted of daughters. Nay more,—from the incessant flings hazarded by Lord Hebberton at “old beaux,” —“gouty Strephons,” — and “grey-haired Cupids,”—I had reason to believe that he was far from easy touching the result of his suit.

Wise enough in her generation to know that though advice may be asked in affairs of the heart, it is never taken, my mistress adopted the policy of the great Talleyrand, by prudent non-intervention.—Remembering how injurious an influence had been exercised in her own affairs by those who wished her best, and satisfied of the competency of Lady Ellen's heart and head to decide for herself, she allowed a

fair field for wooing both to Janie, and Robin Grey. The old man sighed,—the young man blustered. The widower whispered, — and Romeo swore;—and considering the timid and feminine disposition of our Juliet, and the perfect incongruity between Lord Hebberton's character and her own, I entertained little doubt of his eventually carrying off the prize.

The rest of the party evidently thought otherwise.—With those better able than myself to compare the respective value of rent-rolls and precedence, the duke was decidedly the favourite.—More especially from his having assumed the tone of a penitent *roué*, awaiting only the smiles and guidance of an angel, to return to the paths of virtue. For first among the covetings and vanities of the sex, is that of conversion!—To half the women in the world, the dearest of victims is a proselyte;—affording a twofold tribute to her heart and head.

In my Sicilian expedition I indulged so largely

in the weakness of landscape-writing, and am growing so impatient for the epoch entitling me to make my bow wow to the public in the character of a royal favourite, that I must be permitted to leave untranscribed a reamful of sunsets and sunrises, worthy the pencil of Claude, or pen of Tennyson.

Suffice it that, after an adieu, in the English fashion, between my master and mistress, wherein a calm salute and formal hand-shaking were allowed to interpret the fondest emotions of the heart, we set sail for Cette; purposing to sleep a night at Montpellier, on our way to Nismes.

Enchanted, even to satiety, by the fragrance and fertility of Sicily, I was unprepared to be struck by the vegetation of any other province. But a few days spent at sea suffice to endow any new coast with attraction; and I must admit that the luscious fruits and musky flowers of the South of France, more than vied with those of Palermo. The *vendanges* were in full ac-

tivity; and the golden grapes, which render proverbial the names of Frontignan and Lunel, lay heaped on every side, like golden ducats in Rothschild's compting-house, in the baskets and hods of the vintagers, on their way to the winepress; imparting additional charms to the sunny slopes of that balmy clime, whose heaths and coppices are clothed with flowers that tax the utmost skill of the gardener in our own less favoured country.

At Montpellier, what roses and what tuberoses!—In the gardens belonging to the Faculté de Médecine, what marvels of horticulture!—The Duke of Wigmore, on perceiving the passion for flowers evinced by Lady Ellen Howarth, hastened to make purchases for the orangerie at Wigmore Castle, sufficient to freight a brig; till Lord Hebberton, satisfied that the northern atmosphere of *his* family seat, beaten by the Atlantic breezes, rendered impossible the naturalization of palms, or camphor trees, or Azorian jessamines, even though he

should import a Provençal gardener to do them justice, was beginning to look as sullen as an *impresario* whose *prima donna* is attacked by influenza.

Having never chanced to hear of a fair one whose heart was won through the flues of a conservatory, I longed to whisper to his lordship that he was premature in his despair,—that *qui quitte la partie, la perd*,—that it was too soon to become negligent in the knotting of his neckerchief, or parting of his hair;—or to inquire of him

Would, when dressing well can't move her,  
Dressing ill, prevail?—

For I was a little interested in his favour,—though less by reason of his virtues than of the vices of the Duke of Wigmore.

That a being so young,—so innocent,—or full of promise as Lady Ellen should fall to the share of one whose wary worldliness and thorough corruptness of nature, placed as com-



plete disproportion between them, as between Comus and the Lady, brought tears into my eyes. And I was half afraid!—Educated in retirement, under the care of a doating father, Lady Ellen Howarth was unversed as an infant in the deceptions of society. Her heart and mind were so fresh as to be only too vividly susceptible to new impressions. All she saw delighted and amused her; all that met her ear, she was prompt to believe;—and the duke so topped his part as an amiable and *aimable* man of the world, conscious of his demerits, but doubly conscious of her excellence, that I felt by no means easy on her account.

Still, the mask of virtue is but a mask.—I do not say it in a spirit of self-sufficiency; but I swear I was never a moment deceived as to the reality of a man's pretensions on the moral score. A certain discrepancy between the sparkle of his eye, or the still more expressive plaits around the mouth, and the sentiments he is expressing, convict the impostor.

I could not, however, expect that a simple girl of eighteen should possess the sagacious discernment of Rattle.—Destiny be thanked, the course of events was preparing a stroke in her favour.

After our visit to the Jardin Botanique, the beauty of a mild misty afternoon, that seemed as though Peace were enveloping the earth in an atmosphere of her own, induced our little party to return on foot to the hotel, through the Faubourg de Lozère; leaving the honours of our queer-looking *char à banc* exclusively to the Bingleys; when lo! the attention of the duchess and her sister-in-law was suddenly attracted by the luxuriant shrubberies and parterres surrounding a small but elegant villa, in the style of the *bastides* that abound in the environs of Marseilles.

Lady Ellen, more especially, was enthusiastic concerning the beauty of a clump of double blossomed Arabian jessamines; a single bloom of which, one sees stuck coquettishly over the ear

amid the smooth black tresses of a Chinese beauty, on the top of a tea-box;—and so eagerly did she express her wish for a close inspection of the flower she had hitherto seen only in paintings, that a less gallant man than the Duke of Wigmore, (with whom she was walking, because Hebberton had sulked back alone to the hotel,) would not have failed to inquire, as *he* did, of the *laquais de place* escorting the party, “to whom the villa belonged, and whether permission could be obtained to walk in the garden?”

“It belonged to one of the professors of the Ecole de Médecine, and was usually let to strangers; nay, it was to be let at that moment,”—was the reply of the *laquais de place*,—(a species of animal never known to plead ignorance on any subject whatsoever;) and his grace having offered his services to verify the intelligence, entered the gates for the purpose.

He had not been absent five minutes, nor had the *laquais de place*, who remained, in the

interval, in charge of the party, completed his extravagant oration in honour of the climate of Montpellier, “ which induced so many noble invalids to spend the winter there,”—(as he hoped might be the project of his auditors,) when my mistress interrupted him by inquiring of Lady Ellen whether she heard nothing?—adding, in reply to her sister-in-law’s expressive smile, implying that it was difficult *not* to hear the intrusive *tirade* of their guide,—“ I fancied I heard a woman’s cry!—I am sure I heard a scream.”—

A moment afterwards, the duke reappeared, looking flurried and awkward, and reproaching our attendant with having led us into error.

“ The house is not only inhabited,” said he, “ but I fear I have been guilty of an unpardonable indiscretion. My sudden appearance produced such emotion in one of two ladies whom I found resting on a bench near the house, and my endeavours to apologize seemed such an annoyance to her attendant, that I

hurried away heartily ashamed of myself. All that remains for us, I fancy, is to return home; for, after the panic produced by my intrusion, even the hope of affording pleasure to Lady Ellen did not embolden me to ask for a branch of the jessamine."

Abashed by the reprimand he had received, the *laquais de place* could not satisfy his self-love without inquiring of the first person we met, how long the villa had been let, and to whom;—and though the *baragouin* of a dialect in which the reply was couched was perfectly unintelligible to us, he took care to interpret it into the fact that the new *locataires* were English, and had been only a few days in the place.

Women have an intuitive sympathy with screams and screamers; particularly those who, like the Duchess of Normanford, have been recent spectators of some fearful catastrophe; and in the course of the evening, her private inquiries managed to ascertain that the villa of

Monsieur le Docteur Piron was inhabited by a *membre du parlement Britannique*, named Vernon, and his dying wife!

“I had a presentiment that some object of extraordinary interest to us was connected with that house!”—cried the duchess;—and she was on the point of flying into Lady Ellen’s room to communicate the intelligence, when she was stopped by the recollection of how large a portion of Vernon’s history she was not at liberty to disclose to her sister-in-law; more especially, considering the disgraceful share borne by the Duke of Wigmore in the early portion of the adventure.

“I was right then!—I certainly *did* hear a scream!” was the secret *résumé* of her commentaries.

And shocked by the idea that the sudden apparition of the man so hateful to poor Mrs. Vernon, might have produced the most fatal effect on one whose susceptibility had been so recently and powerfully described to her, she

was unable to resist the impulses of her compassionate heart. A few hasty lines, addressed to Vernon, acquainted him with her arrival at Montpellier; and inquired in the most kindly spirit, whether it were in any way in her power to serve or comfort him or his.

But her messenger came back with the letter unopened! Impossible to get it delivered to the English gentleman.—He was by the bedside of his wife, who had experienced a sudden change for the worse, and was in the utmost danger.

I wonder whether the wistful expression of my face, as I sat looking up into that of the duchess when she received the messenger, had any influence upon her conduct?—For though she had already retired for the night by taking leave of the rest of the party at the door of her apartment, she instantly ordered the *char à banc*, tied on her bonnet, and disappeared!

I perfectly understood her errand.—All she had gathered from her husband of his respect

and affection for poor Mary,—all she had heard of that fallen and repentant woman's anguish at the fate of my poor little murdered Jem,—and all that Christian charity suggested of mercy and fellow-feeling toward a country-woman dying in the bloom of youth in a foreign land, hurried, perhaps, into the grave by the sudden apparition of the offender, whose vices had influenced her fate like the overshadowing of an upas tree,—had determined her to retrace her steps to the villa, and offer the services of a sister to one honoured by her husband with a brother's love.

How she prospered in her errand, I could only guess. For she did not return till morning; and it was only by the discussion that ensued between the Bingleys, Lord Hebberton, and the duke, after receiving a note, requesting that they would “proceed without her to Nismes, and she would rejoin them with Lady Ellen at Marseilles in the course of a day or two,” I ascertained that her overtures had not



been rejected by George Vernon's tenacious pride.

That her most obedient humble servants, the Bingleys, offered to wait her pleasure, as they would have done that of any other duchess, for an indefinite period, is a matter of course. But it was now becoming pretty well understood that, when once she troubled herself to form a resolution, on any subject, my mistress was as firm as she was gentle. Most probably, too, the Duke of Wigmore, in his capacity of dragon to our Hesperides, had considered it necessary to ascertain the origin of the letter which had caused her midnight absence; and was eager to place a certain number of leagues between himself and a victim, mere mention of whose name would suffice to forbid his banns of marriage with the daughter of the late Duke of Normanford. At all events, he made not the smallest objection to the proposition of her grace; and the four malcontents proceeded, with drooping crests, on their expedition to

Nismes ; to saunter with pretended interest over the ruins of the *Maison Carrée* and the amphitheatre.

The moment our fellow-travellers had quitted the town, the duchess returned to the villa in the Faubourg ; and as she went on foot, and Lady Ellen was too proud of being entrusted in the interim with the care of her little niece to take heed of my proceedings, I stole after my mistress ; and contrived to enter the villa unperceived, in the hope of beholding for the last time one of the fairest and most hapless creations of the Almighty hand, whom I had last beheld under auspices so different.

But that I had been an ear-witness of the explanations given to the duchess, never, however, should I have recognised the luxurious and beautiful Mrs. Vernon of Curzon Street, in that wasted, shadowy being !—Having made an effort to rise from her bed to do honour to the kindness of which she was the object, she was attired in a silk wrapper, plain as a reli-

gious habit, but of the deepest mourning,—as became the unhappy creature whose chariot wheels had mangled the body of her pauper brother. But no external show of grief or humiliation could compare, in attestation of penitence, with the wan extenuation of her features, or the tender feebleness of every glance and gesture!

Vernon—poor Vernon—scarcely less changed than herself, like herself attired in mourning, and with a tinge of white already perceptible amid the rich brown curls of his finely-formed head, came forth to meet us on the lawn.

“Better,—yes, decidedly much better to-day,” said he, in answer to my mistress’s inquiries; “and yet, dear duchess, I have to entreat that, though your presence here has been so beneficial, you will no longer delay your journey on her account. It is but natural she should over-exert herself (as she is doing this morning) in compliment to one whose act of grace towards us is felt only too deeply; and

the effort tends to shake the sands in a glass which, though I know to be expiring, I tender with such miser-like avarice, that, to prolong that precious life but for a moment, I would renounce all the world holds dear!"

"If you really think the exertion caused by my presence injurious," replied my mistress, "I will not remain here another moment. God forbid I should produce evil, where my sole hope and desire is to do good!"

"Nay—you cannot suppose that I wish to deprive her of the comfort of seeing you once again,"—cried Vernon, gently arresting the movement of the duchess to turn and quit the shrubbery.—"Let her enjoy at least the solace of bidding you farewell!"—continued he, guiding her steps onward towards the house.

"You have nothing to fear from *my* exciting or disturbing her!" whispered the duchess in a low voice,—as if already influenced by the presence of the invalid.

"I know it—I know it!"—rejoined Vernon;

“ you are everything that is good, and generous, and womanly. But I must not lose sight of considerations to which you so nobly blind *yourself*. In the agitation of the crisis of last night, I made no effort to restrain your compassionate impulses. I thought, indeed, only of *her*,—I cared only for *her*. Believing her hours to be numbered, the welfare of the whole world might have been at stake, and I should not have heeded. But now that Piron assures me she is out of immediate danger, I am at leisure to see more clearly ; and must not encourage you, my dear duchess, to do that in Normanford’s absence, which I fear he would disapprove.—You were deceived by the Montpellier people as to mine and Mary’s position.—We are not man and wife.”

A slight start betrayed the surprise of my mistress. But I rejoiced to learn from her answer, that she had not swerved from her benevolent purposes.

“ I will not deny,” said she, “ that, had I

known this at first, it might have influenced my proceedings. But I rejoice that I did NOT know it; for my short acquaintance with poor Mrs. Vernon, and all I have heard from her lips, convinces me that if *one* title to my regard be wanting, others exist a hundredfold more important.”

“ You are right,—your generous heart has judged too truly !” cried Vernon. “ Still, Algernon might secretly reproach me for having profited too largely by your warm-hearted rashness.”

“ Judge *him* as truly as you say I have judged *her* !” remonstrated the duchess. “ My husband is superior to vulgar prejudice. But since your heart and soul are thus bound up in this beloved being, why hesitate to accord her, even in this world, the only reparation you can offer for a life of shame? Why not give her your hand? The clergyman about to administer the last rites of religion, could scarcely refuse to preface them by that of wedlock ?”

“ Because the mere proposition of such a thing would be a direct announcement that her case is hopeless,” replied Vernon. “ Because it would be as a sentence of death! Aware that nothing could have induced me to break my mother’s heart by placing over my household one whom I dared not present to her as a daughter, it would be like telling my poor Mary in express words,—‘ you are to die!—The grave reconciles all differences!—No matter whether it close over my mistress or my wife!’—No, no!—I could not propose it to her!—That which was once so coveted, would now be an injury,—an insult!”—

“ Then leave the task to *me!*” pleaded the duchess,—to whom, in the course of her night-watch, Mrs. Vernon appeared to have opened her heart. “ I have courage to probe a wound for which I know that healing is in my hand!”

“ God forbid I should gainsay you!”—faltered Vernon, as they entered the house. “ You are too good,—too kind,—too like herself, for

me to mistrust any proposition of yours. Say what you will for me! Act as you will for me. But in whatever arrangements are made, be the welfare of my precious Mary our first object."

I trust my mistress acceded to this proposal as unreservedly as myself; nor could I refrain, as we approached the presence of the sufferer, from murmuring the verse of Plautus,—

Facile invenies et pejorem, et pejus moratam;  
Meliorem neque tu reperies, neque sol videt!



## CHAPTER VIII.

Σεμνὸς ἔρος ἀρετῆς ὁ δὲ μνυριδος ἄσχοη ὀφελλει.

Know then this truth, enough for man to know,  
Virtue alone is happiness below.

POPE.

FROM my knowledge of the duchess's habits and character, I foresaw in exactly what words she would place the alternative before the dying woman ;—that, pre-assured of poor Mary's disinterested resistance, she would say,—“ Do not refuse to the man you love, this last consolation. Intitle Mr. Vernon to watch over your last hours,—intitle him to honour your memory, as that of his wedded wife.”

But I was not prepared for the strength and courage with which that delicate creature, to all appearance, insubstantial and powerless as the morning mist, would calmly adhere to her refusal.

“The egotism of human nature clings to us to the last!” murmured she, raising to her pale lips the hand that sought her own, while gratefully acknowledging the generous interposition of her guest. “I am selfish enough to wish that he should regret me,—regret me without drawback,—without compunction.—Vernon has already spoken of me to his mother. When I am gone, he will speak of me again. Let there be nothing to induce her to outrage the memory of the poor humbled creature who never attempted to make him forget what was due to *her*, or to those who had gone before them!”

“You do not know Lady Elizabeth!” cried the duchess,—“the best—the kindest of women.”

“I know enough to think of her only with

love and reverence !” murmured poor Mary. “ May her son live to complete the happiness of her old age. But that happiness would receive a lasting blemish, were he tempted, by tardy feelings of compassion, to give me his hand.”

“ No, no,—Lady Elizabeth is all equity and justice,—*and mercy,*” added my mistress, in a lower tone,—for in her conscience, she could not regard the measure she proposed as an act of *mere* justice on the part of the Vernons ;—her memory concerning poor Mary’s delinquencies being painfully refreshed by her entreaty, when they were alone together the preceding night, that her guest would conceal from Vernon the arrival at Montpellier of the Duke of Wigmore, lest the discovery of his grace’s intrusion should irritate his feelings as it had overpowered her own. “ Lady Elizabeth is a Christian in the highest sense of the word ; and will forgive, as she hopes to be forgiven.”

“ God bless her !—*Her* pardon will be lightly

earned!"—faltered Mary, tears starting from her eyes.—“ But I will not further tax her forbearance. Let me die as I have lived,—an outcast! If Heaven accept the sacrifice at my hands, it may avail me in the wrath to come!”

“ The contrition of such a heart as yours will avail you!”—said my mistress, no longer endeavouring to repress her tears. “ All you have suffered, will avail you.”

“ Even as it availed the repentant Magdalen!”—rejoined Mrs. Vernon with a feeble gesture of deprecation, to which the duchess responded in tones of the most persuasive endearment.

“ How kind you are,—and how strange that I should venture to accept your kindness!—But this world seems already receding from me; and the one to which I am hastening, admits not those distinctions which have placed between us a disproportion so irreconcilable!—While *you*,—your greatness enables you to overlook my humble birth,—as your goodness intitles you to overlook my errors!”—

In a broken voice, the duchess entreated her, instead of indulging in these self-accusations, to comply with the wishes of all who loved her that a legitimate union should re-establish her blighted memory.

“It is too late *now*!—Let me bear my cross!”—was her firm though faintly-urged reply. “Reserve this generous kindness for him who survives me,—and who will so soon be left alone!—Promise me that you will not lose sight of my poor George during the first moments of a bereavement, which his friends will consider a release. Promise me, — promise me!—He will want courage to return at once to Lady Elizabeth; and how sad would be his solitary wanderings!—Had the Duke of Normanford been here, I should have appealed to *his* friendship in behalf of one so sincerely attached to him.”

“But he *is* here. — In all things, our thoughts and wishes are the same!”—cried my mistress. “Should any unusual claim occur

upon the good offices of Mr. Vernon's friends, trust me, mine and my husband's shall be devoted to him, as to a brother of our own."

Yet once and again did the duchess endeavour to persuade her that the best legacy she could bequeath for the solace of poor Vernon, was a death-bed marriage.

"So near the verge of eternity," replied Mary, in a hollow but solemn voice, "self-deception is difficult;—nor can I blind myself to the fact that such a marriage would be an injury to his credit,—an injury to his happiness. Hear the truth, and the *whole* truth; for something in your face enables me to tell *you* all!—You know my story.—You have heard of the terrible retribution prepared for me in the fate of my poor little brother. That terrible event enabled me to obtain tidings of my parents;—and at the moment, I fancied the only comfort that could attend me in this world, was to see them again.—I deceived myself!—I was prepared for their revilings,—

perhaps for their malediction.—I was ready to humble myself at their feet. I was ready to sue for pardon.—But when I found that, instead of regarding me with horror, they thought my lot a happy one,—that instead of grieving for that murdered child, they felt his death to be a release,—that, so far from avoiding the sight of Vernon as the partner of my life of shame, they made him the object of exaction,—intruding upon him without decency or remorse,—my life became a burthen to me!—I saw him shrink under the annoyances I had imposed upon him. I saw him recoil from the habits,—the manners,—the encroachments of my parents.—I saw that he loathed them,—that they had interposed a barrier of reserve betwixt him and me. And then it was I felt that I must die,—die to release him from the disgrace he had incurred,—die to restore him to the honours for which he was born,—die to renew the affection of our happier hours.”—

To all this, the duchess listened with looks of commiseration, but without the intense earnestness of sympathy pervading my breast. For *she* knew not, as I did, the nature of poor Mary's parentage!—*She* could not picture to herself the coarse cupidity of a Betsy Sims, or the misery that must have accrued to a high-bred man like Vernon, from seeing the delicate arms of the woman he adored flung around the neck of a drunken and blaspheming cabman.

“By coming abroad,” faltered Mrs. Vernon, “I secured him against mortifications, the greatness of which I could estimate by the effort he made to conceal them. They must never, dear lady, be renewed!—Those from whom I have seen him turn away with scarcely concealed scorn and abhorrence, must not obtain a legal right to call him their son.”

Poor Mary was right. But Vernon was unhappily also right, in his prediction that the exertions entailed on the invalid by her interview with the duchess, would prove fatally



injurious. The distress of mind produced by recurrence to the bitter results of a worldly position such as hers, rendered infructuous the united skill of Montpellier.—Before night, she was speechless.—Before morning, she was dead!—

“ Be comforted !” cried Dr. Piron, in reply to the self-accusations of my weeping mistress. —“ Agitation has accelerated, but not produced, the fatal event. The powers of life were exhausted. — Under any circumstances, she could not have survived a week !”

True to her promise, the duchess devoted herself to assuage the deep but manly grief of the survivor,—the widower,—for a widower Heaven knows he was, though his union with her who was gone was unconsecrated by the benediction of the church. Under his sanction, she addressed to Lady Elizabeth Vernon an exact account of all that had occurred ; and was able to add the consolatory intelligence that her son had pledged himself, after passing a single month at Montpellier, to witness the

completion of a monument he wished to erect over the nameless grave of the object of his affections, to rejoin their family party at Marseilles, and return with them to his native land.

He could scarcely, indeed, withhold his concurrence from the plans suggested by her who had consoled the last moments of his unhappy Mary,—had seen her wasted remains prepared for the grave,—and accompanied them to that tranquil home where the mercy of God becomes all in all!—

I was curious to ascertain in what terms she would contrive to signify to the gay party at Marseilles, the necessity for a separation.—But women have a readier knack with their pen, on such occasions, than men, or lap-dogs; and a very few words sufficed to convey to the Duke of Wigmore that she had lost all taste for his company, and *he* all chance of the hand of Lady Ellen Howarth.

“I am just returned, my dear uncle,” wrote

the duchess, "from attending poor Mrs. Vernon to the grave. My mind is so distressed by the melancholy scenes I have lately witnessed, and Ellen is, like myself, so deeply shocked by the hard fate of this lovely and amiable woman, that we should only be an incumbrance to your gay party. Will you therefore apprise our friends that we shall not reach Marseilles till after their departure. I do not expect my husband for some days; and after his return, Mr. Vernon will probably join us for the remainder of our tour. By that time, you will have reached the Levant!"

Admiralty orders could scarcely have been more explicit; nor could Admiralty orders have been more implicitly obeyed.—The duke had as little inclination for an interview with Vernon, as Lady Ellen for a renewal of the assiduities of her *un-venerable* admirer; and though his grace probably pronounced in his haste that all *laquais de place* were liars, and execrated the evil charm which had carried them to the

*Jardin Botanique* of Montpellier, so as to betray to the fair object of his wooing the existence of a victim of his profligacy of which she might otherwise have lived and died in ignorance, he retained his usual urbane equanimity while explaining to his *compagnons de voyage* that the wind was fair for the Dardanelles.

It was a great comfort to us, when the *Sémaphore de Marseilles* announced the sailing of the Sunbeam and Waterlily—the Firefly remaining in harbour, pending the arrival of *sa seigneurie*, its noble patron.—For no advantage could result from the prolongation of our stay at Montpellier. It was poor encouragement to the heart-broken Vernon to exert himself to overcome his affliction, to perceive that two of the noblest and most virtuous of his countrywomen, could neither visit the grave of poor Mary, nor cross the threshold of that fated villa, without tears;—and though unheard by *him* the devout thankfulness of my amiable mistress, while imprinting a mother's kiss on

the fair brow of her lovely little girl, that their common lot had been cast in a station which secured *them* from evils to which even the fairest and best might, under the curse of poverty, fall a prey, he saw that nothing could be more heartfelt than her sympathy with one on whose gravestone the dates of her birth and death, alone, could be inscribed without accusation.

It was a melancholy time for us. The days were sadly shortened. And though Autumn comes not, in that southern land, with the gloomy face and yellow mantle which render the diminution of daylight so grievous to all but fox-hunting men and whist-playing dowagers in our foggy island of the north, the flowers were beginning to bloom languidly, wearily, and as by an act of grace,—how different from the vivid effulgence of their summer brightness! Even among shrubberies of evergreens, the strain of the latest song bird has a plaintive note; the decay of the year falling heavily,

even where the bitterness of winter is unknown.

And then, the letters from Bourdeaux were far from inspiring. The interview of the Duke of Normanford with the *juge d'instruction*, charged with the prosecution of Marco Tovale had determined the postponement of his trial, with the view of a still graver plea of indictment; and, to give time for the production of evidence concerning the abstraction of the diamonds, and the suspicious death of Lucy Mason in a household subjected to the authority of the delinquent, his trial was deferred till the winter assizes.

My master proposed that we should pass the interval at Nice. But his projects were undecided, till he rejoined his family and consulted with poor Vernon; his compassion for whose bereavement, was by no means lessened by the prompt and noble sympathy of his wife.

With all my penetration, however, I admit that I failed to discover whether it required

much self-government on the part of Lady Ellen Howarth to reconcile herself to this sudden transition to the house of mourning from a brilliant party of pleasure; or whether, though thankful to be released from the antiquated devotion of the Duke of Wigmore, she was equally content to resign Lord Hebberton's rougher courtship.—From her words or deportment, impossible to guess whether her entreaties to the duchess to remain at Montpellier, at least till the return of her brother, were the result of pique, or a girlish attempt to conceal her vexation and disappointment.

All I know is, that when we *did* quit the sunny *côtes* of Montpellier, nothing could be more sad or silent than our journey. But for the occasional attempts at prattling of the baby, whose accomplishment of her solitary word, "mamma," was as often reiterated as the word "I," by the most fluent member of the upper house, not an attempt at conversation would have enlivened the way; and it was owing

perhaps, to the overpowering effects of ennui upon my temper, that, after the second attempt of the little lady to introduce her fingers into my eyes as I lay in her mother's lap, I hazarded a slight snarl ; which but that, at the moment, she was as contemplative as Jaques, the duchess would certainly have resented !—Like all persons whose minds have been startled by sudden and sinister vicissitudes, she was beginning to recoil with alarm from translation to new scenes. Even placed as she was on the pinnacle of human prosperity, who could say, after the death of Lucy and the Duchess of Wigmore, what the morrow might bring forth !

Scarcely, however, had we passed the barrier of Marseilles, nay, even before we had passed it, what a change,—what a defiance to gloomy thoughts or sad forebodings in every object, every sound, every countenance that met our eyes !—Every house, every public edifice, was adorned with garlands of flowers ; and on entering the city, triumphal arches of evergreens,



and flags, and trophies on every side attested some public celebration. The bells were ringing merrily ; and hark ! from the vessels of the port and answering batteries on shore, a royal salute, proclaiming the arrival of some illustrious guest !—The vessel bearing to France the young Duke and Duchess d'Aumâle, had just touched the shore.

“ How fortunate that we bespoke rooms at the hotel ! ”—exclaimed Lady Ellen, almost appalled by the multitude of joyous sunburned faces turned towards the carriage, as, with much patience and more difficulty, we made our way at foot's pace through the crowd.

“ How careless of me not to have calculated,” added the duchess, “ that we should arrive here at the same moment with the royal bride and bridegroom ! But, for some days past, I have neither read a newspaper, nor taken heed of anything but our family affairs.”

Sincerely did I thank my stars for her inadvertence ! It was not to be expected that a little dog of my ears should resign itself to

green and yellow melancholy, because its betters were in the dumps; and, having been of late considerably dispirited by the marked and increasing neglect of my mistress, I am free to confess that I jumped for joy at the sound of the petards; and in the excitement of the moment, barked a hearty bark of hurrah, when, as the royal carriage, drawn by an exulting multitude, made its appearance in a contrary direction to our own, loud cries rent the air of "*Vivent le Duc et la Duchess d'Aumâle!—Vive le Prince de Joinville!—Vive le Roi!*"—

Despite my slenderness and delicacy, an Irishman does not more delight in a row!—A hearty huzza is, to *me*, music, the music which is the food of love;—and the joyfulness of the huge heart of a great multitude, stirs up all the pulses of my own.—One of the things that pleases me best in France indeed, is, the vivacity of its popular demonstrations.—While John Bull seldom laughs on more than one side of his mouth, the French are ready primed to

explode into mirth for a public fête, no matter why or wherefore.

On the present occasion, there was double motive for hilarity. A young and promising prince, who had fought bravely for his country, was bringing home a young and promising princess, of kindred blood, and bearing a striking resemblance to the Marie Amelie so dear to them;—that excellent queen who, in adversity or prosperity,—in youth or age,—was never known to utter a word or commit an action, of which the happiness of others was not the first object!

And above all, the match was to cost them nothing. They could afford to love and praise a prince whose popularity was to impose no tax upon the nation.—The Duc d'Aumâle was as rich as Rothschild; and among Frenchmen, *on ne prête qu'aux riches—même son vivat!*—They loved the son of Louis Philippe all the better for being the heir of the Condés.

The afternoon was far advanced when we

took up our old quarters in the hotel; and the moment it was dusk, what a blaze of illumination streamed from every house! Notwithstanding the lateness of the season, so soft was the weather that every window was unclosed, and every head uncovered; and though, for a moment, the two fair travellers seemed overpowered by the tumult, they soon recovered themselves to sympathize in the general joy. The recent visit of the king to England seemed to have reknit with firmer strength the bond of amity uniting the two nations. For after all, the quarrels of England and France are only those of two loving but vigorous comrades; ready to knock each other down with a right earnest blow, under the sense of aggression; but equally prompt to shake hands and renew their play together, the moment the squabble has been fought out.

As the royal party wisely acceded to the loyal desires of the city of Marseilles, by appearing in state at the theatre, we were left in

comparative tranquillity after the *cortège* accompanying them had executed its functions; and my mistress and her sister-in-law were loitering over the dessert of a late dinner, when it was suddenly announced by the waiter that “*un monsieur se présentait*, for the honour of waiting on the Duchess of Normanford.”

No time for the churlish Great-Britainism of “not at home!”—No moment for deliberation. But there needed none. My mistress was convinced that the “*monsieur*” was no other than her dear Algy, meditating a pleasant surprise; while Lady Ellen probably suspected that it might be Lord Hebberton driven back by contrary winds, or poor Vernon, come in pursuit of those whose friendly aid was so essential in staunching his tears.

“*Madame j’ai l’honneur de vous offrir mes hommages!*”—afforded a strange disappointment to both, as the “*monsieur*” bowed his way into the room. But most of all, to *me*; for Count Jules de Messignac, by whom the salu-

tation was uttered, was the object of my especial aversion; first, as the master of Jasmin, and secondly, as the patron of Moustache.

And now he exhibited a third title to my disgust. Amid the general rejoicing, he looked as black as an undertaker! — Except John Kemble in the part of the Stranger, never did human being assume so rueful an aspect! —

In the panic of the moment, the duchess hastily inquired whether “he brought news from Bourdeaux.” And on his looking as astonished as though she had inquired whether he had just alighted from Arcturus, Lady Ellen added a very audible inquiry concerning the Waterlily and Sunbeam. To both, he contented himself with a simple negative; and as it was impossible to add a further question of whether his banker had failed, or the cholera had re-appeared in France, we were forced to wait his pleasure for the disclosure of his griefs.

He did not keep us long in suspense. After

less than half the allotment of inquiries concerning *l'état de sa santé* and that of all her friends and relations, which French politeness interposes into all possible meetings and greetings, the *Lion par excellence* of the Jockey Club burst forth abruptly into “*Ah! madame! —vous me voyez au désespoir!*—You behold the most unfortunate of men!

With a slight glance from her mourning attire to his suit of superfine Saxon blue, the duchess humanely inquired what loss he had sustained.

“The most perfect dog on the face of the earth!”—was his unblushing reply;—and on hearing, as I supposed, the upstart Moustache thus audaciously mis-described, I could have found it in my heart to yelp my sense of his presumptuous mendacity.

“My fortunes in life are irrevocably marred,” added Count Jules, “by an occurrence which, to every human being besides myself, will probably afford matter for pleasantry! Your

grace has, I presume, beheld the charming and interesting young princess, who this day set foot on the soil of France?"

"By a glimpse, only," replied the duchess.—"But I was struck with her pleasing countenance, as confirmatory of all the good I heard of her at Palermo; where she was admitted to be worthy the happy destinies in store for her. *C'est tout dire!*"

The count responded to this courtly exposition, by a profound sigh.

"The greater her royal highness's merits, the greater my misery!"—said he.—"Imagine madam, if you can, my joy on finding that the interest of my family had been exercised in my behalf, to recall me from my humble diplomatic functions, and obtain for me a post of high honour in the household of the Duke and Duchess d'Aumâle;—a place every way suited to me—a place to which I was every way suited!—Words cannot express my joy, when admitted to my audience at the Tuileries to



receive the parting commands of their majesties to my royal master, whom I was to rejoin on his arrival at Marseilles."

"And have you already forfeited your appointment?"—inquired the duchess, with good-natured interest.

"I have done that which would render it too painful to me to retain!"—replied the desponding *chevalier d'honneur*. "You will readily conceive that I did not quit Paris uncharged with a thousand tokens of affection and interest for her royal highness, from the various members of her new family.—Among other objects, *hélas!* one of her charming sisters-in-law, (having learned by a letter from the Prince de Joinville her desire to possess a King Charles, *de pure race*,) commissioned me with the care of a little creature of a breed rare even in England,—unknown in France."

"Something, perhaps, resembling *this?*" interrupted the duchess, suddenly drawing me forward from the cushion of the sofa be-

hind her elbow, on which I had ensconced myself.

But do not expect, dear reader, that I should attempt to render an account of the torrent of words in which the ecstasy of the enraptured man expended itself on beholding me!

“*Est il possible!*” — cried he, clasping his hands. “Can I—*can I* really be so fortunate as to have recovered my lost treasure,—the treasure which my own eyes beheld slip overboard from the boat, this morning, as we were approaching the royal barque! It must have swum ashore,—as strong and courageous as it is beautiful! Bijou! Bijou!”—cried he, approaching me on bending knees, and with adoring looks, as the recovered talisman of his future fortunes.

But Rattle stood firm, nor answered to the name of Bijou; and the duchess was forced to explain to him as succinctly as comported with his excited frame of mind, that the only bath in which I ever indulged was one of

Windsor soap, and water; and that, as to breasting the briny wave, I could as soon have swum in a basin of turtle!

Great indeed was his disappointment; almost as great as his surprise that the little animal sold to a royal princess as unique of its kind, should have its fellow upon the face of the earth.

“Precisely the same form and shape!” faltered he; “precisely the same *tâches de feu*,—the same graceful ears,—the same agile movements,—the same pensive countenance!”—

“Rattle is naturally of any thing but a melancholy disposition,” observed my mistress. “But I have been forced to correct him severely to-day,—and shall perhaps be obliged to do so again, for snapping at my little girl. Lap-dogs and children are bad companions for each other.”

“*Ah! madame la duchesse, vous me rendez la vie!*”—cried the Count de Messignac. “I was afraid that this *fetch* of little Bijou might

be inappreciably dear to you. But if there be any sum of money, — any equivalent, — any sacrifice that would purchase him from you, my eternal gratitude would be added to the bargain. Her royal highness is still unaware of the loss she has sustained; and by *your* means, might be prevented from ever knowing it.”

No mediatized principality, or dismembered province, ever felt more sublimely indignant on finding itself carelessly appropriated to some new sceptre by the despotism of a Congress, than I, at the idea of being made a *paratonnerre* for the storm about to explode over the head of an awkward *chevalier d'honneur!*—

“Neither money nor any equivalent would purchase him from me,” replied the duchess, in a tone of determination which incited me to start up and lick her hand. “Not from personal predilection, for I am not particularly fond of dogs. But *this* was the favourite of

the poor Duchess of Wigmore, Monsieur de Messignac; and since her death, I have kept it near me for her sake."

"A most amiable feeling on the part of *Madame la Duchesse!*"—was the obsequious reply. "But since her only object, under such circumstances, must be to secure a happy home and kind mistress for the poor little creature, and since she admits that it is not to be trusted in company with her darling baby, and, above all, since her royal Highness is notorious for the affectionate gentleness of her disposition—"

The diplomat paused. The duchess mused. And so did I,—at the staggering fact that a royal highness should need a certificate of good temper, to entitle her to the proprietorship of poor Rattle!

"I am so completely taken by surprise in all this," said the duchess, much sooner than was warranted by the gravity of the matter in suspense,—“that I scarcely know how to re-

fuse, without ungraciousness,—or to concede, without the appearance of inconsistency.”

“Since the possession of the dog is a matter of such vital importance to the prospects of Monsieur de Messignac, and since you will certainly have to get rid of it when little Jane grows older and more venturesome, surely it were better to secure a kind mistress at once?”—pleaded Lady Ellen,—who had a spite at me,—either from the memory of muslin dresses I had tumbled, or from my association in her mind with the name and presence of the Duke of Wigmore, against whom she was beginning to entertain an antipathy.

“*Je ne sais comment vous refuser!*” added the duchess, addressing the man who had never ceased to be an object of annoyance to me. But I will say no more!—Though a dog, I am not Dogberry enough to write myself down an unconsidered brute. It would be too painful to record the exact amount of time and eloquence which sufficed to decide my transfer from

private to public life. Nothing but my own eyes should have convinced me that those of the duchess would remain unmoistened by a tear as she had adieu for ever to the partner of the happiest days of her life.

I promise you, dear public, that you need not tax me with the weakness of a whine as I quitted the presence of those so regardless of my attachment. I concealed my grief like a man,—*ay, like a man!*—Instead of indulging in the weakness of natural emotion, I played to admiration my part of exquisite dissembling;—fawned upon my new master with the readiness of a practised courtier, and prepared to show myself worthy the honours of a Royal Favourite, by an artful display of my charms, and the utmost subservience of docility.

Though insulted and betrayed, I was not blind to the advantages of my worldly advancement. Singular as had been my rise in life, this last and most unanticipated stroke of pro-

motion aroused my long dormant ambitions.  
—Throw strawberry-leaves to the dogs!—*The*  
dog was henceforward entitled to the precedence  
of a *monseigneur*!—



## CHAPTER IX.

Equè feris humana in corpora transit,  
Inque feras noster,—

QUOTH honest Ovid.—And if his suggestion be a true one, (and assertions couched in the solemnity of a dead language have twice the influence over *my* mind of aphorisms slouched in the queen's English,) the unbodied spirit of the great Mirabeau must have found refuge under the inky coat of Rattle!—

For no sooner installed as the minion of a princess, than I lay me down with pensive soul and contemplative visage, to meditate upon

what the title-page of a fashionable pamphlet would call the Present State and Prospects of Royalty.

Undazzled by the brilliancy of my fortunes, I prepared myself to survey with firm and philosophic eye the fearful struggle insidiously in progress, in all quarters of the globe, between the thrones and peoples of the earth.

But my public, whose appetite for the circumstantialities of life has been fostered into a vice by the over-zeal of such writers as Balzac and Fennimore Cooper, who, like Gerard Douw, devote a day to painting a broomstick, my public will doubtless require to be told at fuller length the particulars of my introduction into the marble halls of royalty; and though no one more thoroughly despises the slavish appetite of the vulgar for all and everything whereon is set the seal of crown or coronet, I own I can pardon the interest excited by the *début* of a new courtier,—when such a courtier as Rattle, and where the

royalty is embodied in the person of one of the fairest of the daughters of Italy.

And then, a bride is, under any circumstances, an object of interest. A bride must be old and ugly beyond permission, whom people do not turn round to look at; and in the present instance, she was not only young, lovely, and graceful, but recalled to mind the youth and graces of her royal mother-in-law, even as the second rainbow in the sky appears to be the softer reflection of that arch of promise which sealed the covenant of peace.

I beg I may stand excused therefore for the slight *batement de cœur* which attacked me when conveyed by the *chevalier d'honneur* into the hands of the Neapolitan *cameriere*, by whom I was to be placed in the dressing-room of her royal highness, to await her return from the theatre.

And what a dressing room it was!—To do justice to the French, though they now and then give warning, or worse, to the sovereigns

who do not suit their place, when sovereigns do suit it, no people better understand the honours due to the presence of royalty. England abounds in

Stupid starers and in loud huzzas ;

and few run harder or further than John Bull to enable himself to say "he has seen the king or queen." But the French have a more delicate sense of the claims of regal nature.—They choose their princes to be lodged and cared for, not only better than themselves, but better than the princes of other countries.—And above all, a sense of chivalry such as never animated the dot-and-carry-one materialism of the greatest constitutional monarchy in the universe, suggests that whenever a *fils de France* brings home a good and sufficient princess to be his wife, the honour of the nation is pledged to welcome her gallantly to its shores.

The city of Marseilles, accordingly, had done itself credit in the exquisite arrangements

of the bridal chamber wherein I found myself breathing all the perfumes of Arabia, couched upon the richest produce of the looms of Lyons, to await the coming of my royal lady. The apartment prepared for Marie de Medicis (and Mignon) still engages the interest and curiosity of all the visitors to the Louvre; and it would be a task worthy the Pictorial Times to illustrate the march of luxury in the great nation, by means of the thousand rich and costly superfluities, the charming nothings,—the *élégantisme arch-élégant*, — which surrounded me on every side, while I was attempting to modulate my philosophy to the

Vain pomp and glory of the world,—I hate ye,  
which is after all more appropriate to the spirit  
of a fallen cardinal, than a *parvenu* lap-  
dog!—

Meanwhile, the satin on which I gazed was so brilliant in its sheen, — the jewels so sparkling,—the gilding so lustrous,—the ivory so creamy,—the mother-of-pearl so opaline,—the crystal so transparent,—under the radiance

of the clusters of wax-lights illuminating the right royal apartment,—that I could scarcely refrain from asking myself what man that is born of woman, or woman that is loved of man, could have done to deserve that the vulgar common-places of cleansing, purifying, and attiring, should be arrayed for her pleasure in a guise of such exquisite refinement.

No matter!—The princess thus honoured was fated to be the mistress of Rattle; and posterity will probably regard *that* distinction as a sufficient certificate.

And, as I said before, kings, and those of kingly race, have in the present century troubles and difficulties to contend with, such as entitle them to extra compensation.—If the honours first conceded to the first of a nation purported to be in guerdon of his labours in protecting the interests of the people, in the field by his hand,—in the council by his head,—(a poor requital for sleepless hours and personal jeopardy,)—surely the salary of sovereignty ought to be raised, now that, instead

of having to defend the throne against battering rams, or javelins, or four-and-twenty pounders, it is beset by the far more perilous warfare of public opinion,—the sapping and mining of the press,—and all the manœuvres, ambuscades, and strategies perpetually hatching in the bureaux of European diplomacy.

I vow to mercy that I never reflect seriously on the calling of kings, without feeling, with a shudder, that I would as soon have been born a turnspit.—Talk of eating the bitter bread of banishment!—What bread so bitter as that which is conceded with a smiling face but grudging heart, by a nation that never gazes on the embroidered mantle of royalty without a stinging thought of its starving millions?—It is not always pleasant even to be a Royal Favourite. But *that* place is at least easier than being the pensioner of the people!

Unspeakable was my comfort in knowing Henri Eugène Philippe Louis d'Orleans, Duke of Aumale, to be substantial as a Lombard

Street banker, prosperous as Hudson I. King of the Railways; and even had I believed his means of supporting me to be dependent on the whims of those Chambers which make all the more noise because they cannot be discharged, my blue devils must have vanished like vapours at sunrise, when Caroline of Salerno entered the room, beaming with that best of loveliness, the sunshine reflected from the smiles of admiring thousands.

I loved her in a moment.—The coronal of intermingled coral and brilliants adorning her fine hair, looked like a kindly thought of her own Italian shore, penetrating through the gorgeous prospects of her new destiny.

Over her reception of Rattle, I must be permitted to pass in silence. To write of royalty, or write of oneself, is at all times a critical ordeal.—One can never say enough of the former, or little enough of the latter, to satisfy one's evil-wishers; and I confess I regard tête-à-têtes with royal highnesses, in a confidential



light.—Suffice it, therefore, dear Public, that if, in spite of the compliments lavished upon me, I permitted myself for a single moment to be dissatisfied with the warmth of my reception, and sigh after the fonder caresses of my dear, dear Jem, I was not so unjust towards my favourite lady as to overlook the fact of her being engrossed at that eventful epoch of her life, by an attachment which is either like the spectre in the Castle of Otranto, too great for the tenement that should contain it, or a mere mockery.

“*Mon bel ami, Rattle, courage et patience,*” said I to myself.—“The day of the little dog is yet to dawn!”—

Even when, on our journey Paris-ward, which consisted of a series of triumphs such as it is given only to women and princes to enjoy, I found myself consigned to the carriage of the *dame d'honneur*, instead of the post to which I was entitled upon the knee of the Duchesse d'Aumâle, I revenged myself by another fit of

Mirabeauism, more sublime than the first.—  
For there is nothing like a snubbed courtier  
towards the making of a bitter democrat.

But albeit

A dog who fortune's buffets and rewards

Could take with equal thanks,

and resigned to find a young and devoted bridegroom preferred to myself, I cannot assert that I accepted without a snarl certain ugly words occasionally discharged at me by the young and devoted bridegroom's favourite brother, the Prince de Joinville;—perhaps because he saw in me an Englishman of a dog—or *vice-versâ*.

He was much to blame—I had never barked in the chorus of Rule Britannia. I had never yelped my opinion concerning the unship-shapeness of all things maritime in *la belle France*. I had never exhibited *curiosity* in my place in parliament concerning the naval resources of the rival kingdom; or supplied information to the empty heads of junior lords of the Admiralty,—so often “to be let unfurnished.” I had

given no offence. *I* had meditated no defence ; but sought peace and ensued it.

Every time, therefore, that his royal highness favoured me with a touch of the heel of his boot, *je me suis promis de parier cette botte là*.—And I can promise him that Rattle does not vote with the minority !—Just let him try !

To my shame be it spoken, however, no sooner had I reached the Pavillon de Flore of the Tuileries, already inhabited by that charming princess of his who came to us like some graceful bird of the tropics, accustomed to perch only on the waving foliage of the palmeto, than I abjured my sense of injury—resolved to forget that I was a Great-British dog—and to show myself an animal that had seen the world, *et qui savait vivre*.

The amenities of courtiership were already insensibly infusing their balm into my veins.—It is a soothing thing to pass through life, like Queen Elizabeth, between files of people on their knees. It is a soothing thing to be *viva*-ed

from post to post, and know oneself entitled to be troublesome and disagreeable, without the chance of being told so to one's face.—And the moment it came to be perceived in the household and circulated among the vulgar, that I was becoming a favourite, nothing insolent, or mischievous, or dirty, I might not have done with impunity!—Take a single example.

*Anty noo*, as Mrs. Lewson used to say, I have, like other mortals, my foot of clay.—My poor tail is not exactly the feathery feature it ought to be. The hair is not quite so rich or flowing as the *belle chevelure* of Madame de Grignon. The Duchess of Wigmore, poor soul, used often to talk of sending for Willis to me;—and in Italy, where the sun *does* shine, I have been often put out of sorts by seeing pourtrayed in my shadow a certain anomalous termination to my shapely form, which I felt almost ashamed to wag. I know my weak points, and can afford to be candid.

And yet, dear public, I promise you I have

heard this *beauté de moins* of mine pronounced to be a *charme de plus*!—More than once, when the young duchess permitted herself to observe that, if I had a handsome tail, I should be perfect, all present instantly proclaimed in chorus that my tail was unexceptionable!—

“*Son altesse royale daignait sans doute plaisanter? Mais c’était ravissante de beauté que la queue de cette chère petite bête!*”—

And under such circumstances, how could I do otherwise than bless the day which gazetted me into a royal household!—To find oneself grow suddenly infallible, is like acquiring a sixth sense; and if a new-made pope could be compelled into frankness, I bet my little life that *his* sensations would be found exactly similar to those of poor Rattle!—Nor are the mere extrinsic triumphs of a position such as mine unworthy mention. One day, as I was enjoying my snug corner of the brilliant bridal equipage of my duchess, on our way from the Tuileries to *Dans sa pompe élégante, admirer*

*Chantilly*, (famed for its black lace veils, make-believe races, and the dismantled palace of the Condés,)—as we were driving through the Champs Elysées to lunch at Neuilly on our way, the pressure of the throng, eager to stare at the little dog and his great lady, rendered it somewhat difficult for our coachman to force his way through the heaving multitude.

“*Narguons les espèces!*”—thought I,—out-facing from the carriage-window the filthy faces presuming to grin familiarly into mine.—When lo! as I gazed superciliously upon the *allée* usually occupied by stalls, shows, jugglers, and mountebanks, I was struck with indignation on noticing, at an exhibition of dancing-dogs, a beast of a poodle—yes—a dirty, red-eyed, scurvy beast of a poodle—endeavouring to attract our notice by holding in his mouth the Queen of Hearts, which he had extracted from a pack of cards as filthy as himself, on the approach of the carriage, containing Madame la Duchesse d’Aumale.

As he stood there, capering and grimacing on his hinder legs, a mere mockery of our noble species, methought the countenance of the wretched creature was familiar to me. Nor was I mistaken.—The *chien savant* was no other than Moustache,—

*Digna satis fortuna revisit!*

Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,—

Fallen from his high estate,

he was, endeavouring, like other broken-down Frenchmen, to turn his *talens de société* to account.—Poor beast!—I was really sorry for him; and had we, at any moment of our lives been friends, would certainly have noticed him in his adversity.—But after whispering to myself something about the moral lesson of seeing prodigals and profligates put to their shifts, I plead guilty to having looked so fixedly out of the opposite window, as to render impossible to the French poodle the slightest appeal to my acquaintance;—the sort of thing that

Christians of the better order, or rather of the better *orders*, call a dead cut!—

Talking of “*French* poodles,” by the way, I must needs confess that a predominating portion of the favour bestowed upon me, at Paris, arose from the fact of my being English. Notwithstanding the national *guignon* subsisting and uneradicable between the two nations, prodigious is the instinctive Anglomania of the French. In all matters which the abuses of modern language connect with the word “gentlemanliness,”—more especially the turf and the stable, English taste is ever paramount.—A well-dressed Englishman is as proverbial at Paris as an ill-dressed Englishwoman,—while, as regards horses and dogs, the *ipse dixit* of a helper from Newmarket, goes further than that of a French prince of the blood.—

Designated by the whole court as *par excellence*, “*le petit Anglais de Madame la Duchesse d’Aumale*,” I obtained, therefore, a far larger share of public consideration than if I had been



simply called a *Carlin*.—I often regret the superfluous pains of national self-assumption taken by the English; but for the jealousies engendered by which, the honour of being top-sawyers would be accorded to them all over the world.

I was much struck by this prejudice in our favour, when accompanying my lovely lady and royal sister-in-law on their round of shopping, preparatory to the *obligated* generousities of New Year's Day.—With few exceptions, the objects commended to our selection by way of *étrennes*, were of English manufacture:—English desks, English dressing-boxes, English albums, English keepsakes, English china;—some as *professedly* “*Anglais*,”—some as Bohemian, Spanish, or French.—

But I was still *more* struck, on noticing what very mediocre specimens of human nature became current in Parisian favour, nay, even popular or fashionable, from the mere fact of belonging to the same nation as myself! The

set of my country people abroad, that winter, were really detestable.—Yet I swear that they were received at the Tuileries, as though one and all, what the Chinese denominate “first chop.”

Among them, those two superannuated *chipies*, whom the “Idler” would call “my fair and talented young friends, the right honourable the Ladies Semiton,” passed for girls of wit and beauty about town.—So I conclude, at least. For, in addition to the most flattering public reception at court, they belonged to all our most private parties ; so that Lord Horsham and Charley Marston, not recognizing them, perhaps, in this juvenile character, as the pair of dowager damsels they had avoided at Rome as junior only to the Coliseum, were actually beguiled into a flirtation !

*Our* household, in fact, was more open to these incursions of the Picts and Scots than any other comprehended under the royal roof of the Tuileries, from the fact of Jules de Messignac’s previous *attachéship* in England ; and the

number of capital dinners he had eaten, and of lawn-meets in which he had participated,—to be requited in kind, somewhat more gratefully than the comforts enjoyed by the Faubourg St. Germain and the French princes, during the period of emigration, at the cost of Great British hospitality.

No Englishman was ever beheld at the dinner-table of Charles X. They dined by dozens with *us* of the Pavillon de Flore!

The only bore entailed by the notice bestowed on my countrymen arose from the fact that Englishmen carry about with them, wherever they go, a certain *mauvaise odeur* of Windsor soap and politics. Every Englishman, whether doomed to weigh out figs behind a grocer's counter, or to parade a blue riband on levee days with the grace of a clothes-horse, conceives himself to be born a statesman; and whether steaming across the Red Sea, or on the top of a mail coach, or looking over the lofty side of a white cravat at Almack's, or in a fast

train, or while discussing a dish of Francatelle's *suprême de volaille*, fancies himself fulfilling his mission by converting conversation into a parliamentary debate.

Like a forty-horse power windmill, such fellows wear one down with Ireland, corn-laws, or the Oregon question; while their flimsy moieties, inspired as they are just now with the rage for speculation worthy only of the Stock Exchange, or the bureaux of a bargain-shop, pester one, on the other hand, with quotations of the railway markets, and slipslop discussions of the broad gauge and the narrow.

I endured, however, with as few yawns as might be, their "fribbles and frabbles," and was rewarded for my forbearance when, one day towards the end of the carnival, after listening, without winking an eyelash, to a *tirade* from Lord Hard-enbrass anent the greatness and glories of Louis Philippe; "the Napoleon of peace, the most active, far-sighted, vigilant and liberal of modern sovereigns,"—"the egg that binds together in

unity the jarring ingredients of the European pudding,"—to which Exceptionatus Blank and Rodomont Bragge kept nodding their assent from the opposite side of the table, like a tray of mandarins on the head of an image boy, I heard the Countess of Surcingle, who was newly arrived from Italy, inquire with eager interest of one of the cabinet ministers beside whom she was seated, whether "there was any chance of royal clemency for a certain escaped *forçat*, named Marco Tovale, convicted, she saw by the *Journal des Débats*, by the *Cour d'Assises* of Bourdeaux, of having assassinated at Rome an English girl in the service of one of her intimate friends,—the wretch having, since his conviction, made ample confession of the fact, as well as of an enormous robbery of jewels, concealment of which was the motive of his heinous act."

For I felt as certain as the *Garde des Sceaux* to whom she addressed herself, that, however great the abhorrence of the French

and their kind-hearted king of capital punishments, the crimes of Maurice Thibaut would be requited as they deserved, and the fame of my poor Lucy and my ungrateful Duchess fully re-established,

But I was not prepared for the intelligence which that most garrulous of gossips, Cep, superadded to her ladyship's view of the case.

“I am glad to find the Normanfords are released at last from the prosecution of this odious affair,” said he. “I suppose we shall have them here in a day or two. Lady Elizabeth Vernon is already arrived at the Hotel de Bristol to meet her son, who has been touring with them in the South, and, by the way, is said to be paying attention to Lady Ellen Howarth.”

“A capital match for both of them,” cried the goodnatured Lord Surcingle, “and I hope, with all my heart and soul, it may come to pass. Not but what, if Lady Ellen had smiled a little more kindly on my poor friend Wigmore, (who

seems to be growing younger than he knows what to make of,) it would have prevented all the idle gossip about him and Lady Bingley, which reaches us with every mail from Malta like a whiff of the plague."

Poor Mary!

Well, after all, I would rather have to write "poor Mary!" than "poor Ellen!"

It was but a few days before that the gossiping of Cep had equally served to apprise me of the cool, calm, but decided refusal given to my quondam master, Sir Barnadiston Roper, by the charming Marchioness of Rosamel! Had it been possible, indeed, I would have subscribed to Cep instead of to the Morning Post, as the best manual going of fashionable intelligence. He seemed to have an electric telegraph perpetually at work for the transmission of matrimonial news; and could I but have converted it to my own purposes, to obtain tidings of my lost Adelmina, what a happy dog should I have been!

As it was, the languor of feeling incidental on my separation from the object of my first and only love was becoming alarming. I found myself sinking into atrophy, and had not the sight of a volume of fashionable memoirs on the table of Madame la Duchesse d'Aumale suddenly suggested authorship as the last resource of the *ennuyé*, by this time I should have barked my last!

So exciting, however, is the vanity of every sentient entity, that the mere attempt at autobiography has proved invigorating as the cold water cure. Since I put paw to paper, I have become another dog. The *ennui* emanating from the miasma of courts has ceased to paralyze my faculties; and if I could only hope that, while diverting my own weariness, I imposed none upon my readers, methinks I should wag my tail off.

Encouraged by reviewers, patronised by publishers, read by royalty, spelled by the people, I should eventually rise to the level of



my vocation, and some day, perhaps, achieve a pamphlet on Ireland, pillaged out of the table talk of my political friends, or some nameless *chef d'œuvre*, on the sixth edition of which the critics would throw vitriol, in order that the anonymous author might betray himself by a howl.

Think seriously of it, dear Public,—think of what boarding-school advertisers call my “peculiar advantages,” as an unsuspected confidante of the first personages of the day,—*doctrinaires*, devotees and mischief-makers of whatever denomination. Even Princess Lieven talks without restraint in presence of Rattle; and Brougham and Molé dined together last week within reach of my long ears. Guizot lays aside his sanctimonious mask, and Madame de Castellane—but, for the present, I forbear!

Buy me, try me,—  
Read ere you decry me;

and I promise you, in compensation, a journal

of royal sayings and doings, outshining those of Dangeau and Pepys by as much as the life of crowned heads has been rendered pleasanter by the intervention of railroads and steam-yachts, enabling them to amuse themselves, and cultivate the acquaintance of their order,—a journal, in short, entitling me to become hereafter notorious as the editor of a “Rattle’s Magazine,” should princely caprice ever dethrone me from my present proud pre-eminence as a ROYAL FAVOURITE.

THE END.

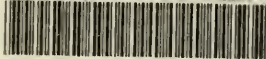
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