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THE COURTIER
OF THE
DAYS OF CHARLES II.
WITH OTHER TALES.

BY MRS. GORE,
AUTHORESS OF "POSTHUMOUS MEMOIRS OF A PEERESS;"
"MRS. ARMYTAGE;" "STOKESHILL PLACE;"
"MARY RAYMOND."



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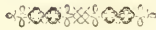
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THE COURTIER

OF THE

DAYS OF CHARLES II.



CHAPTER I.

DEEP as fruitless are the furrows impressed of late years upon the fair field of society, by the iron share of party-spirit. The Conservatives and Radicals of to-day, scarcely yield in acrimoniousness to the Whigs and Tories of yesterday; and, even in this age of refinement, the world is apt to pull caps and draw triggers,—to call names and indulge in retorts uncourteous,—in a spirit becoming the barbarian feuds of the White and Red roses. The Catholic Question and Reform Bill begat “haters,” such as even Dr. Johnson might have pronounced “good;” while banners of orange and green still emulate, in the sister kingdom, the exciting influence of the *Bianchi e Neri* of the factions of the Middle Ages.

Yet how pale and vapid appears even the bitterest of these antagonisms, compared with the party-spirit engendered by the deep-seated injuries of civil war!—To stir up the soul of man into genuine partisanship, his pecuniary interests must be affected. The loss of a ministerial salary, administering to the daily cake of life rather than to its daily bread, is scarcely worth bringing into comparison with the tribulation of having a fair house razed to the ground, or blazing to the sky,—woods hacked down,—farms ravaged,—nay, perhaps the dear ones of our heart given up to slaughter before our eyes. Such are the injuries which create heroes and patriots; such the losses which, in England’s olden time, set the lances of York and Lancaster in rest; or, at a later period, stimulated the remnant of chivalry to oppose those roundhead Puritans, whom the spirit moved to plunder and slaughter their fellow-countrymen in the abused name of the Lord!

It is not, however, in the hour of strife that the force of party hatred roots itself strongest in the heart. The feeling does not

acquire its deadliest force till, seated by the desolated fireside, and missing one of its accustomed treasures, we revert to the origin of the bereavement,—recall forgotten grievances,—revive effaced recollections,—and dwell upon those frightful tumults when a fellow-countryman became a deadly enemy, and our dwellings resounded with the cry of pillage and violence, breathed in the accents of our native land!

Such was the state of national feeling in England, at the period of the Restoration. Things had been done and suffered, which it behoved the sufferers to steep in oblivion. Country neighbours who, a few years before, had been opposed hand to hand in unrelenting strife, were required to meet at public convocations, as having no cause of discord. The words they had uttered, the cruelties they had mutually inflicted, were all to be obliterated by the act of amnesty which afforded leisure to King Charles for his licentious orgies at Whitehall, and to bumpkin squires for hanging up their buff jerkins and steel head-pieces on pegs in their musty halls, and for scouring up the battered arms which were not doomed by act of parliament to become rusty like their resentment or their pride.

Scarce a neighbourhood throughout the kingdom that was thoroughly at its ease. The Londoners had their commerce and their recreations,—the courtiers their fêtes and processions; but the rural population had nothing to divert its sense of injury. The evidence of evil was still hatefully before them. Fair estates fallen to ruin,—fair edifices overthrown;—naked hills in place of thriving plantations, and roofless halls instead of goodly manor-houses. The stately minster lacked its desecrated shrine—

. . . levelled, when fanatic Brook
The fair cathedral spoil'd and took;—

the lonely hearth—the helpless orphan—its master and father, martyrs of unavailing and unrewarded devotion.

In one of the most beautiful of the woodland districts on the borders of Northamptonshire, there abided an individual,—rich even to overflowing in the best gifts accordable by nature or society,—whom the evil chances of those disastrous times had visited with searching influence. The Lady Lovell, in her twenty-sixth year, was beautiful and intelligent beyond the common lot;—nobly born, nobly allied, immensely wealthy. Yet with these and other means and appliances of happiness, such as good health, good humour, good sense, good principles,—a hopeless blight was upon her destinies. Scarcely to be termed a wife,—scarcely to be termed a widow,—the love of every heart was hers, save that of the man who, as she was required by law to share his title and estates, can be designated no otherwise than as her husband.

Lovell House was a noble seat, situated on a gentle eminence, overlooking the river Nen; surrounded by a stately park, with vast domains widely outstretching its enclosures. The place was antiquated, it is true; having undergone no material alteration since the latter days of Elizabeth, who had feasted within its walls on her progress to the grander domicile of her favourite chancellor. But few mansions in the county were to compare with the old hall of Lovell; for in addition to its formal groves, avenues, and pleasance, its young mistress had chosen to indulge for its adornment in choice whimsies of her own; by creating, in the midst of a straggling coppice of beech and elms fringing the western boundary of the pleasance, a garden of fair shrubberies and parterres, wild and beautiful as Ariel's wand might have called into existence amid "the still vex'd Bermoothes."

Nor were the usual accessories of country pleasures wanting at Lovell, albeit its liege lady could do but inadequate justice to their entertainment. The ancient mews, the old kennel and stables of the hall, were carefully kept up; and Lady Lovell, though a somewhat subdued representative of the barons bold who had of old taken pleasure in the sport, was perhaps the best horsewoman who ever laid aside her riding-gear to resume the gentler occupations of the lute or pen, the distaff or the needle.

Dwelling alone at the hall as lady paramount of the vast estate, she fell not into the usual faults of female sovereignty. Her rule was neither arbitrary nor capricious. The afflictions and vexations of life had subdued rather than soured her temper. The ancient servitors of the house adored their lovely mistress,—the tenants respected her,—the poor (save when in the lady's hearing) never named her without blessings; for Anne Lovell had a proud and generous spirit, and abided not the servility of overstrained gratitude.

Nevertheless, with all this affluence of love and prosperity, no one could look observantly upon the countenance of the lovely lady, without discerning a certain "unquiet glancing of the eye" that betrayed a spirit ill at ease. It was clear that Lady Lovell was not happy. When she returned from her brisk rides across the hills upon her favourite mare, Black Maud, whose beauty and spirit were well matched with her own, any one might perceive, when she dashed aside her beaver and threw open her velvet vest, that though her fair cheek glowed with the exercise, and her large dark eye beamed with momentary excitement, no joyous smile visited her compressed lips. Even the gleams of satisfaction called up into her countenance by opportunities for the indulgence of her beneficent propensities, or proof that some antecedent good action had brought forth its fruits, were transient as those of winter sunshine. There was discontent in her soul,—

impatience in her gestures. It was probable that she had suffered grievous wrong; for, in moments of unreserve, it was apparent that her opinions and feelings were under the dominion of a deep-seated indignation.

Such were the comments of the casual observer. But when curiosity induced him to ascertain the facts of the case, his wonder was of short duration. Lady Lovell's domestic history was too well known, and her country neighbours were too ready to recount a tale so eventful, to prolong the suspense of strangers interested by her beauty and singularities to make further inquiry.

Lady Lovell, in her own right an heiress, was the only daughter of a Rutlandshire esquire, the representative of a Protestant branch of the ancient house of Heneage of Hainton. Himself an only son, and bearing token in his puny nature and physical infirmities of the over-solicitude usually attending the breeding of a mother's darling, Miles Heneage at thirty years of age was a confirmed valetudinarian; absorbed by the contemplation of his own ailments, and utterly incapacitated for social enjoyment. Every better instinct of his nature seemed merged in selfish hypochondriacism.

Even his loyalty, a distinguished characteristic of his family, became enfeebled by the influence of habitual supineness; and though his heart was with the failing cause of the king, he took no active part in support of the royal standard, nor was known to offer the slightest resistance to parliamentary usurpation. Certain of the Puritan generals who, having occasion to traverse the fertile pastures of Dalesdene Grange on their march from the northern counties to Marston Moor, had been moved to cast a longing eye upon the inheritance of an avowed malignant and hereditary adherent of the house of Stuart, were at length compelled to direct their covetous views to other quarters. Miles Heneage was never known to commit himself by incontinence of tongue; nor from the moment of the death of the king, did he ever resist levies or withhold taxes demanded in the name of the government by force established.

For to his natural inertness was now superadded the influence of profound affliction. Conscious of his unfitness to match with a person of his own degree, Mr. Heneage, on his final retirement to Dalesdene Grange, had formed an alliance scouted as disgraceful by his kinsfolk and acquaintance, but regarded by himself as a pledge of domestic happiness beyond his justifiable hopes:—his young and lovely wife (the daughter of a wealthy farmer in the neighbouring vale of Belvoir) being not only mild and docile in disposition, but sincerely attached to the man who had overlooked her deficiencies of birth and education.

Scarcely, however, had his kind-hearted wife modified her tastes

and habits to suit with those of her sedentary spouse, when poor Heneage was required to resign her to the grave; and accept a peevish helpless infant, in exchange for the gentle and intelligent companionship of its mother. At first, indeed, he was almost tempted to reject the innocent cause of his bereavement; and, for many months after his loss, was unable to bear the presence of the child. It was not till its tiny features began to assume a faint resemblance to the loved one who was gone,—the crushed violet he had been the means of rescuing from obscurity,—that he took the slightest interest in its existence;—an interest increasing day by day into that painful intensity of love, only to be appreciated by the parents of an only child.

Mr. Heneage at last discovered what a comforter for his sorrows had been vouchsafed him in his little daughter;—what an occupation for his lonely leisure—what a brightener of his dreary prospects!—His house and lands grew precious to him from the moment he felt that something of his own, *and of hers*, was hereafter to enjoy them. His knowledge,—and it was extensive and various,—acquired importance in his eyes when he considered that it would enable him to monopolise the task of preceptorship to this only blessing; nay, the very time which had often hung heavy on his hands, seemed to have converted its leaden minutes into gold, now that every one of them served to develop some new charm or faculty in the cherub with which Providence had adorned his solitude.

Little Anne was illimitably privileged!—Never had child such prerogative of wilfulness and mischief. For Heneage, though a man of accomplished mind, had none of that knowledge of the world which is indispensable to render available the powers of the strongest understanding,—like the hand-polish, without which the sterling metal of a fine weapon must remain useless. His infirmities had kept him aloof from society. His wealth, rendering him a person of high account in his family and household, had deprived him of the hard lessons which even domestic seclusion may afford. Having never been taxed with blame, he had a right to fancy himself faultless; and whether he wedded with a farmer's daughter or spoiled his lovely little heiress, his tenants were not the less loyal in their opinion, or his servants less sedulous in reporting it, that “the squire could do no wrong.” The same adulation which converted the reigning sovereign into a despot, converted Miles Heneage into a harmless egotist, and his daughter into a termagant and romp.

For the latter, however, there was more hope of amendment than for the sickly recluse. Reason had not yet done its work to tame down the eccentricities engendered by her peculiar position; and even when, at ten years old, Anne Lovell was accustomed to

spring upon the wildest colt in the pastures, and with her long dark hair streaming to breezes as wilful as herself, and her white hands fixed in its mane, gallop away, regardless of the threats of her nurse, Dame Audrey, to report her indiscretion to her father, —there was an archness in the expression of her lovely face that implied somewhat beyond the vacant sportiveness of youth.

Interfering friends, meanwhile, were not wanting, to remonstrate with Mr. Heneage upon the extraordinary education he was bestowing upon a girl likely to be so splendidly endowed. Her maternal grandfather had already enriched her with the amassings of a life of industry; and the estates of Dalesdene were strictly entailed upon her. Yet her training was scarcely beyond that of the lads of the parish grammar-school:—strange breeding for one predestined to be a lady in the land!

Among the remonstrants, was the only person who shared with the monument in Dalesdene church an influence over the affections of Heneage;—Arthur, Lord Lovell, the playmate of his school-days, who, in early times, had rescued the life of young Heneage from imminent peril, from which period, a tender friendship had existed between them. Their union was in some degree interrupted when the alliance of Lovell with the daughter of the Earl of Bristol rendered the habits of Lovell House too formal for the enjoyment of the infirm Rutlandshire squire; and thenceforward, though domiciled at only thirty miles distance from each other, the friends corresponded oftener than they met. But learning the death of his friend's young wife, Lord Lovell had hastened to Dalesdene to console the afflicted Heneage, and officiate as chief mourner at the funeral ceremony he was incapacitated from attending; and though his lordship no longer combated Heneage's determination never again to sleep from under his own roof, he became an occasional guest of the squire, to deposit in his bosom his political anxieties, and deplore the falling cause of royalty and the Stuarts. On these occasions, his lordship could not refrain from expressing his regret at the hoyden habits of the only daughter of his friend.

“It is my fate to be everywhere thwarted by witnessing mistaken systems of education!” said Lovell. “All the time I can spare from public affairs, is devoted to disputing with Lady Lovell touching the breeding she is bestowing on her son;—a likely, hopeful lad, were he not trained like a Benedictine acolyte, rather than as befits the heir of my name. But the youth is so idolized by his mother, that, had she her will, she would pen him in a glass case to save him from vulgar contact or bodily hazard. If yonder tanned and mettled lass of yours, my dear Miles, were half as delicately tinctured as my Arthur, or were Arthur as clever a marksman or bold a rider as your lass, both would be gainers. Pr’ythee

reflect, my dear friend, that the girl is gaining growth; and that it were an unseemly thing did Miss Heneage of Dalesdene Grange exhibit at some future time a trace of the strange propensities which you are leaving unchecked in little Anne."

"The girl is, as you say, gaining growth," replied the squire, pushing out of the way the dog's-eared Virgil which had ministered in the morning lesson of his daughter.—"Let her gain health and strength as well as growth; *that* is the point on which I am at present anxious. I must not have this second treasure prematurely wrested from me: and whether she can bob a curtsey as daintily as your wanton damsels at Whitehall, or hang over a French lute, or keep measure in a cinque-pace, I care no more than whether there be ten grey hairs, or twenty, in Dobbin's tail."

"But others will some day have a right to care," cried Lovell warmly. "Think you that a husband of the birth and breeding you naturally expect for the heiress of such noble property, will bear to find her ignorant of the common accomplishments of her sex?"—

"Expect a husband for my girl?" exclaimed Heneage, with an air of consternation. "Would you have me look forward to losing the delight of my widowed days,—my joy, my consolation, my only, only earthly blessing?—Go to!—The mere thought of her wedding with a stranger, would drive me to distraction!"

"Whatever the thought may do, the fact is a consideration to which I counsel you to reconcile yourself," replied Lord Lovell gravely. "The child bears indications of rare beauty; but were she to turn out black as the crook, the lands of Dalesdene would wash your Ethiop white. Wooers she will never lack; and unless all this mad rough-riding, and shooting at marks, and fording of brooks, should harden her nature as well as her frame, those dark eyes will some day discover that there are younger and more gallant men in the world than her father and his chaplain!"

The remark provoked a heavy sigh from poor Miles Heneage; but, in the sequel, it influenced his conduct towards Anne. A few weeks afterwards, he took into his establishment a decayed gentlewoman, the widow of a distant kinsman, to assist him in the education of his heiress; and Mistress Corbet being a woman of sense, who did not in the first instance draw the rein of government too tight, she eventually acquired such influence over her pupil as served to perfect the manners and disposition of the highly-gifted heiress of Dalesdene.

Most opportune for her welfare, indeed, proved the suggestion of her father's friend; for within a year of Mistress Corbet's instalment, Mr. Heneage experienced a paralytic seizure, by which he was rendered wholly helpless. His intellects were only tem-

porarily affected, but it was clear he would never recover strength to cross the threshold of his chamber of sickness.

Debarred therefore, by necessity as well as inclination, from taking any active part in the contest by which the calamities of the nation were now brought to an issue, Heneage was content to follow in fancy the movements of the rival armies; and Naseby and Marston Moor inflicted wounds upon his spirit, such as were little conjectured by the witnesses of his infirm egotism. Convinced from the period of General Cromwell's return from his triumphant Irish expedition, that the cause of the Stuarts was fallen beyond retrieval, he sank into a lethargic despondency, interrupted only by querulous ejaculations of "Poor country!"—"Unhappy England!"—which induced his daughter and her governess to attribute to patriotic affliction the despondency of the invalid.

They little suspected that the poor palsied man was "still harping on his daughter:"—sometimes dreading that the inheritance derived from ancestors of well-known loyalty would be wrested from a feeble girl by the despotic hand of the parliamentarians:—sometimes apprehending that at some future moment, the wealthy heiress of Dalesdene might be compelled into an alliance with some roundhead general,—some canting rebel,—some blood-stained regicide; and thus, excited to a warmer frame of loyalty, his whole soul engaged itself in the prospects of the young king, who had once more raised in Scotland the standard of the royal cause.

It no longer surprised him that his friend Lord Lovell, so staunch an adherent of the throne and altar, should hasten to offer his loyal support to the youthful sovereign, thus forced to wrestle for his rights. Every evening did Mistress Corbet and her charge follow, for his satisfaction, on the map, the movements of Cromwell's forces, and those of Montrose and Argyle; listening patiently to Heneage's prognostications of ensuing triumph to the latter, which the news of the morrow never failed to gainsay! His whole discourse was of the perils encountered by his noble friend, and the honours likely to crown his efforts on the eventual re-establishment of Charles Stuart!—

It was only after assisting to support him into the adjoining chamber, and smooth his pillow for the night, that the kind-hearted girl ventured to entreat her governante would use her efforts to disabuse the poor man of these unavailing hopes, which might cause the last fatal reverses to fall too heavily upon his soul.

CHAPTER II.

It was a dreary evening towards the close of August, in the disastrous year 1651. Throughout the day, a mistling rain had

imparted to the aspect of the country the premature desolation of autumn : while, with the pertinacity of a cuckoo-clock, the hypochondriac of Dalesdene marked the lapse of the hours and their quarters, by his monotonous ejaculations of " Poor England ! " till even his daughter's spirits were tamed down by his depression. Retreating from the hearth where Heneage's valetudinarian habits required, even in summer, a few embers to be kindled, she took her station beside the still unshuttered windows, peeping out through the dusk over the paddock in the midst of which the Grange was seated ;—involuntarily comparing the cheerless monotony of the scene with the brilliant visions of Tasso's chivalrous creation, into which she had been that morning inducted under the learned auspices of Mistress Corbet.

While her thoughts were busy in comparing the valour of Goffredo's red-cross knights with the now neglected heroes of her dog's-eared Virgil, Anne Heneage was startled by seeing what appeared to be a human form glance stealthily across the lawn, and at length approach so near the house as to command a view of what was passing within. Repressing the exclamation into which she had been half-betrayed, she continued at her post of observation till the mysterious intruder disappeared behind a thicket of lilac-bushes skirting the offices ; and Anne, resuming her place at the hearth-side, was about to communicate in a whisper to her governante the suspicious transit of which she had been witness, when the door was carefully opened and closed by old Gervas, the venerable attendant of her father, who proceeded to fasten the window-shutters and draw together the serge curtains for the night. After completing his task, Gervas approached his master's chair ; and having ascertained that, though silent and still, Mr. Heneage was not asleep, demanded, in an audible whisper, whether he would be pleased to receive a guest.

" A guest—at *this* hour ? "—cried the astonished invalid.—" Marry, no !—and I wonder thou shouldst disturb me by such a question ! But, prythee, who is it, good Gervas, that shows me such small respect as to intrude at Dalesdene Grange almost at my sleeping-time ?—Is it that tedious fellow, Dr. Druncush of Cottesmore,—or the fat major from Oakham ? "

" It is one whose presence here is ever right welcome to your honour," replied Gervas, respectfully. Then bending lower towards the ear of his feeble master, he added, " Under your pleasure, sir, it is no other than my Lord Lovell."

" And you have made all this ado, instead of ushering him to my presence ? "—exclaimed his master, angrily.

" I was fain to have all sure, previous to introducing his lordship into your honour's parlour," replied Gervas. " His lordship is, as it were, a fugitive.—His lordship brings bad tidings from the

armies in the North.—The troops of the commonwealth are within a day's march of us.—Scouts are already on the way, and were his noble lordship to fall into their hands——”

“Enough—enough!”—cried Heneage, recovering sense and energy the moment Lord Lovell's danger became apparent. “It is with himself I must commune of these things. Prepare refreshments, Gervas,—prepare the secret chamber,—send all the knaves to bed,—find errands for the babbling chamber-wenches,—and close up the house for the night.”

Ere he could conclude his instructions, Gervas introduced into the chamber the lofty figure which had excited the alarm of Anne. Withdrawing from his face the flapped beaver with which it was overshadowed, Lord Lovell disclosed the worn and haggard countenance of the fugitive cavalier.

“All is lost, then?”—demanded Heneage, pressing cordially between his own the outstretched hand of his friend,—“or, alas! I should not behold thee here!”

“All is lost!”—replied the hoarse voice of Lovell, struggling with contending emotions. “In the north, the king's troops have yielded, like willows before the wind.”

“And the young king?——”

“Was safe when, three nights ago, I quitted him on the borders of Lancashire. His majesty is making the best of his way, by forced marches, towards his friends in the west.”

“It bodes no good, my dear Lovell, that you should have parted from him in such a strait. Has any misunderstanding——”

“None—none!”—cried Lovell, hastily interrupting him. “I quitted his majesty but by his own especial behest. A few thousands in nobles or jacobuses were of more import to his progress, than one poor head to counsel, or one poor arm to defend. I am straight from home,—from Lovell Hall, whither I betook myself to tax to the last penny my personal resources. My Lady Lovell, who hath retreated thither with her son and his tutor, foreseeing with womanly apprehension our ruin consequent upon this failure of the royal cause, hath been of late most remiss in forwarding to Scotland the funds required by my needs, and those of the prince; and it was fitting I should remonstrate with her in person. The rapid advance of the parliamentary troops made it indispensable that my journey should be secret. The rest.” continued Lord Lovell, glancing in an agitated manner towards Mistress Corbet and her charge,—“the rest for thy private ear.”

“Leave us, my dear Anne,” said Heneage; and his companion having quitted the room, he fixed his inquiring eyes upon the anxious countenance of his guest.

“From my wife,” continued Lord Lovell, “I have met with unexpected and most harassing opposition. At another moment,

I might have found no great difficulty in thawing by argument the obstinacy of her present determinations. But I lacked time and spirit for the task. During my absence, she has acted as my agent. My funds are in her keeping, and nothing I have been able to urge will induce her either to resign her trust, or facilitate a levy of money which I have solemnly pledged myself to the king to make upon my property for his immediate use. The army is in want of necessaries,—is in long arrears of pay.—The men are dispirited. The Scotch are deserting in thousands.—Not a recruit is to be raised,—not a stiver of supplies is to be had. In short, unless I am able to fulfil my engagements to his majesty, our last hope is extinguished. In this miserable extremity my thoughts, dear Heneage, recurred to *you*.—Are you able—are you willing to assist us?—In my own behalf,” continued Lovell, raising his head from its dejected attitude, “God knows I am not apt to play the beggar; but, for the young and unhappy king, I would do this and more, and rejoice in the indignity.”

“For him or for yourself, my best aid shall never be twice called for,” replied Heneage, cordially. “But, on the spur of this instant need, it may scarce suffice the occasion.—Every noble I can command is at your disposal.”

“Thanks—thanks!—I expected no less of you,” replied his friend. “But, alas! I expected as much of my son’s mother;—and the woman (God forgive her) hath vilely failed me. Such protestations of loyalty as I have heard aforetime from her lips!—And now she fancies the royal cause lost past retrieval, she not only denies my own, but presumes to revile me for not throwing up my commission, and making good terms for myself with the lord general!—Out on her!—she has stirred my blood!—What hope dare I entertain of the son who shares in so pitiful a nature.”—

“Woman is the weaker vessel,” replied Heneage, consolingly. “What right have we to expect fortitude or heroism of those to whom such virtues are not appointed?—But, prythee, tell me—what sum will square with your more pressing demand, and at what hour must it be forthcoming?”—

“If I could start before daybreak,” replied Lord Lovell, “the king’s mind would be the sooner eased of its cares. But if this be impossible, I must even abide till to-morrow’s twilight, my person being known in this district, where scouts are abroad in all directions. Two sure sergeants of the guard, who accompanied me in order to take charge of the treasure I was in hopes of raising at Lovell House, lie in wait with my horses yonder at Scarsden Farm, whereof the tenant is an ancient servitor of our house.”

“And the amount required?”—again demanded Heneage, rightly guessing that his friend hesitated from motives of delicacy to specify his demand.

“Six thousand pounds was the sum which I required at the hands of my wife,” replied Lovell, lowering his voice, having given her many weeks’ advisal to prepare my tenants and debtors for the levy.”

“Six thousand !”—faintly ejaculated Heneage ; “and I have at this moment scarcely a twelfth part of it in the house!—During these disturbances, I am careful to avoid any vast charge of money, little, alas ! anticipating the occurrence of a demand like this.”

“A few hundred pounds were as a drop of water in the ocean of our necessities,” replied Lord Lovell, mournfully. “Nevertheless, since more may not be, I am in no position to disdain the aid of a single jacobus. Bestow with me, therefore, my dearest friend, what sum you may ; and I will onward with my bad tidings towards Worcestershire, whither my brother Richard and a chosen troop ride as escorts of the king.”

“Take at least a few hours’ rest and refreshment,” said the poor nervous harassed invalid, “during which we will make up to the last doit what money is in the house ; and then —— ha !” cried he, smiting his forehead, as if enlightened by a sudden thought,—“how long, saidst thou, was thy utmost sojourn at Dalesdene ?—Canst thou peradventure accord me twelve hours’ delay ?—

“More,—if to obtain any serious advantage to the king,” replied Lovell, frankly.

“In one word,” resumed his friend, “in the hands of my notary at Oakham, lies a sum of more than eight thousand pounds, the property of my daughter, which we are about to invest in land on her account. Elias Wright is co-guardian and executor with myself of her grandfather’s will, and can scarcely refuse the money as a loan.”

Lord Lovell shook his head. “As a guardian and trustee, I should refuse on scruples of conscience to accede to any such request,” said he. “But the man, you say, is a notary ; and I am willing to engage and mortgage my lands to the full amount, which may probably determine his compliance.”

“Or, I, my own,” replied Heneage. “But as those must become the portion of my daughter, to whom this money belongs——”

“Anne will one day be a mighty heiress,” observed Lord Lovell, carelessly.

“Alack ! who can foresee from one day to another, to whose hands his lands and gear may fall !”—ejaculated Heneage. “A poor ailing sufferer like myself has small chance to preserve his substance from the grasp of the Philistines!—When I am gone, dear Lovell, it is to thy protection I shall bequeath her happiness ;

implored thee to wed the poor wench betimes with some honourable husband, to become a protection to her from the chances of these evil days."

"Were my son a few years older," Lord Lovell began—

"And what then?"—eagerly interrupted Heneage, "He is *her* senior by a year or two; and, though young, has his father's experience to guide his conduct. Wert thou of the same mind, Lovell, not only should they be man and wife, but, to circumvent the possibility of compulsory wardship by government, I would even now ensure their union by an immediate contract."

"God send no worse alliance to my son!"—ejaculated Lovell. "The match is great beyond my hopes or views for him; and comes with double welcome, that it would cement and strengthen our ancient bonds of friendship."

"Then, prythee, why not conclude it at once?"—cried Heneage. "The times are critical.—Heaven knows when we may meet again! He who would overmaster fortune must grasp it roughly that it escape not.—Why not sign and seal at once, and ensure the consent of Master Wright to our disposal of the trust-money?"

"You jest with me, my old friend," cried Lovell. "Though assured of my son's consent, (who is a mild and duteous youth,) his presence must needs be wanting to the contract."

"Six hours would convey thy mandate as far as Lovell House," replied Heneage; "six more suffice to bring him hither. By noon to-morrow, the young man might reach Dalesdene, and the attorney be on the spot to frame a basty contract, to be enlarged hereafter. The sum of money which I would fain see transferred to thy hands, would thus become his property; a charge to the same amount being made on the lands of Lovell for the behoof of my daughter."

"Better, perhaps, defer these measures till the darkness of the times shall have cleared away," replied Lovell, gravely.

"And if, in lieu of clearing, they darken, even to the extinction of royalty and its adherents," cried Heneage, eagerly, "must my girl wed with some canting puritan,—some starveling Praise-God-Barebones,—who may foreclose thy estate for the amount of her grandfather's fortune, lent to thee in fee?—Lovell!—as we love these children, let us make them one, so that no convulsion of the state may henceforth divide them. Young as they are, years must elapse ere they abide together in wedlock. But be those years a time of happy assurance that their destinies and fortunes are secured by the foresight of their parents!"

To refuse for his son an alliance in every point of view so advantageous, appeared ungracious and absurd. To the possibility of such an arrangement with his friend, Lord Lovell had some-

times remotely adverted ; but fearing that Heneage might desire for his heiress a spouse in direct enjoyment of rank and fortune, he had scorned to avail himself of his ascendancy over the affections of the valetudinarian to forward his project. The alliance was now, however, of Heneage's own suggestion ; and deeply penetrated as was Lord Lovell with the precariousness of the cause in which his destinies were involved, and overcome by a heavy presentiment that his career was approaching its close, he could not refuse himself the gratification of witnessing and sanctifying an event securing prosperity to his only son and future representative.

After some further discussion, a messenger, bearing a letter and signet from Lord Lovell, was despatched across the country, requiring young Arthur and his preceptor to set off instantly for Dalesdene, without communicating, even to his lady-mother, the instructions they had received ; while, on the other hand, Miles Heneage despatched old Gervas to Oakham, requesting the immediate presence of Master Wright, the notary. Before midnight, instructions were given for the drawing out of the necessary instruments ; and as the prudent trustee luckily concurred in his patron's views of the honour conferred by so high an alliance upon the daughter of Heneage of Dalesdene, he undertook that his clerks should watch and work all night in the engrossment of the contract ; and that one half of the sum deposited in his chests, on the demise of her maternal grandfather, should, on the morrow, be at the disposal of the noble father-in-law of the future Lady Lovell.

One department of the family arrangements still remained to be provided for ; which, wearied and exhausted as he was by his unusual exertions, the infirm father felt disposed to defer till the following morning. Young Lovell could not possibly arrive at the Grange before noon ; and it would be time enough to acquaint his darling Anne on the morrow, of the fatherly care he was taking of her future fortunes. Having two years before her wherein to prepare herself for becoming a wife, two hours might surely suffice to prepare her for becoming a bride.

“The child hath retired to rest,” quoth Heneage to his noble guest ; “and methinks we can do no better than follow her example. In the morning, I will expound to my daughter the motive of all this haste. It might cause her ill dreams, were she forewarned to-night that it is the eve of her marriage-day.”

And Mr. Heneage was so far justified, that the same consciousness, instead of causing ill dreams to himself, deprived him altogether of rest. All night did he ponder over the hasty engagement he had made ! The rash proposal had originated in an impulse of his own ;—he had no one but himself to blame. But he began to fear he had been too precipitate. Not, indeed, as regarded

worldly matters. As far as pecuniary interests were concerned, he knew that they were secure in the hands of the noble and upright Lovell. It was the bridegroom, of whose merits he was comparatively doubtful. Already young Lovell had twice or thrice visited the Grange; and his demeanour had, on both occasions, provoked the mockery of the lively Anne. Though his junior in years, the girl had evidently the advantage of him; and how could Mr. Heneage be assured that she would content herself to promise love, honour, and obedience, to one whom she had hitherto derided as an unmannerly schoolboy?

He almost wished that Lady Lovell might refuse to consent to her son's departure from Lovell House at the mysterious summons of his father.

CHAPTER III.

THE morrow, as if conscious that it had business of festive import in hand, dawned brightly at Dalesdene. The foliage and greensward, refreshed by the showers of the day preceding, resumed their summer brightness. New blossoms expanded,—new fragrance floated on the breeze;—all seemed in fitting mood to do honour to a bridal-day.

Unconscious, however, as the blossoms or the leaves that any event of especial interest awaited her, the bright-eyed Anne shook back her clustering curls with joy as she looked out upon the freshened landscape; and, on being summoned some hours earlier than usual to her father's dressing-room, wondered only whether they were already rid of their ill-omened guest.

On reaching the chamber, she found the solitary old gentleman seated in his flowered night-gown and easy chair, stirring his chocolate with an air more pensive than usual; and on inquiring with her ordinary gaiety, "Did you send for me?—do you want me, dearest papa?"—he reiterated so many times, and so tenderly, "Come hither, child!—draw near Anne,—nearer,—nearer still!"—that instead of taking a formal seat by his side according to her wont, she kneeled down on the silken cushion at his feet, and waited till he should unfold his pleasure.

Recalling to mind that it was at the close of one of Lord Lovell's former visits she had been first reprov'd by her father for her wild horsemanship and lack of maidenly discretion, the panting damsel fully expected to have some further fault found with the ordering of her attire, or the uncouthness of her address; and was, in fact, as little prepared for the overwhelming intelligence at length falteringly communicated by her father, as if it had been vouchsafed on the first day of her release from leading-strings and a bib and tucker.

“*Marry!*—become a lady in the land!—a wedded—wedded wife!—a matron—the mistress of a household!”

For her life’s sake, the giddy girl could not have contained herself at the notion; and covering her fair face with her hands as the words escaped her lips, she laughed long and unconstrainedly. But when, on looking up, she saw her old father’s eyes suffused with tears, and a certain stern sadness diffused over his brow, she checked herself in a moment. The pearly teeth became again invisible, the sweet dimples disappeared; while with dutiful earnestness she took her father’s withered hand between her own, and soothed it with silent caresses.

“I would the thing were matter of mirth!” faltered old Heneage, as if in answer to the appeal. “I would it were a day of joy, as becomes a wedding-day to be!—But, alas! my child—my girl—my darling,—these nuptials chance under heavy auspices. The prospects of the country are all but hopeless; the prospects of the house of Lovell gloomy, as becomes those of the true subject when declines the star of his sovereign; and henceforward, my daughter, thy destinies will take the colour of theirs. Though for two years to come—sunshine or storm—thou wilt still abide with me as though this match had never been, while thy bridegroom completes the measure of study indispensable to one of his great estate,—still, ever as the wind blows with the Lovells, must it blow with my shorn lamb.”

Touched by the melancholy tone of her father’s voice, Anne became grave in earnest; for at the word “bridegroom,” the idea of Arthur Lovell recurred for the first time to her mind. Arthur Lovell!—a heavy, shy, mannerless school-boy!—a dolt, who had frightened her Angora cat into fits by fixing a bell to its morocco collar,—who had got her greyhound whipped by the keepers, by beguiling poor Lily into the mysteries of poaching,—who had engraved with a diamond a planisphere of comets and meteors on the glasses of Mistress Corbet’s spectacles,—who knew not Tasso from Ariosto, a peony from a rose,—a straight-haired round-shouldered boy,—sans taste, sans eyes, sans promise of amendment!—

The light-hearted Anne now pouted in earnest;—and when, discerning her vexation, her father proceeded to acquaint her that her contract of marriage was already half engrossed, and his word wholly pledged to its execution, her previous flightiness gave way to a sudden burst of tears, as persevering as the freshening showers of the preceding day.

Mr. Heneage begged her to retire and take time;—*not* to reconcile herself to the match, *that* he seemed to fancy a matter of course;—but to prepare herself for the ceremony. At the spur of the moment, no grand parade was possible. The richest of her

robes must be assumed to do honour to the occasion, lest Lord Lovell should imagine her indifferent to the honour of entering his family, and becoming daughter-in-law to her father's earliest friend; and as the invalid issued his instructions to her to be as brave as her store of tires might admit, he unlocked a drawer of his scrutoire, and delivered to her hand a double string of costly pearls, on which he gazed with such wistful eyes, that Anne discerned in a moment they must have been the property of her mother.

Obedient to his wish, she rose and was about to retreat, when, ere she could cross the room, Lord Lovell entered, and her father, checking her departure, had her kneel and ask his blessing. Raising her instantly in his arms, the noble friend of her father pressed her cordially to his bosom; imprinting upon her pure young forehead a kiss so truly paternal, that for a moment the misgivings of the agitated maiden were almost reassured.

"Lady Lovell can surely never raise objections to so sweet a daughter-in-law?"—was his lordship's secret reflection, struck by the ingenuous expression of her lovely face. "What though ignoble blood be in her veins, a noble spirit must surely animate those speaking eyes,—those graceful movements!"

"Lord Lovell cannot think so harshly of me as I have supposed," was the maiden's musing. "He would not look thus kindly on me, were he not inclined to love and cherish me as a daughter. Yes!—henceforward I shall have two fathers to caress me and to protect!"

And, with another hurried salutation to them both, she fled from the room, to disclose in the arms of Mistress Corbet the wonderful tale of her promotion. Scarcely, however, had she entered the presence of the governante, when the red eyes and quivering lips of her second mother apprised her that the secret had already transpired. The good woman had been weeping bitterly to find her pupil's destinies so hastily, and, as it appeared to *her*, unadvisedly disposed of. It was a poor consolation to know that, previous even to his disclosing his views to his daughter, her patron had thought it right to announce them to herself.

"Doubtless, my dear child," pleaded Mistress Corbet to her pupil, "this measure, which to ourselves appears so hasty, hath been long projected by the wisdom and tenderness of your father. From the period of yours, and—and Mr. Lovell's—birth, you have been probably destined for each other."

And the effort made by the governante to invest with the dignified title of "Mr. Lovell" the unmannerly lad to whose name she was accustomed to append a string of opprobrious epithets, overcame once more the gravity of the girlish bride; and, surmounting her fit of the dimals, she clapped her hands and laughed aloud for glee.

“Come—come!—speak out for once. We are not yet a wedded couple. Call him as you would have done yesterday—that graceless, gross, untutored, savage of a boy!”—cried Anne, throwing her arms around her friend.

“My dear child forgets herself,” remonstrated the grave preceptress, shocked at her levity.

“I would I *could*!”—retorted Miss Heneage, shrugging her shoulders; “for, good faith! I have little just now in my thoughts which it is pleasant to remember. Yet must I make the best of all!—My good father hath bid me let him see no peevish looks upon the matter. And, after all, *mamma mia*, since the Lovells, father and son, are to quit Dalesdene the moment after the ceremony, (which is to be performed at sunset,) and years must elapse ere I behold them again, the wars of these troublous times, which play the tyrant even with the lives of kings, may render me a widow ere I am well aware of being a wife.”

“In sooth they may!”—rejoined Mistress Corbet, wiping her eyes and cheering up at this comfortable reflection.

“To-morrow I return to my studies, as though no bridal ring were upon my finger:—and here, on this spot, I promise my best of friends that she shall have as docile a pupil in sage Mistress Lovell as in the madcap Nancy Heneage.”

The good woman smiled affectionately upon the sportive girl; but shook her head mistrustfully at the pledge.

“I have hitherto had hard ado,” said she, “to tame down that wild spirit to the proprieties of life. What am I to hope *now*, when emancipated from maidenly submission?—Mistress Lovell will not fail to deride the sermons of an officious governante!”

“You think not as you say!” cried the warm-hearted girl. “Be still, as ever, my monitress, my guide, my friend!—Teach me to be patient this day with the untowardly cub who is to be my husband, (nay, fie! I will say so no more!) and to be henceforward as much a woman as may not prevent my remembering that I am still a child!”

But they had no further leisure for discussion. The silken robes were to be hastily fitted on,—the luxuriant locks of the lady-bride to be reclaimed to order,—while the chamber of dais was prepared. News of the wedding were already rife in the house. The old housekeeper was in despair that the honours of her feast were curtailed for want of warning;—the old butler found there would be scarce time to set the old October abroach, that had been brewed at the birth of his young lady;—the gardeners complained that, but for haste, they might have welcomed the young lord (that was to be) under a triumphal arch of laurels;—the chaplain grieved that he had no time to figure in a new surplice on an occasion foreshowing future preferment;—and the attor-

ney's clerks, who were scrivening away in Mr. Heneage's justice-room, grieved to be obliged to neglect the fair proportions of the German capitals, for which an extra item might have been made to figure in their master's bill of charges.

All day did household cares of this description besiege the careless ears of the trembling Anne. Already the world seemed in league to inaugurate her into the duties of matron-thrift; seeing that, for the first time, the housekeeper presumed to torment her touching the consistency of her chicken-soup,—the old nurse to demand whether the fine damask napery were to grace the board,—and the old butler to require the recruiting of half the village to assist in burnishing up the service of family plate. All conspired to perplex her. Every tongue was prating of arras hangings, silver sconces, codlings and cream, saltcellars and flaggons—of anything and everything but the bridegroom; and Anne, who was at first disposed to treat so highly his pretensions, grew gradually indignant at finding him of such small account.

Escaping first from the chamber where her father and Lord Lovell were dictating to the notary and his clerks, clause upon clause, touching the disposal, to the fiftieth generation, of farms, manors, and messuages,—and next, from that where Mistress Corbet was giving audience to grumbling turnspits and awkward lackeys,—poor Anne retired at length to her maiden-bower, drew every bolt against intruders, and sat her down to muse and meditate alone.

A hectic spot burned upon either delicate cheek;—wild and hurried glances were in her eyes,—strange sounds in her ears,—strange tremors on her lip.—Was not this all a dream?—Could the even tenor of her monotonous life be really broken by so unprecedented a vicissitude?—Was her springtide gone ere come?—or rather, was her summer dawning before the closing of springtide?—Were her destinies already accomplished?—Was there to be henceforth no doubt, no fear, no hope—*no love*;—for how could wild fifteen invest with associations of love the coarse school-boy who had been drilled by his father to pronounce that hasty unmeaning marriage-vow?—

Anne Heneage drew a deep sigh,—another and another; and never before had felt so much a child, as now when required to assume, for the first time, the self-possession of a woman. Pure from the corruptions of the world of silks and satins, flounces and furbelows, her notions of marriage were wholly ideal or wholly positive. She was familiar with the married estate only in the homely experience of her village pensioners, or according to the ineffable visions of poesy; and to the one and the other Arthur Lovell was alike repugnant. She detested the thoughts of tramping through life the hand-in-hand companion of such a boor; and

could form no idea of the beller of cats, under the heroic helmet of Rinaldo, or inspired by the poetical frenzies of Orlando. In every point of view, the animal was distasteful. She could suppose him kneeling down at his father's word of command (like Dash, her spaniel, couching at her own), to imprint a clumsy kiss upon her lily hand; he, blushing to his ears at his audacity,—she to hers, at his awkwardness. Lucky that there were to be no spectators of this vexatious bridal!—There would be no bearing the horse-laugh of their Oakham neighbours, on witnessing the uncouth gallantries of the schoolboy groom.—

Her father, meanwhile, had announced that at mid-day or soon thereafter, the young gentleman might be expected. But noon and an hour more were thrown into the past by the dial,—and no bridegroom appeared! It is true that all was kept cautious and close within doors;—while spies were stationed at given distances from the house, to afford timely information to Lord Lovell should strangers of suspicious appearance draw near, likely to betray to the men in authority in the town-council of Oakham, the presence of a general of Charles Stuart within the limits of parliamentary usurpation. None but the household and the confidential people of Elias Wright were apprised of his lordship's sojourn; and young Lovell had been duly admonished by his father to bring only a single attendant, in addition to the two despatched for his escort. It was not likely, therefore, that he would arrive with tumult or stately presentment; and, but that her window overlooked the court-yard, it would have been possible for him to instal himself unnoticed.

But as the hours drew on, and no Authur was announced, Anne Heneage grew first weary, and then uneasy.—If, after all this note of preparation, the “laggard in love” should fail to make his appearance?—If he should refuse to obey the summons and fulfil the engagements framed by his father?—For a single moment, she felt that she could almost be moved to like him by so spirited an act of rebellion; the next, she recalled to mind, with a blush, the shame of being a rejected bride,—rejected by a boy—rejected by an Arthur Lovell!—Since morning, a world of womanly wisdom had ebbed and flowed over her heart; leaving behind, like other springtides, upon the sand, gay shells, tangled weeds, and fragments of wreck.

At length, when three o'clock struck upon the harsh bell of the turret, Anne started up, exhausted by her feverish musings; and satisfied that she was safe for the day,—that accident or obstinacy had secured her from the immediate solemnisation of her nuptials,—grew gay and girlish as before. She laughed outright when a glimpse in the glass revealed her slight figure encumbered with the unwonted trappings of bridal attire; and, stepping back, per-

formed a mock curtsy to the respondent form of the would-be Mistress Lovell.

But, lol! as she rose laughing from the profound obeisance, a knock at her chamber door reformed her at once to gravity; and resuming her more imposing attitude, she opened it to admit Mistress Corbet.

The good woman was trembling from head to foot.

"Has any evil occurred?" cried Anne,—recalling to mind the hazardous position of Lord Lovell.

"None, my dear child—none!"

"Then why thus agitated?—You are in tears."

"I am sent to summon you to the presence of your father."

"Is he displeased then?—Does the disappointment weigh upon his mind?"—

"What disappointment, my sweet girl?"

The name of Arthur Lovell vibrated for a moment on the lips of Mistress Corbet's blushing pupil.

"He awaits you for the signature of the contract," interrupted her venerable friend. "The marriage ceremony will afterwards be performed at the altar in your father's oratory.—All is prepared. Nay—blench not now, my dearest Anne!—Remember the self-possession you promised me.—Remember the submission you owe to the fondest of fathers!"—

"I do—I do!" faltered Anne, pale with emotion, as she clung to the arm of Mrs. Corbet. "What else but submission to my father would determine me at this moment to risk my happiness on so fearful a casting of the die!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE morrow's sun was high above the horizon, and all at Dalesdene Grange had returned to its ordinary routine of dulness and monotony, before Anne Lovell sufficiently recovered her presence of mind to regard dispassionately the circumstances under which she had ceased to be Anne Heneage.

For she *was* wedded;—a wife, and yet a child,—a wife and soon perhaps to become a widow!—Already the sentiments with which she had been tempted to regard that hasty union, were wholly changed. Her levity on the subject had given place to an almost womanly seriousness;—and though her aversion to the match was strong as ever, she detested it less on account of her contempt of Arthur Lovell, than from being fully conscious of his contemptuous opinion of herself. Unjust as she had been in her estimation of the bridegroom's merits, he had shown himself equally prejudiced in disfavour of the bride!

Again and again did she recur to the amazement of the moment, when, having entered with trembling steps and downcast eyes, the chamber wherein the two fathers and the men of the law were awaiting her signature, she raised them timidly to seek the clumsy schoolboy to whom she was to pledge away her destinies; and discerned in his stead, standing at the right hand of Lord Lovell, a noble-looking youth,—in air, gesture, and countenance, how unlike to him who, only three years before, had visited Dalesdene, to provoke the disgust of its inmates!—Reason was now enthroned upon his open brow.—His frame was nerved by the vigour of manhood,—his deportment restrained by the graces of high breeding; so handsome a stripling had never appeared in presence of the astonished Anne.—*One* only change was dissatisfactory to her feelings!—The mischievous boy had been her friend and admirer; the accomplished youth could scarcely restrain, even under the watchful eyes of his father, the disdain with which he regarded his bride.

At the moment when, startled by the novelty of the scene, the trembling girl, accepting a pen from the hand of Lord Lovell, subscribed her name for the last time as “Anne Heneage,” and led by the noble lord into the adjoining oratory, pronounced her irrevocable vows of love, honour, and obedience,—all these discoveries had not yet appalled her heart. She beheld in her silent bridegroom a person overawed and shy as herself; or rather, she beheld him not at all, so great was her emotion at being strained alternately to the bosom of her father and Mrs Corbet, as though some awful circumstance were befalling her. But when, having quitted the oratory, she received in the adjoining saloon the compliments of the witnesses, it struck her that *one* voice was silent which ought to have been loudest in its courtesies; and raising her eyes once more in search of him she had just sworn to love and venerate, she saw him leaning against the carved wainscot,—cold, stern, pale, disdainful,—evidently scorning all pretence of taking part in the general joy.

They sat down to the wedding-banquet, and things went more contrary than before. Old Elias Wright, having been entrusted with the ordering of the festival, had taken upon him a notary's privilege of pleasantry, to place the chairs of the youthful bride and bridegroom side by side at the head of the table. And there they sat,—Anne fair as a lily, growing paler and paler, and graver and graver;—while young Lovell, dark as a sapling pine, seemed every moment sinking into gloomier reflections. There was evidently not a grain of sympathy between the young couple; nothing in common,—nothing affording, even in the remotest perspective, a promise of happiness or love.

Few as were the guests, Lord Lovell, though sorely ill at ease,

felt himself called upon to divert their attention from the evil dispositions of his son and heir, by the affectation of an empty hilarity. In spite of the cares that were gnawing at his heart,—(cares how tremendous, since they regarded the impending ruin of his king and country)—he talked and jested, while he praised the Dalesdene venison and quaffed the Dalesdene wine. The notary's clerks, who had seen in him that morning a care-aged ruined cavalier, pawning the honours of his house and the happiness of his son for gold to pave the predestined way of his unhappy prince, were amazed to find him so readily assume the jolly boon-companion, —indulging in snatches of old rhymes, so as occasionally to bring a blush to the discreet cheeks of gentle Mistress Corbet. They began to think that, had there been no Lady Lovell in the case, the father might have proved the apter bridegroom of the two; so loud and frequent were his challenges to his silent son to pledge a deep health to the lovely ladies of the county of Rutland, in bumpers of Bordeaux. It was not for strangers to conjecture that Lord Lovell dared not adventure a more explicit allusion to the name of his new daughter-in-law, lest Arthur should give direct offence by refusing justice to the toast.

Better, however, had he resigned the young gentleman unnoticed to his taciturn sobriety! Excited by the wine thus forced upon him, the disdain of young Lovell rose in offensive laughter to his lips. It had been impossible for any man less drowsy than the half imbecile Heneage, to mistake the hollowness of the young man's mirth, or the scornfulness of his expressions. It was as clear as day that he saw himself sacrificed to the political necessities of his father.

Young as she was, Anne Lovell became quickly aware that she was despised by the haughty youth beside her; and the consciousness, instead of overpowering her gentle nature, roused in her soul a degree of womanly pride and courage hitherto dormant. She scorned to weep. She was resolved to seem insensible to everything short of outrage. She would not wound her father's feelings by showing him how wildly he had hazarded the happiness of his child; she would not give that boy,—that insolent boy,—occasion to triumph over her by proving herself sensitive to his scorn. Her vexations could not be of long continuance. In an hour or two, the strangers were to ride forth in the dusk, and leave her anew to her solitude. She had leisure before her for tears. Her fortitude should at least outlast their ill-omened visit.

From the instant the young girl found strength for this noble resolution, she raised her hitherto downcast face,—she encountered the defying glances of her young husband,—she adventured more than one acute rejoinder to his arrogant remarks. But all this was lost upon Arthur Lovell. His eyes were blinded by the

wine that was confusing his brain—by the indignation that was throbbing in his heart. He beheld, in the lovely young woman by his side, only the hoyden girl at whose expense he had played off his boyish pranks;—only the rustic for whose fortune his liberty and person were bartered as a degrading bargain;—only the ignoble offspring of a booby country squire, whose veins were furthermore polluted by the blood of a Leicestershire grazier!

Right welcome was it to Anne, when, at the removal of the cloth, the then treasonable toast of “Church and King,” gave intimation to Mistress Corbet and herself to curtsy and withdraw; and she discovered that her father’s chair, instead of being wheeled as usual with them into the adjoining room, was to remain stationary at the convivial board. She felt that she could not, at that moment, have supported the interrogations of her father.

“Do not speak to me,” cried she, having wept a few minutes unrestrained on the bosom of her kindly friend; “girl as I am, I see through all this;—girl as I am, I feel it as such insults *should* be felt. But do not attempt to console me—I can bear anything at this moment but compassion. My wounded pride will bear me up. When they are gone, I will be yours again. At present, dearest friend, do not unnerve my courage.”—

“You see things in too dark a light, my poor child!” pleaded the prudent Mistress Corbet. “This young man is apparently of a more wayward, wilful disposition than we knew of. But has my Anne no indulgence for those who are wayward and wilful? Time, —absence,—the discipline of the world,—will bring down that haughty spirit—”

“Until he is moved to pardon the presumption of the village wench who has presumed to become his wife!” interrupted the indignant bride. “*Mamma mia!*—I have a spirit too!—I was not prepared for this; but the surprise shall not overmaster my courage.”

And, surmounting the tremulous weakness of her frame, Anne Lovell paced the room with impetuous footsteps, sweeping after her the silken robes and pendent ruffles with which Mistress Corbet had been at such pains to embellish her slender person; till the good woman, as she sat gazing after her, was almost awed to observe that her frame seemed in a moment to have expanded into womanhood, while the energy of her expressions forbid all expectation that her character would ever again relapse into the meekness of a child.

“The evening is gathering fast,” cried Anne, stopping short at the bay-window, and suddenly looking out. “It will soon be dusk,—they will be gone,—and then for the bitterness of my despair!—O that I should already look forward to its indulgence as a luxury!”—

“My dearest girl!” remonstrated Mistress Corbet, “this excitement is misplaced and unbecoming. You will find among the discourses of the learned Seldon——”

“Discourse me no discourses!”—interrupted Anne, passing her hand impatiently through the raven tresses which it had cost the good governante so much pains to place in trimly array. “To-morrow for wisdom and patience;—to-night for resentment and self-respect!”

“Prove it then in a more dignified composure,” rejoined Mistress Corbet, affectionately embracing her pupil, and wiping away two tears that stood in relief upon her marble checks. “My Lord Lovell explained to you at dinner that his graceless son has insisted upon bearing him company to the army, instead of retiring quietly to complete his studies at Lovell House.”

“A resolution to have moved my respect and admiration,” cried Anne, “but for the pains with which he caused me to understand that his reluctant consent to the ceremony of the day was purchased by his father’s promise that he should bear arms in the royal cause.”

“You mistake—you mistake!”—pleaded Mistress Corbet. “The young gentleman did but imply that, if esteemed old enough to become a husband, he was old enough to become a soldier; and that, having urged as much upon the good sense of the noble lord his father——”

“No plausible emendations will smooth away the insolence of his declaration on the subject,” persisted Anne. “But hark!—I hear the tramp of horses!—Lord Lovell tarries too long within reach of his enemies. If Lambert’s people should obtain intelligence of his being here——”

“Fear nothing,” replied her companion, looking out in her turn; “these are his lordship’s people and led horses. The turret clock is on the stroke of seven.”

“For once your eyes are clearer than mine,” said Anne, with a faint smile, dashing away the tears by which her own sight had been obscured; and at that moment the door opened, and her father’s chair being gently wheeled by Gervas into the chamber, she flew as usual to assist him, almost forgetting for a moment that she was a bride, and in presence of a contemptuous and abhorrent bridegroom. Arthur Lovell, slowly following the old gentleman into the room, stood aloof, without deigning to address her; and when Mistress Corbet, hoping to accommodate matters, drew near to him with some trivial conciliatory remark on the state of the weather, he replied by a peevish expression of impatience at his father’s delay, Lord Lovell being still engaged in a few parting words with the men of the law.

“His lordship is giving instructions, I conclude, for his will

and testament," observed the insolent boy; "an instrument that may become the more needful, since, if we loiter another hour at this place, there is every probability of falling in with the advanced guard of the rebel army; when my Lord Lovell may be honoured with heading or hanging, as a scout or spy, according to the summary process of martial law!"

The peace-making woman replied with becoming moderation, while Anne remained still more becomingly silent. Little did either of them suspect the honourable object which detained Lord Lovell at a crisis of such instant danger. Instead of accepting old Heneage's invitation to a stirrup-cup, Lord Lovell hastily drew into the embrasure of a window the confidential notary of his friend.

"You are, I trust and believe, an honest man!" said Lord Lovell, with an abruptness which Elias Wright was prevented from resenting, by the earnest gravity of his manner.—"There is none here but yourself to whom I can confide my counsel,—and no time to confide it to yourself in decent and becoming terms.—You are the adviser of my worthy friend,—the guardian of yonder poor innocent victim; and I would fain constitute you her champion and defender. This morning, sir, you doubtless saw in me a sordid wretch, weighing my son's honour and that maiden's happiness, against thirty pieces of silver!—You misjudged me.—I swear to you, by all that is holiest, had I *then* suspected the temper of Arthur Lovell, I would have gone back penniless to the feet of my unfortunate prince, rather than peril the peace of mind of my old friend's daughter. The broils of these disastrous times have estranged me from my home. For years past, I have taken less note than was my duty of the progress of my son's character. I guessed not what revolutions might be effected there by the influence of his mother and her haughty family. It may be that the flames which have been long smothering, do only now burst forth; but, on the truth of a gentleman and a soldier, I no more dreamed of finding a Hotspur in the listless truant of my fireside, than the lovely and sensitive creature I now discern in poor Miles's hoyden daughter. Puzzled, vexed, thwarted throughout the day, I am overpowered at this parting moment by apprehension of the anguish of spirit my rash improvidence may have created. Yonder bags of gold, good Master Wright, become hateful in my eyes, as though they were the price of blood;—for, alas! my fears admonish me that they are the forfeit of human happiness!"

"Your lordship is over late in the discovery," replied Elias, bluntly. "We have been labouring all night and all day to strengthen with technical legalities a ceremony which already you seem to hold too binding!"—

"Add not reproaches to my heavy load of cares," cried Lovell,

in a tone of deep despondency ; “ but rather promise that, should I be hurried off among the thousands who must fall to establish the permanence of King Charles’s sovereignty, you will watch over the happiness of our gentle Anne. Her father is on the brink of the grave ; brother, kinsman, friend, defender, hath she none !”

“ My grey hairs and peaceful garb, my lord,” replied Elias, gravely, “ scarcely constitute me an efficient antagonist for one of your son’s temper and degree.”

“ You have prudence, sir,—you have knowledge of the law. Should I fall in the contest which a few days must bring to issue, Heneage, as mortgagee to the full value of the estate of Lovell House, may take possession ; and I implore you to impress upon his mind the necessity of devising both that, and his own inheritance, in trust for the separate use and benefit of his child.”

“ But since your lordship’s son will share the chances of the campaign,” observed the notary, “ *he* also may become a victim to his loyalty ?”

“ My brother, Sir Richard Lovell, would succeed to my title and entailed estates,” interrupted Lovell hastily, having been already twice apprised that his horses and men awaited his pleasure for the bestowal of the charge of money. “ Dick is the worthiest and warmest of living souls,” added he. “ Should my brother survive me, my daughter-in-law will find a friend to aid you in your task ; should he survive me and my son,—a father. Let me therefore entrust you with a few words, to be delivered to him in case of such a contingency, corroborating the appeal I have now adventured to yourself.”

Then readily supplied with writing materials by Elias Wright, Lord Lovell indited a few lines, in the course of which his heavy sighs and undisguised emotion avouched the solemnity of their purport. Though unwilling to expose to the matter-of-fact notary the nature of his prognostications, he felt that he was recording the last instructions of a predestined man.

“ If bad tidings of our fate should reach you,” resumed his lordship, placing the letter unsealed in the hands of the man of business, “ *this*, in care and confidence to Dick Lovell. If *he* too should be swept away, it is to yourself only I dare look for the remedy of my fault. Farewell, sir!—Sustain our cause with your prayers,—sustain this house with your counsels ; and should all prosper, count hereafter upon the gratitude and good faith of the ill-fortuned Lovell !”

Touched by the fervency of this address, old Elias strained the noble hand extended towards him. There was no misdoubting the sincerity of so worthy a heart.

“ I crave pardon for intruding to remind your lordship that the

night draws on, and that we have a long ride ere daybreak to get the start of the rebels," cried Arthur Lovell, impatiently, unable longer to cope with the prosy exhortations of his new father-in-law, or the scrutiny of his silent wife.

" 'Tis well—'tis well!"—cried Lord Lovell, following him to the presence of the family. "We are likely to be in more haste to find ourselves back at Dalesdene, than now to cross its hospitable threshold. Arthur, see the sacks deposited in the saddle-bags, and carefully strapped to the cruppers. Mr. Wright, oblige me by overlooking the transport of this important burthen, which will prove as welcome at head-quarters as a well in the wilderness. My daughter!"—continued he, approaching Anne, when the bridegroom and the notary had quitted the room, and none were present but the poor deaf invalid and the governante, who was attending to his moans,—“forgive me what hath chanced this day,—forgive me for having perilled thy future peace!—God’s blessings be upon thee, my sweet Anne!—If I live, thou shalt never need a strong arm and true heart for thy defence.—If I die, Heaven be thy fortress and thy defence. Be brave, be firm, be good——” He impressed a solemn kiss upon her fair brow in lieu of concluding his sentence; for, at that moment of expanded feeling, he found it impossible to add the conclusion he had meditated—“and thou wilt be happy!”

Lord Lovell felt conscious that it was to eternal unhappiness he had consecrated the daughter of his friend.

In a few moments, the tramp of departing steeds disturbed the stillness of evening; and even the usually unobservant squire was of opinion that there was a degree of unnatural formality in the cold salutation deposited by the frozen lips of Arthur Lovell, as a farewell token, upon the fair hand of his bride.

CHAPTER V.

SUCH were the events slowly and sorrowfully passed in review on the morrow, by the gentle bride; and as the reflections to which they gave rise caused her involuntarily to particularise, hour by hour, the incidents thus rapidly detailed, emotions hitherto strangers to her happy heart were revealed in the varying colours of her cheek, and the rise and fall of her agitated bosom. There needed no monitor to prompt her perceptions or resentments. Nature already spoke audibly to her awakened sensibility.

She had attempted to minister with an unchanged countenance at her father’s morning meal; had recited to him his usual form of morning prayer; and, according to daily use, offered her service as reader or amanuensis, previous to betaking herself to her

own occupations or recreations for the day. But the old gentleman, purblind as he was, could not but note the unusual paleness of his daughter's face, and depression of her air; and, attributing all to the fatigues of the preceding day, bad her hasten to take the air of the garden ere she assumed her station at the desk.

Right glad was the weary maiden to comply. Throughout the night, for the first time in her life, Anne had laid her throbbing head upon a sleepless pillow; and, immediately on rising, was harassed and mortified by the assiduity of her good nurse and the rest of the household in addressing her as "Mistress Lovell." Unskilled to enter into her feelings, they fancied they were paying their court to the girlish bride, by this early recognition of her dignities. Having prepared herself to be subjected throughout the day to a series of similar persecutions, it was a relief when, encountering Elias Wright and his cloak-bag as she departed from her father's presence, the old man, instead of pursuing the pleasantries with which he had assailed her the preceding morning, contented himself with a respectful inquiry after her health, and stood aside to let her pass on to the hall. She fancied this excess of reverence a tribute to her new condition. Alas!—on the part of the good old notary, it was only an homage to the dignity of misfortune!

She had been less grateful to his forbearance, could she have known that Elias was fresh from a conference with Mistress Corbet; wherein, without saying aught to excite the alarm of the governante, whose sensibility was riper than her judgment, he strenuously advised that the young girl, on whose happiness so rash an experiment had been tried, should not be a moment left alone to commune upon its strangeness.

"Be ever with her—let her mind have constant occupation!"—was the notary's fatherly counsel. "Her false position may beget careful thoughts if made the subject of solitary reflection."

Yet, on the whole, it was fortunate for young Mistress Lovell that he proffered the advice; for a long-standing jealousy of his influence over the mind of her patron, and occasional interference with the pursuits of his ward, had created a tacit feud between the two privy councillors of Dalesdene; till, unconsciously to herself, whatever was proposed by Elias Wright was opposed by Madam Corbet.

"Though they have so wilfully disposed of the fate of my poor child," was the argument of the governante, "let them not thwart her in all beside. My Anne is summoned into trying fortunes. The foundations of her mind are strong. In much leisure, her opinions and determinations will shape themselves into steadiness of character. What should the old notary know of the heart of woman?—Not leave her to herself, quotha?—Never suffer her

to be alone? Marry,—she *shall* be alone—*much* alone! It is time that the child, whom they have made a wife, should acquire the self-knowledge of a responsible being.”

Mistress Lovell being dismissed by her father to the enjoyment of air and exercise, Madam Corbet, in pursuance of her determination, feigned the necessity for supervising an early reparation of the grand household disorders of the preceding day, as an excuse for not accompanying her charge. In point of etiquette, indeed, she was fully exonerated. At Dalesdene, “a stroll in the garden” was neither more nor less than a parade up and down a raised terrace of gravel, bordered on either side with a coping of pierced freestone; over which might be seen on one side the orchard or fruit garden, and, on the other, the herbary and pleasure ground, where a scanty supply of old-fashioned flowers threw up their luxuriant blossoms amid beds of lavender, basil, marjoram, and rue. Overlooked by the chamber-windows of the chaplain and governess, the young lady’s movements, though companionless, were under strict surveillance; and here it was that Anne,—now pacing the terrace with hurried and unconscious footsteps,—now leaning over the balustrade as if attracted by the fragrance of an autumnal honeysuckle upclimbing from the gardens below,—mused upon recent events, and pondered upon misfortunes to come!

So light as her steps had been, when tripping day after day along that habitual promenade!—So light as had been her heart, while gazing over the parapet upon that formal array of aromatic bushes, alive with bees, and bright with gaudy insects!—So gay as that featureless and contracted garden had ever before seemed to her, when, escaping from the morning’s tasks, she pruned its gadding rose-trees, or snatched a branch of its sweet-scented gale-bushes or shapely bays! And now, all was a wilderness, too narrow for the aspirations of her swelling heart,—too uninteresting to subdue the impulses of her mental irritation!

Inclining her aching brow against one of the stone vases ornamenting the parapet, it was difficult not to recall to mind the days when Arthur Lovell, interdicted at her desire by Mistress Corbet from disturbing their daily walk, had made it his mischievous delight to lie in wait in the gardens below; and as the young lady and her preceptress paced along, shower upon them, with well-directed aim, handfuls of flowers or summer-berries, for which he was duly reprimanded at dinner-time by his pedagogue; or those later times, when she had found a squirrel chained to the foot of one of the vases, caught by the young truant in the Dalesdene woods, as a gift for his playmate. She recollected how imperiously she had comported herself towards the awkward boy by whom these tokens of regard were ungracefully tendered; and how scrupu-

lously she had obeyed the instructions of her preceptress to repel, by the most formal stateliness, the indecorous forwardness of Master Lovell.

Times were altered now!—Tears started anew into her eyes at every fresh occasion of recalling to mind the stern, contemptuous countenance displayed by her bridegroom!—Since she, to whom the marriage was so unacceptable, had controlled *her* movements to a decent show of serenity and submission, what must have been *his* reluctance, who was thus unable to repress the indications of his repugnance! He must indeed despise her—must indeed loathe—detest! There was but one comfort in the case!—he was gone! They were to meet no more for years—perhaps never to meet again. The state of public affairs forbade all thought of his speedy reappearance at Dalesdene; and, in the interim, she would take such precautions—would make such earnest intercessions to her father, as never again to be exposed to the contumely of him who, by force of parental authority, had been made her husband. Nay, if Arthur Lovell should survive the event of the war, (and the rashness of his disposition rendered his chance doubly precarious,) they might meet only to concert together the dissolution of their involuntary union.

Such were the reflections of her first day of wedded life. But ere she returned a second time to her allotted promenade, the wounded feelings of the injured girl had subsided to some degree of composure. Instead of allowing herself to anticipate the event of Arthur Lovell's fall in battle as a chance of deliverance to herself, she had begun to reflect that he was the only son of loving parents,—the inheritor of many honours,—the object of many hopes.—If the law forbade the cancelment of their marriage, they might live apart; or if even that modification of the bond were insufficient to appease the antipathies of her husband,—if one of them *must* die to secure the happiness of the other,—better herself, who, at the fast-approaching death of her father, would be friendless in the world,—to none a source of happiness,—to her country a profitless burthen!

This softened mood of mind was in some degree attributable to the ill tidings brought that morning to the Grange by Elias Wright, that the vanguard of the Parliamentary army was sweeping the country with triumphant insolence; that Dalesdene itself would probably be subjected to a domiciliary visit, in consequence of the prevalent report that a troop of strange horsemen had been seen to issue at midnight from the gates; and, worse than all, that Cromwell's forces, both regulars and militia, were gathering in unprecedented strength towards Worcester, where the event of a general action must be fatal to the royal cause.

It was grievous to the good notary to oppress the infirm mind

of his client with such black intelligence; but so imminent was the crisis, that it was requisite for the helpless valetudinarian to be prepared for the worst. Mistaking for resignation the apathy with which Mr. Heneage seemed to listen to the recital, he congratulated himself at having found courage to communicate the state of their prospects. It was only Anne Lovell who had intelligence to perceive that her father's intellects were giving way; that the effects of his paralytic seizure, added to the terrors of the time, had reduced him to a state bordering upon imbecility. He was no longer accountable for his words or actions.

"That I had but been aware of this three days ago!" murmured the poor girl, almost within hearing of the old notary. "Never had I suffered my happiness to be disposed of for the gratification of a whim which, with the free use of his judgment, my father had perhaps contemned as earnestly as myself."

It was on the evening of that very day,—an evening memorable to Anne as the eve of her sixteenth birthday,—that a letter, in a strange handwriting, and still more strangely addressed, was, with looks of anger and amazement, tendered by old Gervas to her hand.

"To Anne, the daughter of Miles Heneage, Esq., of Dalesdene Grange, and elsewhere, these."

A momentary conjecture that the unknown handwriting might be that of Arthur, induced her to cut the string, and tear open the envelope of the despatch; when, to her astonishment, she found the signature to be that of "Letitia Lovell,"—the date "Lovell House,"—and the initial line,—"*Madam, or Mistress, or by whatever name it pleases you at present to be known.*"

All that the harshest of human natures and the narrowest of human understandings could suggest in the way of invective, followed this insolent apostrophe! Apprized by a letter from her son of the purport for which he had been so hastily summoned to Dalesdene, and the result to which it had conducted, of his hasty departure for the army, a mother's anguish on bereavement of her only son took, in passing through the hard heart of Lady Lovell, the distorted shape of her own unamiable character.

A daughter of the proud Earl of Bristol, a stanch bigot and uncompromising aristocrat, Lady Lovell, from the period of the late king's execution, had retired to Lovell House with her child; increasing a thousandfold the difficulties of her husband's career by the audacious publicity of her professions of political faith. For many years following her alliance with Lord Lovell, the influence of her powerful family had seconded the arrogance with which she not only domineered in her household, but presumed to govern the political opinions of her lord. She taught herself to regard her son as almost exclusively *hers*,—pledged to the service of

the Stuarts as the grandson of Bristol and nephew of Digby, rather than as heir to the house of Lovell. Already she had projected for him an alliance with a fair kinswoman of her own, possessed of an inheritance as considerable as that of Dalesdene, and a pedigree free from the hateful defilements dishonouring the genealogy of Anne Heneage; so that the letter which brought tidings of the disposal of Arthur's destinies, without reference to her will and pleasure, dealt a blow of mortal disappointment. At first stupified by the news, she recovered herself only to burst into paroxysms of fury,—sad evidence of which was registered in her almost frantic letter to her rejected daughter-in-law.

“But let not the upstart grandchild of a Le'ster grazier,” was the concluding paragraph, “presume to hope that her designs upon the hand of the descendant of the houses of Digby and Lovell, will be sanctioned by the laws of the country. For years past have I suspected this base design on the part of his besotted father; and, thanks to my providence, so profound is my son's contempt for the low-born minion to whom he has been compulsorily contracted, that his first measure on the restoration of peace to this unhappy country, will be to appeal to the House of Lords for the dissolution of a vow forced upon him during his nonage.”

Strange to relate, instead of finding herself roused to indignation by the contents of this mad epistle, “the low-born minion” felt easier in her mind from the moment of its perusal!—Poor Anne was content to be despised for her humble parentage,—content to be hated at the instigation of an arrogant despot;—for the shame of such pitiful sentiments fell upon their entertainers rather than upon their object. The bitterness of being personally loathed and contemned thus spared her, she could have found it in her heart to thank the infuriated lady for her explanation of Arthur's proceedings. Having determined to confide the letter neither to her father nor Mistress Corbet, (the former of whom would be scarcely able to understand, the latter to endure, its drift), old Elias, her trusty guardian, became her only confidant; and finding his opinion coincide with her own, she determined to meet with contemptuous silence the gross insults of the Lady Lovell.

“I scarcely knew this child,” was the worthy notary's communing with himself, as he jogged back on his road from Dalesdene to Oakham. “She accepts and parts with a handsome bridegroom, as coolly as my client Heneage parted withal, and my new friend Lord Lovell accepted, a sum of six thousand pounds. Yet, ever since that day of blunders, when these foolish old dunderheads laid their sapient heads together to make two young folks miserable, there has sparkled a spirit in her eye, and sat a firmness

upon her lip, most impressive and premature. So strange a couple of their years as this boy and girl, never fell under my observation. Of any others I should say, 'A fico for their antipathy! Let them grumble and make wry faces for a year or so; they will nathless fall into each other's arms at last, as loving as shepherd and shepherdess in some rhymester's ballad!'—But of these twain, I presume not to predicate.—Young Master Lovell is capable of serving fourteen years—*not* to obtain, but to be rid of, his wife; while, as to my ward, I will not even divine to what extremities her resolutions might lead!—Lucky, at least, that my Lord Lovell saw through his son's desperation, and was pre-mo-nished of his lady's prejudices, so as to leave in the hands of the bride's father and trustees so vast a hold over his estate. By that rein may we still bridle the mouth of the restive old jade, and reform the paces of her stubborn colt!"

CHAPTER VI.

"WHAT cheer, good nurse, what cheer?"—cried the mourning bride to the venerable Dame Audrey, who came hobbling towards her along the terrace one morning, some ten days after the great event.

"Alack, madam—sad news!"—sobbed the old woman, drying her eyes with her apron. "Here is Master Wright ridden over from Oakham, and seeking you far and nigh through the house.—All is over, my dear young lady—all is over!"

"What is over?" cried Anne Lovell. "Surely nothing has happened to my father?"

"God forbid!—My master, blessings be praised, has just finished a hearty breakfast, and is dozing sweetly in his easy chair!"

"The evil tidings then are from the army?"—demanded her nursling, turning deadly pale, and leaning on the balustrade for support; seeing which, Dame Audrey lacked courage to communicate the ill news she had been required by Master Wright to break with becoming caution to her young lady.

"Say on, good nurse!" faltered Anne, perceiving the old woman to hesitate at sight of her emotion.—"His Majesty the King?"

"Is either slain, or a fugitive before the face of his enemies," replied Audrey. "Worcester hath yielded;—the rebels have obtained a signal victory;—his Grace of Hamilton was mortally wounded in the engagement——" Then pausing, she added in a lower voice, "as well as many other worshipful nobles, adherents of the royal cause."

“And among them, our good Lord Lovell!”—cried Anne, clasping her hands together with a gesture of despair. “I read it in your looks, dear nurse.—I have lost—I have lost my friend!”—And, with the ready emotion of her tender age, tears flowed rapidly down the pale cheeks of the afflicted girl.

“Master Wright is a-waiting to impart all this and more to you, dearest lady,” added the old woman, extending her faithful arm to support her darling child.

“There is more, then, to be told?” faltered Anne, hastening her agitated steps as she approached the house, yet not trusting her lips to breathe the name of Arthur, lest a fatal reply should convey the worst tidings; while on the threshold of the hall-door stood the old notary, his overclouded countenance black as his inky cloak, seeming to reveal in silence the news she dreaded to hear.

Raising her pale and tearful face inquiringly towards him, she hoped to be spared the necessity for an explicit question; but so shocked was the good man on perceiving the effect produced by Audrey’s intelligence, that he contented himself with extending his arms to receive her, lest she should fall to the ground. Bearing her across the hall into the nearest chamber, Dame Audrey hastened to revive her with volatiles and burnt feathers.

“I see how it is!” faltered Anne, turning after a few minutes’ painful silence towards the old man, who still supported her on her seat, “I am a widow, and you fear to tell me so;—a child, and yet a widow;—too soon a wife—too soon a widow!”—

And her anguish burst into a fit of hysterical laughter, which froze the very blood of the old notary.

“I beseech your ladyship to take patience,—your ladyship hath no just cause for this disturbance!”—cried he, not forgetting amid his perplexity to mark his sense of his ward’s accession of rank.

“Have you tidings then of Arthur Lovell?—Can you assure me that Arthur Lovell yet lives?”—said she, in a firmer voice, when, at length the restoratives of Dame Audrey produced comparative composure.

“I can attest that there is not so much as a rumour of my young Lord Lovell’s mischance,”—replied Wright. “At present, madam, our news is of the vaguest. All we know for certain is, that the lord-general fell upon the city of Worcester with an army of thirty thousand men; that the king’s troops, amounting scarcely to fourteen thousand, speedily gave way. But it was in defending the passage of the Teme, previous to the general action, that my Lord Lovell received his mortal wound, and expired upon the field.”

“His son was with him at his death?”—demanded Anne, in a low voice.

“It may be so presumed. But my tidings (being only such as have reached the town-council of Oakham) bear no such import. Touching the young lord, ’t is rumoured only that he accompanied the king, when, having vainly attempted to rally the courage of the discountenanced Scottish troops, in a spot named Friar Street, of the city of Worcester, his majesty implored them to put an end to his life, that he might not survive to witness the fall of his cause. Upon this emergency, my young Lord Lovell seized the bridle of his charger, and compelled his majesty from the spot, the troops of Cromwell having already carried the opposite gate of the city, for some time stoutly defended by Colonel Careless.”

“And whither has our unfortunate prince betaken himself?”—demanded Anne, not choosing to hazard a more intimate inquiry.

“The Almighty, his best protector, only knows!”—ejaculated Elias Wright, in a disconsolate tone. “An hour or so before the Castle Hill was surrendered by Colonel Drummond, (a measure which proved the signal for a cessation of resistance,) the king, guarded by a detachment of Scottish cavalry, issued from St. Martin’s Gate, and took the northern road. It was six of the clock, and dusk; and the escort, it is supposed, quickly dispersed, leaving his Majesty to pursue his flight encumbered only with a select band of followers.

“We are now on the seventh of the month,” said Lady Lovell, musingly; “yet, though these events chanced upon the third, no news is known of the king!”

“A heavy price will be set by parliament upon his person,” observed the notary. “God give him a safe deliverance from those who desire no better than so send him after his royal father.”

“Their sole chance is to reach the coast, or I should say that it was probable he might direct his steps hitherward,” observed Anne, musingly; “here, at least, he knows himself to be secure from betrayal.”

“Mr. Heneage is then in more direct communication with the king than I am apprised of?” demanded the astonished Wright.

“I spoke of my Lord Lovell,” resumed his companion, timidly. “Better however, that the fugitives made for the nearest port.—The banner of the king is irrecoverably fallen!—There is no safety for either him or his on English ground!”—

“Such is, alas! the general judgment,” replied the notary. “Cromwell, in his advice to the parliament of this signal victory, entitles it the ‘crowning mercy of his mission.’ Even in our poor town of Oakham, where loyalty hath hitherto preponderated, I discovered this morning a decided manifestation in favour of the triumphant lord-general. ‘There is no longer a king in Israel,’ cry the populace; ‘Charles hath deserted the people; let us seek

wiser rulers for the nation, that they may govern it." It is vain to conjecture what further evil may betide."

"The faction which hath slaughtered one sovereign and driven another forth to exile, will now usurp all," observed Lady Lovell. "Heaven send that it may leave us peaceful graves. I doubt 't is the best portion that will be granted to well-thinking subjects."

"Nay, nay; scarcely yet so desponding, my dear young lady," cried Wright. "Dalesdene may long afford a secure refuge. Men of peace, like Master Heneage, who have taken no active part in this unhappy struggle,—who have opposed no tax or exaction of the established government, may reasonably hope to sit under the shelter of their own vine in safety. Your father's infirmities secure *him* from all claim or necessity of action. My own insignificance and scrupulous forbearance from political broils, insure my impunity; and the best aid and dutiful service of old Elias Wright are at the disposal of my honoured Lady Lovell, the ward confided to my guardianship by her good old grandsire. His arm may not be so strong, nor his name so noble, as those of others who ought to be at hand for her protection; but all I can do, my dear child, for your aid, comfort, or honour, shall be done as zealously as though you were a lamb of my own fold."

A tear gathered on the old man's cheek as he spoke; and it was curious to note the struggle in his mode of addressing his lovely companion, between respect for her newly-acquired rank as a peeress of the realm, and his habitual affection for one whom he had seen grow up from infancy to the verge of womanhood. Lady Lovell, however, heard only in his address the comfortable assurance of his fatherly care and protection.

"Thankfully do I accept your friendly offers," she replied. "My poor father, as you must perceive, is incapable of thought or action. Judge for us both;—proceed for us both.—All that ought to be done for our safety, for our credit, I look to your wisdom to provide for. Our funds are already in your hands. Were there any hope of obtaining a sure agent to seek out Lord Lovell and convey to him the succours necessary to his present emergency, I should say, be such our first consideration. But interference might occasion further peril both to him and to the king, by directing attention to their retreat. All therefore I recommend to your care is to despatch a discreet and confidential person to Worcestershire, with means of bestowing becoming burial upon the remains of my father's noble friend."

"Were I to presume to advise, my dear young lady," interposed Master Wright, "I should say that the interests of the living claim precedence over the pomps of the grave. Let the dead bury their dead!—The body of my late Lord Lovell is probably long ere this deposited in christian ground; and were there any pretext in

these troublesome times for bestowing more ostentatious obsequies, surely it is the business of his widow to provide for the ceremony, rather than a friend?"

"Lord Lovell's only son is perforce a fugitive," replied Anne, with dignity, "and I, his lawful wife, at present represent him, and am called upon to act in his behalf. If I know aught of the haughty woman whose letter of last week displayed so hard and selfish a spirit, *her* care will be to maintain her rights and privileges at Lovell House, rather than to show respect to the memory of her departed lord."

"I faith her ladyship's task will be far from laborious," cried the lawyer, betraying, as far as became the sobriety of the moment, his professional glee at having overreached an adversary. "The dowager hath no more share or portion in the interests of Lovell House or its dependencies, than the poorest of my clerks.—Her ladyship's dower is levied upon the entailed estates in Shropshire; of which, during her son's nonage, she may pretend to the administration. But the whole demesne of Lovell is made over in fee to my worshipful client, your ladyship's good father—with power to his son to redeem the same on the attainment of his majority. Let her but so much as lay her finger on a blade of grass, dating from the third day of this current month, and she will hear news of the attorney-at-law of Miles Heneage, Esquire, of Dalesdene Grange."

"You mean no offence, I trust, to Lord Lovell's widow?"—gravely demanded his ward.

"None, madam, so long as we receive none at her hands. It is simply my interest to serve in due time upon her ladyship a process of ejection, for the better understanding and establishment of her claims and our own."

"Eject her from her husband's doors?"—cried the startled Anne. "You surely do not dream of such an outrage?"—

"We will discourse of it another time, my dear young lady," observed Elias. "Your feelings are now excited,—your judgment scarcely at your disposal. There will be a time to consider it more patiently hereafter."

"No—*now!*"—replied Lady Lovell, with decision and composure. "Untoward business rarely gathers grace from procrastination. I am prepared to discuss with you, henceforth and from this moment, all matters in which my co-operation may be needful."

"Without troubling you, then, with formal terms of law," observed the notary, "know, madam, that in consideration of a sum of eight thousand pounds to your personalty appertaining, (whereof six were delivered to his hand when he quitted this house on the twenty-ninth of August,) my Lord Lovell did recently

make over in trust to your ladyship's father all his estates and messuages situated in the shire of Northampton."

"Well, sir?—The moneys were forthwith assigned by the late noble friend of my father to the use and profit of his sovereign," replied Anne; fancying that the attorney was about to suggest an inquiry into the appropriation of a sum which might be supposed available to the claims of his heirs.

"With his lordship's employment of the moneys, madam, we have at present small concern," said the attorney. "It is the estate which falls into our hands that importeth us to consider."

"At present," replied his ward, "refrain from all proceedings in the matter.—My father is incapable of interference.—I have surely no need of the proceeds.—Let Lady Lovell enjoy, so long as she listeth, the lands pledged by the generous loyalty of her husband."

"Under your favour, madam, this disinterestedness mars at once the Lady Lovell's cause and your own," remonstrated the cautious Elias. "Her late lord fell in arms against the established government. His lands will doubtless be subjected to sequestration; nay, if the prognostications of the longest heads are to be trusted—every acre belonging to the royalist generals will be forfeited by parliament to the Commonwealth to defray the costs of this disastrous war. As the property of the deceased nobleman, Lovell House would consequently be lost to his heirs. As the property of the inoffensive Miles Heneage, against whom no overt act of resistance to the ruling powers can be charged, it is secure from spoliation. How say ye, then? Shall the inheritance of your father's noble friend be preserved by this stratagem intact till better times; or shall it become a hunting-ground for the foxes of the commonweal?"—

"Secure it as best you may, for the future benefit of his son," replied Anne, after a moment's consideration. "Should *he* too become a victim to the good cause, God send us a happier time to restore it to the enjoyment of his mother!"

It was not for Master Wright to combat what he regarded as the romantic generosity of girlhood. Time would be the best monitor of the young Lady Lovell. The old man took his respectful leave of his ward, that no time might be lost in the ordering of his legal measures for her advantage.

It needed the lapse of more than an hour after his departure, to relieve the mind of his young client from the exhaustion into which it subsided after such trying exertions. Dame Audrey peeped unheeded into the chamber, and Mistress Corbet approached unperceived towards the chair in which her pupil reclined. But in a few affectionate words, she entreated the forbearance of both; and, on the expiration of her allotted period of silent

meditation, Lady Lovell issued from the room, composed in deportment, if not tranquillized in spirit.

She had resolved to make no disclosures to her father. Of what use to inflict pain upon the infirm mind which had lost all power but that of suffering?—Having bent her steps towards Mr. Heneage's apartment, she assumed her usual place beside his chair, took up her customary work, and waited patiently till he should indulge in some of the vague childish questions which, at rare intervals, constituted his attempts at conversation.

CHAPTER VII.

So glowing was the atmosphere of that fierce September day, that even the poor paralytic man, whose existence was scarcely more than a prolonged lethargy, could endure to have the casements thrown open; and as his ghastly cheek rested against the scarcely whiter cushions of his easy chair, the spicy scent of the lavender and rosemary hedges came wafting into the room, till a vacant smile overspread his wasted features on recognition of their recollected fragrance. Vaguely conscious of some agreeable sensation, the imbecile man sat passing his fingers through the button-holes of his vest, as he inhaled the musky breeze and gazed upon the graceful form of his daughter.

But while in *his* mind all was a blank, in *hers* all was emotion and activity. For she did but *seem* to work. Inclining her head over the seam she was sewing, the tears kept dropping fast over her hands, while the foldings of her dress vibrated with the quickened respiration of her bosom. Lady Lovell's thoughts were far away. The struggle of the battle lay before her. She seemed to look upon the dying moments of that noble being who, ten days before, had tendered her, in that very chamber, his fatherly protection, and who was now trampled into the gory clay of a dishonoured field!—

Yet even *his* was not the plight that moved her tenderest compassion. *He*, at least, was at rest. "Nothing could touch him further." The troubles of his afflicted country,—the injuries of his young king,—would never again disturb the tranquillity of his impenetrable sleep. Her pity was more deeply moved towards the fugitive prince and his followers—the hunted of the law—the proscribed—on whose heads a price was set, that, like the first murderer, whatsoever man should find them, it was lawful to kill and slay!

Oh! how little (when for a moment, as she sat beside her newly-wedded husband at the wedding-feast, she had prayed within her

soul that the cruelty with which he was treating her might be revenged upon his head), how little had she imagined that the pride of Arthur was about to be so quickly levelled with the dust!—that he would be thus speedily exposed to ignominy—persecution—danger—despair! Though nothing had transpired of his deportment in the fatal field, she felt assured, as if instructed by an eye-witness, that he had done honour to his name. That he had been at hand to watch over the safety of his sovereign, was attested by the information obtained by Elias Wright. But, alas! what availed the deeds of that disastrous day?—What chance was there even of escape for Charles and his handful of followers?—Already, perhaps, they had been sacrificed by some obscure hand. At any hour, at any moment, the news might reach her that she was a widow. “I could wish,” mused Anne Lovell, through her tears, “that we had parted in charity!—Would I had found courage to acquaint him, ere he quitted the house, that the marriage was as little of my desiring as his own,—that I had no mind to thwart him by persisting in the alliance,—that I was content to aid its dissolution, and renounce all claim upon his hand!—He might then, perhaps, have quitted me without bitterness,—have bid me adieu as a friend,—as an old playmate;—perhaps have asked my good wishes for him during his absence,—my prayers for his safety in the day of battle!”

And, in spite of her efforts, her work dropped upon her knee at the thought, and, covering her face with her hands, she wept long and unrestrainedly.

The old man looked wistfully on her proceedings. He had a vague surmise that something was amiss. But while his daughter still wept unquestioned, a loud clanging was heard at the door-bell, a tramping of many horses in the court-yard; and before Lady Lovell had time to inquire into the cause of disturbance, she was startled by a wrangling at her father’s very chamber-door, when she distinguished the voice of Gervas, striving to interdict the entrance of a stranger. For a single hasty moment, she fancied that peradventure the fugitive king and his followers might be seeking refuge at Dalesdene; but the entrance of a portly old gentleman in a buff coat, and steel cap sitting most incongruously upon his rubicund face, destroyed the illusion.

“This obstinate major-domo of yours, Mistress Anne,” said the intruder, trundling his rotund person towards Lady Lovell, with an attempt at obeisance at every alternate step, “hath the ill grace to oppose the authority of the laws of the realm, represented unworthily in the person of your humble servant.”

“The state of my father’s health being such as to prevent our receiving guests at Dalesdene, must be Gervas’s excuse, sir, for any seeming want of courtesy,” replied the young lady, reddening

with terror at the sudden inbreak ; for though the worshipful Hosea Shum, town-major of the borough of Oakham, was a neighbour with whom the timid squire had scrupulously maintained terms of amity, yet his present warlike array, and the escort of men-at-arms whose steps were distinctly heard in the corridor, forbade all hope that his visit on the present occasion was one of mere civility.

“The name of guest, young lady, is a title which squareth not with my present mission,” replied the pursy major, striving to impart to his nasal twang, broken by the palpitations incident upon his exertions, the dignified tone of a man in office. “Upon the warrant of the worshipful town-council of the town of Oakham, have I made ingress into this mansion, with authority to examine and search for concealed arms or other implements of war.”

“God forbid that any member of my father’s household should oppose your investigations, sir,” replied Lady Lovell, somewhat reassured. “You must be well aware, Major Shum, that the poor armoury of the Grange, insignificant as it is, was put under requisition two years since by the magistrates of your town-council ; since which time, (as you will find on examination,) it has been used by our housekeeper for drying flax, or some household purpose.”

“That remains to be seen, Mistress Anne—that remains to be seen,” replied the major, who having unbuckled his cap in deference to the young lady’s presence, was deliberately wiping his streaming brows.

“Permit me, then, to lead the way thither,” replied Lady Lovell, apprehensive that so strange an intrusion might seriously agitate the frame of her father. But on glancing towards Mr. Heneage, in explanation of her impatience of the presence of the town-major, it was clear, from the almost idiotic smile playing over the old man’s features, that his eyes, like those of an infant, were dazzled and gratified by the glittering accoutrements of the individual whose person he was not sufficiently able himself to recognise at that moment.

“It were, as I conjecture, useless,” resumed Hosea, “to expound unto the good gentleman, your parent, the extent of my commission regarding him. For verily I do perceive that the account rendered by my kinsman Wright to the town-council, of his client’s bodily condition, is a true saying ; and that Mister Heneage is, at this present speaking, incapable, by reason of defect of mind and body, of the malefactions against the government of the realm, imputed to him by certain denunciators.”

“Malefactions?”—interrupted Lady Lovell, with a look of amazement.

“It hath been deposed by credible witnesses to the magistrates of Oakham, of whom I am the unworthy coadjutor,” resumed the

pompous Hosea, "that on a certain night of the past month, a troop of armed horsemen did issue at dead of night out of the gates of the demesne of Dalesdene; being, as it is surmised, no other than succours making towards the quarters of the malignant Charles Stuart, now, by the grace of the Lord, a fugitive before the face of his people."

"We will talk of this on our way to the armoury, or whatever portion of the house you may see fit to visit," said Anne, changing colour, in the apprehension that some casual word might reach the ear and rouse the dormant intelligence of her father, so as to induce an imprudent rejoinder. Leading the way, therefore, out of the chamber, she observed, as she accompanied the hobbling hero along the corridor, "Even were this deposition just, I need not suggest to the wisdom of Major Shum that my father's lands might afford traverse for a squadron of horse, more especially under cover of the night, without so much as the knowledge of a person so infirm as the unfortunate gentleman whose miserable condition has just now been perforce exhibited to your notice."

"The very observation I had myself the satisfaction of making to my honourable colleagues," retorted the Major. "Miles Heneage, of Dalesdene Grange," said I, to the assembled council, "is an individual of peaceful habits and demeanor, ungiven to broils or plots; a just man,—a payer of dues to the state,—a submissive son of the church;—ergo, it is most unlikely that he would thrust his old age into the perils of a cause now, by the blessing of Providence, levelled with the earth, when his cautious youth refrained evermore from political demonstrations."

"I pray you let the key of this chamber be sought for of Dame Audrey," said Lady Lovell, turning towards old Gervas, as they reached the door of the armoury.

And as the old man departed, grumbling at being compelled to leave his young lady unattended in company of the major and his sour-visaged troop, Hosea Shum added, in a lower voice, as if not caring to be overheard by his men,—“Verily, there was another count in the charge against my worthy neighbour, Miles Heneage; *videlicet*, that, within four days of the battle of Worcester, (for the event of which render we evermore thanks to the Lord!)—he entertained under his roof, with honour and feasting, the malignant Arthur, commonly called Lord Lovell; a stumbling-block whom it hath pleased Heaven to remove, by the strong arm of his saints, out of the way of his people.”

"And if it *were* so," cried the young lady, recovering her presence of mind, "my father is, as you see, in no condition to play the host. Lord Lovell was deeply my father's debtor for moneys lent and other obligations; and Mister Elias Wright, your kinsman, may have seen fit, amid the hazards of the times, to bring him

personally to account with his creditor. On such an occasion, Major Shum, I, a weak and inexperienced representative of my infirm parent, was scarcely likely to deny the hospitality of a meal to a gentleman of estate, of whatever party, a sojourner within our gates for purposes wholly unconnected with parties or politics."

"It was even in this light, Mistress Anne, that I had the satisfaction of placing the transaction before the eyes of my worshipful colleagues," rejoined Hosea, admonished by this allusion to his kinsman's name, of Elias Wright's involvement in the affair. "But what have we here?"—cried he, as the door of the dismantled armoury being thrown open, a long table piled with a service of antique plate was discovered within.

"There hath been no leisure to replace the silver in its appropriate chests since the night of the banquet," observed old Gervas, in an audible whisper to his young mistress, whose countenance evinced surprise and displeasure at the display. "My good master's seizure followed so closely upon the visit of my Lord Lovel."—

A sign from the embarrassed Anne put a period to the old man's garrulity; while Hosea and his companions, though the denuded state of the chamber afforded no pretext for the extension of their investigations, paraded leisurely round the tables, examining with covetous glances the embossed flaggons and platters recently burnished up to grace the ill-omened wedding-banquet of the heiress of Dalesdene.

"A sore sight to the eyes, and a reproach to the soul of the faithful, this disgraceful wastery of gear!"—ejaculated a grin-visaged gentleman, the lieutenant of the troop, apostrophising Major Hosea Shum. "Wherefore, while the saints of the Lord lack meat and suffer hunger, and the soldiers of the commonweal need raiment, should these vessels of silver and vessels of gold, lie tarnishing in bootless amassment?"

"As much might be urged, good Master Gathergrace, against thine own apportionment of fertile territory to the raising of unprofitable tulips and other painted weeds, wherein corn could be sown, and grown, and reaped, for profit of the troops of the Lord General," replied Hosea, drily. "But even as it is writ, 'Remove not thy neighbour's landmark,' it is also commanded, 'Covet not thy neighbour's goods.' Wherefore, instead of wasting our minutes in admiration of these gaudy vanities, it were fitting that we pursued our search for arms into the cellars and out-houses, according to the ordering of our instructions."

Thus twitted by the centurion in authority over him, the abashed lieutenant followed the guidance of his major; and the whole company were now recommended to the care and guidance of old

Gervas by Lady Lovell, who hastened to give orders for their entertainment, and to take precautions that no further token of their intrusion might disturb the tranquillity of the invalid.

It was not the first time that the intelligent daughter of Mr. Heneage had noticed how much her family stood indebted for its civic impunity to the protection of Master Elias Wright. In other instances, as well as this, the mouse had contrived to secure the safety of the lion. Of humble origin and avocation, Master Wright boasted extensive connexions among the burgesses of Oakham; and was so far a dutiful adherent to the existing government that he was never known to raise his hand or voice in favour of any other. "Whatsoever king might reign," he was a loyal subject; not that he might remain "Vicar of Bray," for neither office nor profit did he hold at the hands of government; but because a quiet life was his desire, and he knew that while his submission or recusancy was too unimportant to be profitable to either cause or faction, his intermeddling with politics might open the vials of wrath upon the heads of his peaceful household. No child remained to himself and his good woman, (the pious sister of Major Hosea Shum.) But they had adopted the orphan offspring of their only son; and Hope and Rachel Wright were too tender of years and fair of person, not to make their welfare a thoughtful charge to their kind-hearted old grandsire. He became more cautious than ever, on the reflection that were mischance to befall him, no protector would be forthcoming for the two friendless girls.

Till the accidental alliance of his old friend farmer Hovenden's daughter with the great man of the neighbourhood, the esquire of Dalesdene Grange, had brought him into contact with a gentleman of high estate, an hereditary upholder of the abuses of government, Elias Wright's convictions and prejudices naturally inclined him towards the daily increasing body of the disaffected. But though personally and professionally disgusted by the lawless innovations of the late misjudging monarch, Elias was too reasonable to include an inoffensive valetudinarian, such as his client at Dalesdene, in his enmities towards the mal-advisers of the unfortunate Charles; and he consequently made it his business to stand, when occasion warranted, betwixt the timid country-gentleman and the blustering magistrates in authority in the neighbourhood:—suggesting to the former such little sacrifices as might preserve his household unmolested, and to the latter, the utter harmlessness of the squire.

"The poor gentleman complies cheerfully with all prescribed forms," argued the attorney with Major Hosea and his colleagues. "Nature never cut him out for a patriot or hero. Leave him to dwindle away his inoffensive days in quiet; and whenever necessity presents itself to increase the fine upon his lands, or other-

wise lay him under contribution, let the demand be made through myself. So shall *your* trouble and *his* vexation be alike diminished."

To old Heneage, his advice was of an equally pacific tendency : and whereas the infirmities of the father and the tender years of the daughter forbade all exercise of hospitality at the Grange, many were the sides of venison despatched in Heneage's name to the corporation of Oakham, and many the baskets of game and choice fruit from Dalesdene, which tickled the palate of the rotund Hosea Shum, as peace-offerings from the dormant cavalier.

But old Elias had lately overstepped, or suffered his client to overstep, the modesty of his former prudence. The hasty alliance with Lord Lovell, propounded for the first time to the wary guardian at the witching time of night, and without a minute's space allowed for deliberation, had been sanctioned in an incautious moment, as affording to the grandchild of his earliest friend, and the daughter of his most liberal client, an establishment in life beyond his hopes or her pretensions. Lord Lovell was a gentleman of unblemished honour and reputation, free from all blame in the misadventures of the late King, and all suspicion of interested motives in his devotion to the present. He had even forsaken his home, family, and peaceful vocation, to attach himself to the person of a throneless and wandering prince; and there was something in the noble frankness of his address, which, on occasion of former visits to the Grange, had engaged the regard of the old notary, and which now, in his lordship's need and despair, appealed forcibly to his sympathy. Elias had not, in short, felt himself justified in opposing a match so gratifying to the feelings of Mister Heneage; nor was it till four-and-twenty hours had elapsed after the flurry of the event, that he sobered down into perfect consciousness of the unauthorised indiscretion of his proceedings.

All that remained to be done in extenuation of his fault, was to confide himself in kinsmanly counsel to his brother-in-law Hosea; imploring that, should any hint or denunciation reach the corporation of Oakham, he would take upon himself, as far as possible, the investigation of the matter; so as to watch over the safety of Heneage and his daughter, for whom the fat Major's organs of digestion entertained almost as deep-seated a regard as the grateful soul of Elias Wriggles.

Such was the cause which had determined Hosea to suggest, as of his own absolute wisdom, a domiciliary visit to the Grange, purporting to anticipate and defeat the measures likely to arise from the rumours afloat concerning the mysterious entertainment of the squire:—a visit which seemed to end to the satisfaction of all parties; for so absorbed was the portly Major in the discussion of a venison pasty, washed down, at old Gervas's suggestion, with co-

pious draughts of Rhenish, that he noted not when his fair young hostess rose abruptly from table, and quitted the room, leaving the honours to be done by Mistress Corbet to himself and his comrades.

Still less did he conjecture that her sudden emotion was caused by the recollection that the last time she had presided at that board, Arthur Lovell was seated by her side; while the chair occupied by Hosea Shum was filled by their good and noble father!—Where—where were they now?—Lord Lovell in an unhallowed grave!—Arthur—but, no! she dared not even surmise the destinies of Arthur!—

CHAPTER VIII.

It were a painful and thriftless task to describe the hours of suspense and anxiety endured during the ensuing month by the patient daughter of Miles Heneage. Relieved by the favourable issue of Hosea's visitation from all uneasiness on her father's account, every day brought harassing tidings as regarded the fate of him with whose her own was irrevocably united. During the seclusion of King Charles at Boscobel, and his wanderings on the coast of Dorset, endless rumours of discovery and mischance were spread, with a view of provoking the indiscretion of those really cognizant of his retreat; and the anxious girl, believing young Lovell to be the companion of the fugitive prince, was now distracted with intelligence that Charles and his companions were lodged in the Tower of London, thence to be transported, without trial, to the common gibbet;—now, with news that Charles Stuart, having hired a fishing-smack on the coast of Devon, had gone down in a storm at sea, with fifteen of his youthful followers.

Her ear was ever on the watch for the slightest whisper involving the name of the king,—her eye directed in eager interrogation to the countenance of every creature that approached her.—Her food remained untasted, and her pillow sleepless; till her fair round cheek, hitherto tinged with the bloom of youth and health, grew pale, and wan, and wasted. It was in vain that old Elias remonstrated, or Mistress Corbet reproved. It was in vain they assured her that her unconcealed grief, attributed by all who were not in her secret to zeal for the royal cause, might involve her father and herself in irrevocable ruin.

“All will have a right to conclude,” observed the venerable notary,” that the grief of Anne Heneage is for the malignant Charles Stuart, seeing that none are privileged to attribute your ladyship's tears to the danger incurred by your wedded lord.”

“Yet what more natural cause for grief, pleaded the sor-

rowing girl, "than the loss of my father's dearest and earliest friend?"—

"It is more natural, at least," retorted Elias, "than sympathy in the fate of a young gentleman, an all but stranger;—and, in the little known of him, a *worse* than stranger,—an insolent and scornful ingrate!"—

But Lady Lovell, detecting his drift, was not to be taunted out of her imprudent self-betrayal. Her nature was too candid to admit of the assumption of indifference when her soul was tortured with anguish.

Disappointed in his hopes of stimulating her pride, the notary next attempted to divert her attention by details of his measures of worldly thrift. He chose her little ladyship to listen, while he narrated the injurious treatment he had received at the hands of the Dowager Lady Lovell, on serving upon her the necessary process of ejection. The haughty woman having insisted that, as *locum tenens* for her son, she had a right to retain possession, Elias Wright had been compelled to prove to her, per exhibition of the warrant of the law, that her son himself had no longer a claim upon the property; and backed by the authority of the local magistracy,—which a judicious distribution of royalist gold speedily secured to a citizen of the Commonwealth possessing influence in parliament, and kinsmen high of account in borough corporations,—he at length succeeded in persuading the haughty woman that the widow of a rebel lord could not do better than retreat decently to her Shropshire estates; lest, drawing down upon herself the interposition of the law, she should be condemned to penalties securing the ruin of herself and son. Sir Richard Lovell, the only brother of her late husband, was already in prison, awaiting his trial among those taken in arms for the royal cause; and Elias Wright mildly suggested to the infuriated dowager, that instead of wasting her time and breath in execrations that recoiled only upon the head of her who uttered them, she would do well to prepare herself for the ameracements with which the blackslidings of the Lovell family were likely to be visited by government.

"The widow, then, has been already driven forth from beneath her husband's roof?"—demanded Anne, with an air of undissembled indignation.

"The Lady Lovell, madam, is installed under her late husband's roof, Duke's Court, the Shropshire seat of the Lovells;—Lovell House being, as I have already suggested, the absolute property of your ladyship's father."

"How know ye that she hath chosen to retire thither?"—persisted Anne; "she may be, at this moment, homeless and friendless as her son."

"Nay, madam, for your satisfaction sake, I have made it my

duty to inquire. The dowager is in actual possession of her dower-house, and lacketh no means of decent entertainment. The agent of the late lamented peer is my trusty aforetime yoke-fellow of the law, Master Polliſh, of Thrapstone; with whom, by conference and adjustment, I have come to a good understanding touching the real object of our investiture; he, in the interest of the young lord, admitting our tenure in fee to be the only mode of securing the property for his future benefit."

"A benefit which, it may be, even now he surviveth not to enjoy!"—murmured Anne, with a despairing countenance; "in which contingency, I shall, upon attainment of control over my worldly estate, make over to his mother my portion in Lovell House."

"I thank Heaven, sweet lady, that mine and your good father's providence will evermore prevent so wanton a sacrifice," cried the notary. "The estate must remain in trust for your benefit and the benefit of such children as may hereafter be born to you. And should mischance befall the young lord, your husband, his unfortunate uncle, Sir Richard Lovell, who succeeds to his title and estates, were the only person justified in disputing your possession."

"He would find me no tenacious antagonist," replied the young Lady Lovell, with a sigh. "Meanwhile let all possible heed and care be taken of the mansion and estate which, it appears, I hold in pledge."

"Fear not that they will be looked to," replied the notary. "In your good father's name and behalf, I have retained all the ancient servitors of the place; appointing over them in chief a pious kinsman of my own, Enoch, the son of Hosea Shum, (a Templar, learned in the law, and of fair repute with our men in authority,) as respondent to all claims and inquiries touching our right of appropriation."

"Let me be no further troubled, then, concerning a tenure in which I am not suffered to act according to my own good pleasure," replied Anne. "I have anxieties enough, God wot, without taking such ready thought of the things of this world."

Accepting this remark as a token of dismissal, the old man took his leave; while his youthful ward returned to her dreary task of filial duty,—dreary, because the worse than solitude to which it consigned her, was saddened with cheerless thoughts and thronging fears. It was not till towards evening, when, after her father's slender meal, he was apt to sink into slumber, enabling the faithful Gervas to supply her place, that she stole out for refreshment into the garden, to pace that monotonous gravel terrace, scarcely less disheartening than the chamber of sickness.—

Yet it *was* a relief.—*There* she could give free course to her

tears.—*There* it was tacitly understood between herself and Mistress Corbet that her movements were to be free.—*There* none was to molest her with consolations.—She might be all in all to her musing,—all in all to her grief!—

Yet, as she was bending her pensive steps towards an arbour of lilacs and Gueldres roses, which sheltered the wall at the furthest extremity of the terrace, a hand was suddenly laid upon her arm; and pausing with a start, the maiden drew up almost with hauteur on perceiving that her meditations were again interrupted by Master Wright. She did not care that the old man should detect, in her disordered countenance and streaming eyes, manifestations of an affliction of which she had striven to make light.

“Methought, sir, I had given orders that I was to be unmolested?”—said she, with unwonted harshness.

“I received them, my dear young lady,—I received them!”—replied the good old man: “but the occasion justifies my disregard. I have happy news for you!”

“For *me*!”—demanded Anne, blushing for her previous ungraciousness.

“The king’s majesty is in safety in the kingdom of his maternal ancestors. On the 20th day of the month, Charles Stuart landed at Fécamp, in Normandy, after privations and escapes which render his preservation little short of miraculous.”

“Heaven’s mercy be praised!”—faltered Anne, penetrated with joy.

“From the field of Worcester, as it appears, his majesty proceeded into hiding at a lone mansion belonging to the Giffard family, on the borders of Staffordshire;—alone, and at the absolute mercy of certain peasants to whose loyalty he entrusted himself.”

“*Alone!*”—reiterated Anne, in unconcealed dismay. “His faithful followers, then, are still at the mercy of the murderous Roundheads?”

Old Elias shrugged his shoulders. He was desirous, perhaps, of retaliating on the young lady’s recent perversity, or of probing the secrets of that guileless heart.

“My Lord Lovell is still missing?”—persisted Anne, scarcely able to support herself; “or tidings may have already reached you that death has removed him from the hands of his enemies?”—

“I should scarcely presume, madam, to style *that* happy news,” he replied; “howbeit, your ladyship’s interests in life might be advantaged by such an issue. But, on the contrary, my young lord’s safety is as assured as that of his royal master. Compelled by his majesty’s change of route to miss a rendezvous they had appointed together in London, Lord Lovell sailed from the river in a Scheveling schooner, and is now in safety at the Hague. Ten days ago his lordship’s escape transpired in the city; but, as a

matter of less general interest, the news reached not Oakham till this morning, by the same express advising the town-council that all further vigilance of search for the person of the fugitive king might be dispensed with."

Old Elias was surprised that no word of exultation broke from the lips of the young wife; and scarcely less so, when, after a minute's pause, she suddenly placed her arm within his, as if craving his support toward the house. Before they reached the threshold, however, she had recovered herself; and, willing to mislead his observation as regarded her unavowed weakness, was no sooner at the home-end of the terrace, than she proposed prolonging her walk by a turn or two. Not another allusion, however, to the escape of either the king or his adherents! She began in a hurried voice to talk of business; to explain that, her father's mind being now irrecoverably gone, she desired daily interviews with her good friend and guardian Master Wright, to consult for the better ordering of their affairs; till at last, as the evening shades fell darker on her cheek, she ventured on the exposition of the real object of her promenade; begging him to cause it to be written and fairly engrossed by his clerks, on what grounds the estates of Lovell had been seized in her father's name.

"I would have it made your earliest business, my good sir," said she, in a voice still agitated with joyous emotion, "to seek out a sure hand by which succours may be forthwith transmitted to Holland to the son of my father's late noble friend,—who may be in plight of need ill becoming the honours of his name,—with which this deed of instruction shall be conveyed, that no mal-interpretations may be placed on our proceedings."

It was in vain that the good notary pleaded in reply the danger of intermeddling, at such a crisis, with the affairs of an outlawed man, so obnoxious to the existing government as the son of the late Lord Lovell. He assured her that her own safety and her father's might be fatally involved in the discovery of their intercourse.

"At the court of the Princess of Orange, madam," said he, "the name of Lovell will be a sufficient warrant of welfare. The young lord, moreover, is doubtless already on his way to Paris to rejoin the king and queen mother, to whom his recent exploits must have signally recommended him. Be patient. There will come a time hereafter for these explanations. Lord Lovell's thoughts are less likely to be of forfeitures and mortgages, than of the safety of his worthy uncle, sole representative beside himself of their ancient line. While the sword of justice still hangs suspended over the head of Sir Richard Lovell, let us not wrong this wayward youth by supposing that his mind is directed towards his farms and messuages in the shire of Northampton."

Unwilling to prolong the argument, Lady Lovell directed her steps towards the house, as if subdued to acquiescence. It did not appear necessary to acquaint her attorney-at-law that it was at least as likely the young exile should pass in review the conduct of his new wife and father-in-law, as that he should restrict his cares to the fate of a war-and-weather-beaten uncle, from whom the haughty prejudices of his Roman Catholic mother had been careful to estrange his affections.

From that memorable evening, the spirits of poor Anne seemed to alternate between glee at the unlooked-for escape of Charles and his followers; and grief for the fate of the royal cause, and the one revered victim whose memory she honoured with sable weeds, befitting the reverence of a daughter. There was no fear that her mourning garb would excite the notice of her now imbecile parent; and when Elias Wright remonstrated that it might be reported of her as indicative of too dear a sympathy in the fate of the cavaliers, she replied by a look of silent and dignified reproach, which announced her determination to be immutable.

“To rock the cradle of declining age,” became now her exclusive and pious task. Abandoning to her trustworthy agent the guard and conduct of her worldly affairs, she devoted herself wholly to retirement; and if subdued in spirit by the constant spectacle of the life-in-death that was endured rather than enjoyed by Mr. Heneage, she was somewhat reconciled to his state, on finding that it spared him the terrors of examination by the commissioners of sequestration employed to investigate the nature of his tenure of the Lovell estates, and the spectacle of the harsh administration of the law under the auspices of the new government. While Elias Wright, through his party alliances and professional adroitness, managed by a cautious distribution of bribery to secure the rights which his principals, sooner than stoop to such means, would have abandoned to the encroachments of their rulers, he excused his mode of administration in the eyes of his young charge, by exercising similar mal-practices in behalf of Sir Richard Lovell; who, while his fellow-prisoners, the Earl of Derby, Sir Timothy Featherstone, and others, were put to death by authority of a court-martial, was remanded to prison, his sentence being commuted to a heavy fine and two years' imprisonment in Newgate jail.

It was a weary winter at Dalesdene. Even the ensuing summer found Lady Lovell (now on the eve of her seventeenth birth-day, and exhibiting a development of womanly beauty which, could he have been sensible to the charm, must have enraptured the doating eyes of her poor old father,) still a mourner, and still a sedulous recluse. Mistress Corbet, who in her time had “sat at good men's feasts” and basked in the sunshine of worldly pleasures,

began to lament that the lovely youth of her pupil should be fated to blush unseen in the unincidental wilderness of the Grange; for which murmurs the good woman was duly rebuked by the wiser Elias.

“Rather rejoice,” said he, “that the tenour of her defenceless days is thus secured from the persecution which; under other circumstances, would, I doubt not, await her from the vindictive spirit of her husband. In these times, when even the daughters of kings are abased,—when the royal sister of Charles Stuart keepeth her bed, lacking fuel to preserve her shivering limbs against the winter’s frost—when Hyde and Ormond, and other noble counsellors of his majesty, are known to be shoeless and shirtless, (1) subsisting upon the charity of strangers—let not those who abide in peace and prosperity indulge in discontents most sinful in the eyes of a protecting Providence. Better days may be in store; or if not, be thankful, both for yourself and her, that worse be not dispensed us. Our gentle one walketh in the path of duty. She could do no more were her steps appointed to the purlieus of the courts of kings; wherein,—as our experience shows,—is neither profit nor salvation.”

CHAPTER IX.

FIVE years had elapsed from the memorable period to which Lady Lovell still continued to revert as the commencement of her time of tribulation. The Protectorate was now established; and, saving when some imputation of a royalist or popish plot condemned new lives to the gibbet and new lands to sequestration, the very name of Charles Stuart seemed scarcely to be had in remembrance in the land. Though the people of England had seen the liberties confirmed to them by their great charter, more scandalously violated by the self-styled upholders and reformers of the law, than under the despotic sceptre of Charles the Martyr, they had learned to crouch to the lash; piously submitting to drink the vinegar and hyssop presented to them under such plausible pretences of divine sanction and grace.

But though the captivity of the nation seemed ordained, the time was come for Anne Lovell’s emancipation from her dutiful thralldom. Her poor lethargic parent slept to wake no more. Within a few months after his daughter’s attainment of her majority, Mr. Heneage was laid in the parish church of Dalesdene, beside the fair young wife whom he had been so strangely sen-

(1) Vide the Letters of Lord Clarendon from the Hague.

tenced to survive. On the occurrence of this event, it was the express desire of Lady Lovell that she might be left in unmolested solitude for the space of a month following the funeral; a ceremony which, unsought by the survivors, was honoured by the presence of the local magistrates, in deference to the good citizenship of a man whose estates contributed so largely to the maintenance of government, and who (paralytic and idiotic) opposed no obstacle to its course. But, at the expiration of the four appointed weeks, Master Wright proceeded as usual to the Grange,—prepared to deliver to its young mistress his opinions and provisions touching the further ordering of her career.

No sooner had he entered her presence, however, than the old notary discovered that he was there simply to receive the signification of her own; that the high-minded young woman of one-and-twenty was never more to be argued from her noble purposes into the narrow path of expediency.

“Having resolved to quit a spot wherein I have endured so many painful trials,” said she, in a firm and composed voice, “let me be the first to inform my venerable friend that it is my intention to take up my abode at Lovell House. It is not fitting that so fine a seat should fall to ruin and decay. The sentence of banishment against Lord Lovell is for life. He hath repelled, as you well know, with scorn and indignity, our written offers to place the estate under his control by nominal redemption,—the sequestration of his whole ancestral property having rendered all other means unattainable; and it is now my purpose to do honour to the name which (perforce) I wear, by maintaining fitting state and grace in the family mansion. Your wise counsels have, I trust, in some degree instructed me in the ordering of my affairs; yet the only regret I experience in quitting this ill-omened home of my youth, is the knowledge that it will remove me from the neighbourhood of my second father. To say to the aged tree, ‘Uproot thyself, and come with me to overshadow my new dwelling,’ were, I know, a mockery. Nevertheless, chambers will be set apart for you and yours at Lovell House; and if in its abandonment you will deign to find your summer pastime at the Grange, the old place will be kept up, to remain henceforward at your disposal. It would rejoice me that the faithful friend of my father and grandfather, should occupy Dalesdene in my room.”

Lady Lovell paused, overcome by emotion; but she would neither listen to the good man’s thanks for securing a Goshen to his old age, nor to his remonstrances touching the cheerless life she must lead in a mansion like Lovell House, to which her present household establishment was wholly inadequate.

“You mistake my purpose,” replied Lady Lovell. “It is my intention to adapt my modes of life to the limits of my noble for-

tune. My fate hath been unhappily appointed. But all the happiness I am ever to enjoy,—all the duties I am ever to fulfil,—are as much within my grasp at present, as ever they will become hereafter. Twelve months shall I devote to do homage to my father's memory; after which, look to see me assume the place which I should occupy were Lord Lovell already numbered with the dead."

For a moment, the old man experienced some alarm at this announcement. His knowledge of the frivolous nature of woman-kind, tempted a passing apprehension of purposed levity. But he soon checked himself with self-rebuke, on calling to mind the unerring prudence of Lady Lovell's afflicted career,—her nobleness,—her generosity,—her forgiveness of injuries,—her sympathy with the wants, miseries, and frailties of her fellow-creatures.—She stood beside him, in her beauty and serenity, a superior being: and when, on the day appointed for her departure from the Grange, he saw her followed to the verge of her estate by the prayers and benedictions of the people among whom from childhood she had abided, he was fain to confess that their tears bore witness to her excellence. Not even her farewell benefactions could reconcile the poor people to the idea of losing sight of their guardian angel.

Lady Lovell, meanwhile, had affectionately declined the old gentleman's escort to Lovell House. She even ordered her measures for Mistress Corbet to remain some hours behind her at the Grange, so as to enable her to reach her new residence unaccompanied. Not that she indulged in the puerile vanity of wishing to present herself potentially to the people over whom her rule was appointed, and who, for years past, had loved her as an unknown benefactress. She wished only to enjoy unobserved the emotions likely to arise from her inauguration;—the emotions of the contemned wife of a banished husband, about to consecrate her life to the fulfilment of duties in which choice and necessity alike forbad his participation.

Ten years before, she had visited the place, a wild gamesome girl, accompanying her father in a visit of ceremony to the roof of his only friend, the formalities of which had been pain and grief to the insubordinate Anne. Yet long as was the period intervening since that week of penance, every circumstance and every feature of the spot was indelibly impressed upon her memory. It was the only mansion, besides her own dull house, with which she was familiar. She remembered the stately hall;—the old tapestry of the corridors, to the grim figures of which she went childishly curtsying along as she retired with Dame Audrey for the night;—the armoury, the chapel, the falconry, and above all, a certain canal, embanked by a certain terrace, from

whence, but for the uncouth aid afforded by her playmate, young Lovell, she must have slipped into the waters below, one day when they had escaped by stealth from the house to enjoy the graceless sport of pelting the old grey carp with quinces from a venerable tree that twisted its hoary arms at one extremity of the canal.

She remembered, even now, the fierce reprimand they had jointly undergone from the imperious Lady Lovell, who chanced to encounter the young truants as, dripping and exhausted, they stole back to the hall. She remembered how the dear good lord had stood their advocate, when their misdemeanour was recounted to the circle in the saloon, into which they were dragged for reprehension and judgment. She remembered—she remembered—there was no end to those trivial but precious recollections!—

She had purposely evaded the demonstrations of welcome which, she was forewarned by Elias Wright, her tenants were anxious to make in her honour, by arriving at Lovell House several hours previous to her announcement; so that, when her old-fashioned equipage rolled into the park, the peasantry had not yet gathered together for the purposed procession.

“Let them not suppose me ungrateful,” was her apology to her auditor, Master Shum, who came to tender his respects, as she entered the hall. “But the mourning-dress I wear, and the respect due to the memory of the great and good man who last inhabited these walls, ought to forbid all tumultuous show of rejoicing.”

Touched by this homage to the memory of his beloved lord, the grey-headed steward who was attending them quitted her in tears. All preparation of mirth and music was abandoned; and the lady was left, as she desired, to wander alone through the deserted galleries of the house, to seek the well-remembered saloon, the garden, the terrace,—the all and everything that spake audibly to her soul of times of old.

For one circumstance, however, Lady Lovell had not prepared herself. Above the mantel-piece in that very saloon, hung a portrait of her old playmate, limned at the instance of his adoring mother by the immortal Van Dyck;—one of those speaking pictures, to which that matchless painter had the skill to impart a life-like resemblance, combined with an air of spirit and nobleness in which the original might be deficient; for, like the Creator of mankind, it was in the image of his own genius that the artist had fashioned his work.

Alone with that breathing canvass, Lady Lovell stood riveted to the spot. *There*, then, was the living object of all her reveries,—all her hopes,—the origin of all her sorrows, the source of all her humiliation!—*There* was the lofty brow of him who disdained her;

—the glowing, the impressive, the commanding face by which, when seated by his side, she had been made to shrink into herself!—She saw nothing of her old playmate in the picture,—nothing of the scapegrace,—the snarer of squirrels, and pelted of carp. It was her bridegroom!—the fiery youth, who, rebelling against even while he obeyed his father's mandate, had loathingly accepted her hand as a ransom for the prosperity of his king, and a pledge of his own inauguration into the loyal toils of war.

All the woman was roused in her heart as she gazed and gazed upon the picture; and the tears suffusing her eyes were alternately sweet with tenderness, and bitter with indignation. But what a prize had she obtained in an object thus capable of calling into existence the dearest emotions of the soul!—What had the desolate walls of Dalesdene to boast of, comparable with that talisman of power!

Spell-bound by the charm, she stood contemplating the picture,—exquisite as a work of art,—priceless as a personal memento,—till she had made even its slightest details familiar to her eye; the very shaping of the satin vest and cloak of velvet,—the very turn of the flowing feather gracing the beaver held carelessly by the hand of the distinguished youth; when, as if she had gazed till gazing left her nothing further to recognise, she turned slowly away to quit the chamber.

But no sooner had she reached the door, than, with a deep sigh, she retraced her steps, and took her station as before; having first assured herself, by glancing towards the windows and recesses of the chamber, that she was safe from the watchfulness of prying eyes. It was not till nearly an hour had elapsed, that Lady Lovell found herself bending her steps along the stately gravel-walks intersecting the Dutch garden, which reached to the windows of the southern frontage of the house; while the green slopes of the park were overlooked by the porch of entrance that adorned the northern façade towards the terrace and canal, which, as she rightly recollected, formed the western boundary of the parterres.

Nothing had been changed there since the period of her first visit. At that time, the troubles of the times had left little leisure, either to king or subject, for the adornment of their native Sparta; and from the disastrous epoch which had placed the domain under the control of Heneage's daughter, it was her command that not a stone should be moved, or a shrub uprooted on the spot. But the strictest order had been preserved; the gardens were in the most trimly array. It was not with Lovell House as with the sober herbary at Dalesdene Grange. All the horticultural arts and secrets transplanted from the fair gardens of St. Germain, by the queen-mother, had been borrowed from Hampton Court by Lady Lovell, the daughter of one of Henrietta Maria's most fa-

avourite courtiers; and now, in the propitious month of June, the roses of Provins and Puteaux were intermingling their luxuriant blossoms with the heavy heads of rich carnations, and fragrant clusters of many-coloured pinks and gillyflowers. So sweet, so variegated, so brilliant, was the aspect of the flower-garden, that nothing short of the attraction of happy reminiscences would have directed the steps of the lady up the ascent of the old terrace.

Foreign to the design of the garden of which it formed the boundary, and to feed whose fountains the embanked reservoir was intended, nothing had been done for the adornment of the spot. All—all was as of old!—The old grey carp still lay basking in the limpid waters; a collection of curious reeds, cultivated at one extremity, were throwing up their feathery bloom into the sunshine; and though the old quince-tree at the further extremity revealed at present no mellow fruitage amid its denser summer verdure, there was, in compensation, the exquisite fragrance of a low hedge of sweet brier and honeysuckles that skirted the canal, having been planted on the spot in consequence of the escapade of Arthur and Anne, in order to preserve both Lord Lovell's aged carp and juvenile visitors from further misadventure.

“I shall be happier here than in Rutlandshire,” mused Lady Lovell, when, after a prolonged sojourn on the spot, she bent her steps, with flushed cheeks and in a softened mood of mind, through the fragrant dusk of a June evening towards the house. “The grounds of Dalesdene lie too low for health. This place hath a freer air,—a drier site.—That fine old library promises ample funds of entertainment. Yes! I shall be more cheerful here than in Rutlandshire.”—

Nor were these comfortable prognostications disappointed. Both the lady and the lady's household rejoiced in the change. Old Gervas had lost, by the death of his infirm master, his occupation at Dalesdene, and was glad to quit the place; while Mistress Corbet and Dame Audrey gloried in beholding their beloved charge intent upon assuming at least the outward tokens of her noble condition.

“Since this hateful marriage must needs hang like a clog of lead upon her young existence,” said the good governante to Elias Wright, at the old notary's first visit to their new residence, “let her at least enjoy the worldly honours of her position. In these kingless and courtless times, small account belongs to titles of worldly distinction; but personal recreation need not therefore be unattainable. While the Protector amuses his leisure by playing the charioteer with his team of Friesland horses in Hyde Park, surely my Lady Lovell may be permitted to enjoy her rides a-coursing on Black Maud, or divert herself with repairing and re-establishing yonder ruined mews, without offence in the eyes

of God or man. The sport imparts vigour to her frame, and cheerfulness to her mind."

"It may serve at least to distract careful thoughts," interrupted the good old man. She was ever a mad rider. Before your precepts had trained the wilful child into the gentle woman, I have seen her drive her father to distraction, good sooth, by clearing the hedge as neatly as the best foxhunter in the shire! Long may she content herself with such pastimes!—Even sobered as city life hath become, under the guidance of the Lord Protector, I were loth that this fair and friendless creature should be tempted Londonward by the perilous pleasures of the capital."

CHAPTER X.

FOR three years or more after the inauguration of Lady Lovell, did the prayers of her worthy ex-guardian prove propitious. The heaviness of mind arising from the daily spectacle of her father's miserable plight had given place to the impulses of cheerfulness and health. Sufficient excitement awaited her in the delight of promoting the welfare of those committed to her care; and in due time, she resumed her former occupations and studies. Virgil, though venerated as an ancient friend, was made to yield his place upon her favourite book-shelf to the sterling poets of her own country; and with Shakspeare and Spenser, Milton and Marlowe, she associated those minstrels of France, whose witty lucubrations were at that time scattered upon the court of Louis XIV., like sparks from some glittering firework. Graver studies were not wholly neglected; but though theology and philosophy had their share in her respect, as well as their allotted stations in the old library, it may be inferred that so bright an eye lingered oftener on the fascinating pages of the *Arcadia*, or the biting verses of Des-préaux, than on the rugged records of spiritual controversy or the doctrines of the schools.

Old Elias Wright was sometimes heard to enlarge, on his return to his prim domicile at Oakham, upon the miraculous gifts of the accomplished lady; whom he represented to his wondering grand-daughters as transcending the fair and hapless pupil of Roger Ascham. He announced her as uniting the learning of Lady Jane Grey with the piety and discretion of the matrons of Holy Writ; and it was precisely while indulging in one of these eulogistic rhapsodies, that, on the eve of one of his occasional visits to Northamptonshire, the old gentleman was startled by the perusal of the following epistle.

"Lovell House, Oct. 4, 1657.

"In the expectation of my dear old friend's arrival on Friday

next, according to engagement, I feel it an act of justice to apprise him that he will find settled, if not exactly under my roof, at least 'within my gates,' a military officer, a gentleman of ancient descent, to whose domestication with me he may perhaps be moved to take exception. Lest, however, the intimation should determine him in tenderness of conscience to deprive me of the society of my sweet friend Hope, (whom I hereby remind him of his promise to have with us as a sometime guest,) I must be permitted to assure my kind guardian that, though known to the country round, the domiciliation of my new friend at Lovell bath produced neither scandal nor disapproval. My neighbours seem to coincide in my opinion that my deserted condition leaves me at full liberty to select my fireside companions.

"Before you pronounce a different opinion, dearest sir, see and judge for yourself. I prognosticate that on this, as on other occasions, you will not have courage to find fault with the domestic arrangements of your faithful friend and loving ward,

"A. LOVELL."

Profoundly grieved by the levity with which this fearful backsliding from her eminence of virtue was announced, old Elias determined to persevere in his plan of visiting the unfortunate culprit;—not with any purpose of misplaced leniency, but in order to bestow upon her the admonitions which, in spite of her emancipation from his authority, he felt entitled to offer to the daughter of his friend. He could have wept over her fall, but for the recollection of having sometimes seen her humour inspired by gleams of her former childish mirthfulness, so as to induce the hope that she might be making sport of his credulity.

Nevertheless, as his two grand-daughters were now under his control,—his aged partner having sunk before him into the grave,—the prudent Elias bestowed his pretty Hope and Rachel with their uncle Shum, rather than hazard their encounter at Lovell House with some disbanded captain; one of the locusts by which, since the cessation of the civil wars, the country had to its cost been overrun.

For the first time since the settlement of Lady Lovell in Northamptonshire, Elias approached the gates of Lovell House with a feeling of reluctance. The very pacing nag on which he had oftentimes before performed the little journey, seemed to participate in its master's repugnance, being fairly knocked up before he reached within five miles of his destination; so that it was a welcome sight when he descried on the high road the coach and six with its outriders, which announced that his dutiful charge had either come or sent before to do him honour. He trusted that the equipage alone had been dispatched to meet him. The feelings of pain

and embarrassment with which he saw the velvet footstep let down, advised him of the anguish of spirit he should experience on beholding, in tarnished glory, the hitherto peerless and unblemished Anne.

Happily for his self-possession, she was alone in the spacious coach;—she had not insulted her venerable monitor by the presence of her minion!—Grieved, however, was he to behold how little her countenance was abashed by the consciousness of shame. Her bright eyes shone more resplendent than ever. Her coral lips unclosed more frequently to disclose her pearly teeth and adorn her cheek with dimples; and as to her deportment, it was alternately that of a wood-nymph and a queen! The finely developed form of Lady Lovell now attested the zenith of womanly beauty; and her face was bright with genius as the earth with summer sunshine.

Master Wright had premeditated to launch, the first moment of their meeting, into the subject uppermost in his thoughts. But this point, he discovered, lay not at his own discretion. The moment he was seated by her side, his fair companion opened upon him one of those batteries of female loquacity which, though reserved like certain other batteries to be fired off on occasions of public display, are as unsilenceable as more warlike engines. Her ladyship had now to relate how the Dowager Lady Lovell (compelled two years before to fly from England by the sequestration of her Shropshire estates) had taken refuge in a convent of Ursulines at Bruges; wherein her unquiet spirit was creating such broils as to call down the interposition and reprimands of the archbishop. Then, ere Elias could interrupt her with inquiries touching the sources of her information, she beset him with prattle of the latest news from court; the approaching marriages of the two daughters of the Protector with the Viscount Fauconberg, and the grandson of Oliver's faithful friend, the Earl of Warwick;—predicting from these concessions to the aristocracy, that the kingly crown recently rejected by his highness, would not always be so coldly repulsed.

“It seems that Whitehall is becoming almost as censorious and full of prate as in the rampant days of monarchy,” quoth she, with a merry laugh. “How judge you of my Lord Protector's buffooning it so idly, as to thrust burning embers into the boots of his pretty playmate, old Ludlow, to punish him for his sluggardliness of a morning, when on a visit at Hampton Court?—‘Once a man,’ quoth the proverb, ‘twice a child!’—Methinks our godly governor inclineth anew to leading-strings.”

After smiling away Master Wright's reprehensions of the rashness of her discourse, Lady Lovell secured herself further from his reprimands by relating the high festivities she had recently enjoyed with her noble neighbours at Apethorpe House,—with

her friends at Laxton Hall,—and the worshipful knight at Barnwell Castle. “Presbyterian or Episcopalian,—royalist or leveller,—I have not a neighbour whose door uncloseth not in hospitality at my coming,” said she. “Nay, I sometimes progress so far as Kimbolton, Boughton, or Drayton Manor, to vary my cheer, and keep up friendly fellowship with those who mean me kindly. For what influence ought politics to obtain over the feelings of a poor weak woman, whose best of judgment availeth no further than the fattening of her turkeys, or cutting of her hay;—and whose notions of good government are neither with those who did illegally slay a king, nor those who would unlawfully assassinate a chief magistrate!—I would fain behold both more and less of liberty established in this island, than is likely to chance within half-a-dozen generations to come; and, conscious of the impotency of my aspiration, the name of king or kaiser, protector or parliament, never (save in colloquy with a friend so sure as my kind guardian) is suffered to escape my lips. Helpless as my poor father, my impunity lies in the same spirit of caution which influenced his blameless existence. Even the rash and free-spoken soldier with whom I pass my life,” added Lady Lovell, stealing an inquiring glance at old Elias, “is not privileged to broach the forbidden subject in my presence. We should else lead an ill life together!”

The old gentleman, instantly laying hold upon the text, was about to commence his homily, when, as at that moment they entered the stately gates of the park, he was startled by perceiving, perched on a grassy knoll, yet half hidden in a thicket of feathery beeches,—a modest mansion,—a newly-raised erection, which might have been mistaken for an ornamental building intended to close some vista from the house, had not Lady Lovell, following the direction of his eyes, announced it to be the residence of her new favourite.

“I would ask you to stop with me on our way, and admire the elegance of an elevation designed by my accomplished self,” said she; “but that I am pretty sure my friend must be at the great house, impatiently awaiting our arrival. Ay, there he is, in sooth, in my flower-garden, whipping off the heads of my hollyhocks with his riding-wand, and taking advantage of his influence over my feelings, to play the spoiler!”

Master Wright was now too indignant for words!—When, lo! as he attempted to conceal his emotion by affecting to look forth and catch a view of this libertine object of an unprincipled attachment, his eyes fell upon a figure scarcely less corpulent than that of his brother-in-law Hosea; while a red jovial face, set off to advantage by the jaunty feather of a slouched hat, scarcely in character with the half-military cut of his riding-suit, announced a Romeo of somewhat extraordinary presentment.

“Thou’st made good speed, sweet niece!” cried a cheerful voice, as the old soldier advanced to hand Lady Lovell from her coach. “I expected thee not till dinner, and the last quarter hath not yet chimed o’ the clock. Master Wright, my honest friend, I hold it a good day that enables me once more to clap hands with thee! Our last meeting chanced in an unseemly place, where, but for the aid of this good girl, I might until this hour have abided; or, I should say, her aid backed by thy assistance in bringing me the last instructions of my poor brother in her behalf; whereby I knew that prejudices of my nephew and his brimstone of a mother were groundless, and that I wronged not the name of Lovell by accepting succour at her hands.”

During this exposition, Master Wright found himself conducted between Lady Lovell and her frank-spoken but wordy companion through the porch into the great hall; where the latter, after pausing suddenly, and examining from top to toe what changes the lapse of five weary years might have affected in the person of the venerable notary to whom he stood so largely indebted, exclaimed in a voice of gratitude,—“Body o’ me, but the air of the old Grange hath given thee the complexion of a spark of five-and-twenty!—Thou’rt younger by half, man, than when thou didst wrangle so convincingly in my behalf with the Lords Commissioners at Westminster!—My name’s not Dickon Lovell, but thou art heartier than ever!”

The alarms of the good old guardian thus happily brought to a conclusion, right glad was he to pledge a cup of welcome with the burly knight, to whom, on the expiration of the imprisonment to which his sentence was commuted, he had been the means of rendering important service; and Mistress Corbet, as she sat simpering over her knitting-needles during their half-hour of wearying for dinner, could not choose but admire the wonder with which Master Wright listened to Sir Richard Lovell’s narrative of his niece’s successful negotiations with government for the rescinding of his sentence of banishment.

“Faith, the girl hath grown a finer diplomat than old Cottington, and a better lawyer than Ned Hyde!” cried he. “Were she a stauncher supporter of the hereditary principles of the House of Lovell, I should not mind proposing to make a chancellor of her, if ever the king should enjoy his own again. I wager the judgment under her ladyship’s coif against all the wisdom housed under the wide wig of Harry Bennet!”

On the graver expounding of the chances and changes which had ended by fixing Sir Richard Lovell as a resident on the lands of his fathers, it appeared that the worthy gentleman had both taken and given disgusts at the court (if court it could be styled) of the exiled king. The freedom of his remonstrances with a

youth, of whose boyhood he had been at one time governor, was received by Charles, not with the careless levity to have been expected from his habitual listlessness, but with a degree of resentment, inspired by the worthless woman who at that period exercised unlimited influence over his mind; and whose contempt of all decency, and offensiveness in the eyes of even his most devoted subjects, founded the groundwork of the old general's reprehensions.

"I loved the boy too well not to bear much at his hands," said Sir Richard, as he narrated, over a tall bottle of Rhenish, to Master Elias, the grievances which had stirred up his wrath:—"more especially from knowing that it was as much as his kingship could manage out of his French pension, (scarce as much, by our lady, as would have kept the hounds of his royal father's kennel in meal!) to find himself in cloak and doublets, with a couple of crowns per diem for bread and board. But when I saw, forsooth, that the hussy Barlow was suffered to make game of my blunt bearing for his Majesty's sport, and that Bob Sydney, Harry Jermyn, and who not, was listened to with complaisance, (let them use what hard terms they list,) while *my* slightest aspersion of blame was pished and pshawed away with the freest contempt,—I got weary of wasting my years among a nation of *parly vous*, and a handful of countrymen who despised me; and as the King, on his departure from France to take up his abode at Cologne, made no motion to me to resume my service and follow him, I, being left behind, like a needy bisognon, of whom he had no longer occasion, was entreated of Judge Lockhart, when he arrived in Paris as negotiator betwixt the Cardinal and the Protector, to suffer him to pave the way for my return to my native country. That the concession was obtained without loss of honour to myself, be the name of Dick Lovell my guarantee. That it was obtained without loss of profit to Master Noll's exchequer, be the noble advances made in my behalf by my good niece, a sterling evidence!"

"Nevertheless, it was scarcely to have been hoped," replied the wary attorney, convinced that part of the truth was withheld from him by his bluff companion, "that the brother of the late Lord Lovell would consent to receive grace at the hands of his highness?"—

"Would you have had him consent to receive insults at the hands of a brainless boy?"—cried Sir Richard, falling instantly into the snare. "Did not Charles Stuart (doubtless at the instigation of the arch-caitiff Hyde) presume to propose to a loyal servant of his sainted father,—a faithful son of his native country,—did he not presume, I say, to propose to *me*,—Dick Lovell, the Wors'ter man,—to become fellow-cut-throat and brother-stabber, with

such bravos as Sexby and Syndercomb?—'T was well for his Majesty that I bore the offence against my honour with no worse reproof than snapping my sword asunder, and throwing it at his feet!—But, thanks to the babbling of Mistress Lucy, the thing got wind; and so it fell out, that when the court moved to Cologne to make way for the emissaries of the Protector, it left behind on the causeway, some waggon-load or so of unpaid tapster's reckonings, —some score or two of fatherless bantlings,—and one Dick Lovell, in a threadbare suit and patched hose, but without speck or blemish on his reputation."

"I could have sworn it!"—cried the old notary, his eyes filled with tears. "Still the same high spirit that gave me so many wounds to salve over, ere I could manage to bring him in safety through the warder's gate!"

"The caitiffs fancied, my good Master Wright," resumed Sir Richard, "that their 'Killing no murder' had thrown dust in my eyes, as in those of Gonthier, to whose hot blood 't was addressed by Master Titus, whom I shame me (damn him!) to call colonel!—But, for myself, I was ever a crabbed hand at sophistry. Fighting in fair field is a trade accordant with my notions; but your assassins on political principles, (ay, even including Madame Judith and Madam Jael, of saintly memory,) I hold no better than any other gibbet-bird."

"And my young Lord Lovell?"—interposed Elias, lowering his voice, though aware that three chambers' space lay between the eating-room and the favourite saloon of her ladyship.

"My nephew abideth still at Cologne," replied Sir Richard, bluntly.

"No offence having been offered him at the hands of the king," persisted Elias, "his lordship felt perhaps that there was none to be taken?"

"So would not have felt his noble father!"—cried the old general, smiting the table impatiently with his fist. "In my brother's time, an insult offered to any member of the house of Lovell, was instantly felt and resented at its fountain-head. The honour of the family vibrated to him as to its centre. It was not my poor Lovell, (God bless him!) who would have remained boon companion and fellow-ruffler with the man, were he thrice a Stuart and thrice a king, who could propose to a Lovell to embrue his hands in blood!"—

"There is much difference of nature 'twixt the late and the present lord, as betwixt jet and ivory," quoth Master Wright, with a sorrowful sigh. "Would he, who was so loving and regardful a husband, even to the shrewish daughter of Lord Bristol, have left yonder sweet rose to wither unnoticed on the virgin-stem, a martyr to his disdains?"—

“There lives not another gentleman in Europe beside my nephew, capable of such ungrateful injury!”—cried Lovell. “That (ta’en at a moment’s disadvantage) the boy, prompted by his mother, may have been apt to resent a too arbitrary disposal of his hand, I can well understand. But that when, having looked upon the fairness of his young wife, and heard proof of her excellence,—her forbearance with his vixen-mother,—her prodigal care of his old profitless uncle,—her goodness to his servitors, his tenants, his dependents,—her unspotted prudence and modesty,—(nay, I shall scarcely end if I come to make the catalogue of her admitted perfections!)—that knowing all this, I say, he should prefer to fling away the substance yet remaining to him, his youth, his honour, his renown, by emulating the vices of the prince of whom he hath become the tag and parasite, is a thing to make mad those who have an interest in his welfare. I swear to you, good Master Wright, that since I have abided here, and been hourly witness of the good deeds of the sweetest and most mettlesome wench that ever stepped a coranto or sat in saddle, scarce have I forborne a curse upon the delusion which keepeth young Lovell a slave to the meretricious attractions of a Parisian light o’ love.”

“And is it even so?—Alas! for my want of charity, I did interpret as much!”—ejaculated the old notary.

“Hush, hush!”—cried Sir Richard, laying his finger on his lips, in token of caution. “Trusting that the chances of time may bring round happier prospects for the family, which, as matters stand, and in my presumptive heirdom, whereafter the ancient name of Lovell ceaseth to be, I have studiously concealed from my sweet niece my own bootless pains to bring her graceless spouse to a more becoming mood. Lady Lovell knows nothing, as I trust, of his misdeeds; and her noble concession of the net rent-roll of this estate, is, I fancy, now remitted to Cologne, where, since the departure of the court from Paris, the young libertine abideth.”

“A noble concession have you rightly termed it, honoured sir,” replied Elias Wright, “for by law (redemption by fine having been refused by his lordship) the last penny is solely and by clause of *ex couverture* her own. Nay, sorely doth it go against my conscience, as trustee of the same, to observe that no sooner doth the quarterly payment reach her hand, than ’t is despatched to the agency of Messrs. Whitecross, of the Barbican, to be by them remitted to the exiled lord.”

“To be lost at primero to the sauntering scapegrace of a king; or, worse, to be lavished on laces and brocade in order that there may be a rival to the profligate prodigality of Bess Killigrew, Kitty Pegge, and the worshipful Mistress Lucy Walters!”

“Fie on it!”—cried old Elias, lifting his hand and eyes with a

look of consternation. "No wonder the Lord Protector hath ceased to take heed of the movements of a court, whose morals, being thus heinously misgoverned, entail upon Charles Stuart an obloquy fatal to all projects of restoration."

"Under your favour, master notary," cried Sir Richard, "Old Noll would do ill to withdraw his cognizance from the movements of a set whose motto is 'Take and slay, for of the blood of an usurper the Lord absolveth thy hand!'"

A summons from Lady Lovell now invited them to the saloon; when, the evening being fair and mild, Sir Richard proposed to his lady niece that Master Wright should accompany them to visit his new abode.

"This wilful child," quoth the old general, throwing on his beaver, and placing his arm in that of Lady Lovell, as though choosing to accept support from her rather than offer her the protection of his unwieldy feebleness, "was pleased to opine that the old swash-buckler knight of Naseby and Marston Moor would scarce find his sufficient independence as a denizen under her roof. She willed me, in short, to be my own master, without regard to the time and convenience of her dainty ladyship; and so hath she escaped, maybe, the filthy fumes of her nuncle's evening pipe, the ungodly ejaculations (Anglice oaths) of his body servant, Sergeant Swatchem, whose profaneness defies mulct of church-session or the stocks of the quorum;—to say nothing of the ill-manners of Stark and Sturm, my two Flemish boardhounds; who, as you may perceive, await me yonder on the threshold, as if apprized of the boundaries of Dickon's Fort, whereto their mischiefs are by statute confined."

"My worthy guardian perceives also, I trust," added Lady Lovell, "that though provided with a sulking-den of your own wherein to pursue your whims and avocations, my dear uncle's word is a law at Lovell Court; even to her by whose hands he condescended to be raised to the power of legislation."

Sir Richard now hastened to exhibit to his venerable guest the admirable distribution of his snuggerly; the cool chamber he styled his barrack-room, shaded by lofty beech-trees, that threw their smooth branches over the southern frontage of the house, hung with maps and charts, and a few choice specimens of armour, interspersed with curiosities, *then* really rare, trophies of the old soldier's Guiana and Jamaica voyages, removed by Anne from the hall of the family mansion, wherein in happier years they had been deposited. Close beside the fireplace, and within immediate view of the arm-chair of the general, hung miniature copies of Vandyke's stately portraits of his brother and nephew; but while Lady Lovell withdrew, (to speak a few kind words to the veteran serjeant, who was busy at his favourite occupation of digging in the little garden

which, anticipating the general's wishes, she had caused to be laid out in the rear of the house,) Sir Richard did not fail to remark, with an expressive wink to his companion,—“Were it not in regard to yonder poor girl's feelings, and the precept that ‘Blessed are the peacemakers,’ into the fire would go that noble-faced picture of my ignoble nephew.—But the smallest of Nancy's gifts is dear to me; so even let it hang there, though the original deserve to hang elsewhere.”

It was a happy night's rest that awaited the pillow of the good old notary. He had not courage to reprove his light-hearted ward for practising upon his credulity. It was not to be expected that, at buoyant three-and-twenty, Lady Lovell should intuitively assume the sober starchness which sat upon the pinched cap of Mistress Corbet. She had enjoyed her laugh at her guardian's expense, and Elias was not the man to grudge so innocent an indulgence to her whose sole enjoyment on earth was manifested in the promotion of the happiness of others. Nay, the very morrow brought convincing proof, if proof were wanting, of this tendency of her disposition. To the great amazement of Elias Wright, he found, on returning from a visitation to the different farms in company with the resident steward and auditor, his nephew, Enoch Shum, that his two nieces and the major had been secretly brought over from Oakham, to meet him under the hospitable roof of Lovell House.

“Now that you are at ease in your mind, my honoured friend, touching the decorum of my household connexions,” cried Lady Lovell, laughing heartily, as she drew forward the blushing Hope and smiling Rachel, to be saluted by their startled uncle and agitated cousin,—“I have ventured to secure the company of these damsels. Rachel shall be my guest so long as it pleaseth you to spare her from your solitary fireside. But of my young friend Hope, prepare to see no more, either at Oakham or Dalesdene Grange!”

The whole party gazed wonderingly at Lady Lovell, uncertain to what new device this strange announcement tended.

“Young eyes and ears are in some matters shrewder than old,”—resumed the noble lady, still holding within her own the hand of young Mistress Wright. “It hath been whispered to me that between certain cousins, now in presence, there is so much liking as will determine my young Master Shum to seek in marriage the hand I hold, when by his industry he shall have achieved the means of maintaining a household. These means are henceforward his own. His stipend is from this day doubled;—his limit of apartments at Lovell House extended, to afford fitting residence to a wife who will become (your good leaves obtained) my daily companion.—My dear friend yonder, Mistress Corbet, who looks on, amazed at my proceedings, hath a child whom nature endows with stronger claims upon her affection than the grateful girl to whom she hath been a

more than mother ; yet hath she not courage to remind me that her son, recently a widower, hath appealed earnestly to his mother to come and preside over his helpless household.—But finding me henceforth provided with fitting female companionship, my excellent friend will no longer feel reluctant to absent herself for a time from my roof ; returning thither when peace and happiness shall be re-established in the home in which she is to plant the olive-branch.—I will not talk to *you* of worldly interests, my precious mother,” continued Lady Lovell, turning with a warm embrace to her governante ; “ yours are provided for as becomes us both ; and you may feel assured that Master Shum will be expeditious in forwarding the execution of the necessary deeds ; since, till they are complete, not a pen-stroke shall be made towards the settlements disposing of the dower which, in addition to what her grandfather may be disposed to bestow, I offer to the acceptance of her whom I trust he will obtain the consent of his family to salute this moment as his bride.”

To throw obstacles in the way of measures thus considerably projected, was not in the nature of those already so largely indebted to the bounty of Lady Lovell. Ten days afterwards, the wedding, albeit solemnised according to the Presbyterian ritual, was held with high festivities at Lovell House ; and the honeymoon, spent by the young couple at Dalesdene Grange, was curtailed only by a few days, to enable Mistress Corbet to hasten her visit to the afflicted household of her son, a Chancery lawyer of rising reputation, established in the city of Westminster.

Sir Richard, warmed by the spectacle of the general joy, was the life and soul of the gaieties arising from these well-assorted nuptials. But he could not help whispering aside to Master Elias Wright, upon the wedding-day, “ Body o’ me ! but I scarce refrain from a tear when I beheld my niece conducting our pretty Hope with motherly care to the altar !—Unless I saw awry (for which, God wot, the hour gave poor excuse), there was a cast of care upon the brow of my Lady Lovell, avouching that the past had more share than the present in her passing thoughts. After all, friend Elias, the fairest flowers have canker in the bud. Light-hearted as at times she may appear, it would not surprise me that this good and gracious creature,—maid, wife, widow,—yet enjoying no privilege from either of her conditions,—were at heart as sad as night.”

Such were the eventful destinies of the lovely woman described in the outset of our history. For though the domiciliation in her household of two persons of the age of Hope and her bridegroom became a guarantee for the extension of her sports and hospitalities, it was noted by the whole county that the bolder grew Lady Lovell’s exploits in the field, and the more she strove to enliven

the old hall with concerts of music and other delectable entertainments. the more noticeable became that absence of mind, which, in the midst of the throng, imparted vacancy to her eyes and imposed silence on her gentle lips.

It was only the veteran general, however, who obtained privilege to rally her upon these passing fits of sadness. Even *he* never presumed to advert to his suspicion that they arose from rumours of the libertine career of her husband.

CHAPTER XI.

WHILE the pursuits and projects of Lovell House were thus methodically ordained, in the wide world of national destiny, great events had come to pass. Time, "the setter up and puller down of princes," had at length brought back to the British throne a prince of the condemned line of Stuarts; and the people of England, so eager in bestowing the crown of martyrdom upon Charles I., proved equally enthusiastic in bestowing a temporal crown upon Charles II. He who had removed the speaker's mace from the House of Parliament, as "a glittering bauble," slept in a royal grave; and in place of the austere simplicity of the Protector, another glittering bauble was decreed to his royal successor!—

The kingdom, from one extremity to the other, rang with loyal acclamations; and Charles, while listening to the addresses, proclamations, attestations, and declarations of his faithful people, was fully justified in his ejaculation to General Monk, "'Tis sure my own fault that I came not before; since not a man in my dominions but seems to have been wearing his heart out with wishes for my restoration!"—

The details of those earliest days of unquiet sovereignty are not for our pages. Even the king, though arrived at the sober age of thirty years, grew almost sick of his calling,—so perplexed were his initiatory counsels by the difficulty of propitiating the adversaries by whose overtures he had been brought back, and the friends by whose evil councils he had been kept away;—between soothing the impatience of injured royalists to whom he had nothing to give, and of Cromwellians from whom he had everything to take away.—As rough a contest was necessary to enable his majesty to re-establish prelacy in his kingdom, as there had been for General Monk to re-establish his majesty; and every now and then "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" was suddenly brandished by the hand of some inspired millenarian, in mortal combat with the constitutional swords of justice and mercy.

Nor were these struggles and contentions between the frogs and their log always of a nature to be described in the ironical tone of the fabulist. While Monk had peremptorily and rashly silenced in parliament those sage propositions for a modification of the kingly power, which might have secured the house of Stuart from the humiliation of being driven a second time from the throne, King Charles had made, at Breda, conditions of his own invention. From the promised indemnity, he had excluded all those whom parliament might adjudge to have been aiders and abettors in the death of Charles the Martyr. As a son, it was pronounced impossible for him to pardon the slayers of his father,—as a sovereign, to pardon the slayers of an anointed king; and the kind-hearted and merciful prince considered himself fortunate that warrants of execution were not forced upon his signature by the ultra-royalists, for much more than half a hundred of his subjects. Providence, as if indignant at this revengeful spilling of blood, laid the heavy hand of retribution upon the royal family; and while all this hanging and heading proceeded, within six months of Charles's accession to the throne, his young and promising brother, the Duke of Gloucester, and his eldest sister, the Princess of Orange, were conveyed to the grave of their ancestors.

A stroke far deeper, however, than even the loss of her children, awaited the haughty heart of Henrietta Maria, when, overlooking the offences committed against herself in exile, she visited the re-royalized kingdom of her son for the purpose of "looking after her dower." It was scarce a sufficient consolation to her vindictive spirit that the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw, were dislodged from their graves, dragged on a hurdle to Tyburn, suspended upon the same gibbet, and their heads decapitated and placed as a ghastly warning in front of Westminster Hall,—so long as she was compelled by the will of the king to salute publicly, at court, as daughter and Duchess of York, the offspring of Chancellor Hyde and his low-born wife!

But heart-burnings, public or private, could not last for ever. In process of time, the King and his minister had executed all they dared, and spared all they chose; while the people were enabled to compute to a fraction at how many millions cost they were to purchase back their well-beloved sovereign. The revenues of the crown were settled,—the Penderels duly rewarded;—the religion of the land was by law established—the royal oak consecrated—and the husband of Mistress Palmer—that mother of many dukes—elevated to the ennoblement of partnership in a royal firm.—And when at length the direful tragedy of kingly retribution had been crowned by the farce of dragging Sir Henry Mildmay, Wallop, and others, on hurdles to Tyburn, with halters round their necks, his majesty, weary of legislating for the past, began to be of opinion

that it was time to enjoy himself for the present, without much regard for the future. He found that he had angered the royalists by showing them too little countenance, and the republicans too much. He found that he had offended the republicans by showing them the rigour of the law in place of the rigour of the gospel.—All were discontented, so long as he strove to please them; and he consequently set about the more welcome task of pleasing himself.

To assist such an office, good and faithful servants and loving subjects, fair and unfair, were more readily to be found than for the arduous duties of regulating corporations, passing acts of uniformity, or conjuring out of that weakest of strong boxes—the Exchequer—the sum of 1,200,000*l.*, indispensable to stop the mouths of the most clamorous of his majesty's creditors.

In addition to the “sweet little Barbara,” Countess of Castlemaine *in esse*, and Duchess of Cleveland *in posse*, there were the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Rochester, the handsome Sydney, the pompous Earl of St. Albans, and his vain and giddy nephew, Harry Jermyn;—the Earls of Arran and Ossory, and the dissolute Killigrew, who governed the privacy of their prince as readily as Clarendon, Ormond, Southampton, Sandwich, Nicholas, and Morris, his public measures.

In spite of debts and reminiscences,—nay, in spite of the spectacle of that hateful window from whence the last Charles Stuart had stepped from the throne to the block,—Whitehall was now the gayest and noisiest of any royal caravansary in the civilised world. Courtiers and courtesans, musicians, jugglers, and mountebanks, found ready entertainment within its walls; all the king's subjects, in fact, were welcome there, saving those threadbare cavaliers, who, having sacrificed all but their swords in the royal cause, were received with the coldness due to needy dependents. Too old to frisk and caper in the king's pastimes,—too poor to game or dice at the king's bank,—too proud to pick up the crumbs that fell from the king's table,—sneered at by ushers and pages, and gravely assured by ministers that the regicides had been executed, and Oliver's remains insulted only to do them pleasure;—nothing remained for them but to retreat unhonoured to their provinces, to eat the bitter bread of humiliation for the remainder of their days.

Among these postulants for the favours of the court, Sir Richard Lovell disdained to class himself. More truly rejoiced at heart by the event of the royal restoration than those who had flung themselves into the Dover road, or beset the ante-chambers of Westminster, to offer their gratuitous gratulations to the prince whom none of them had wagged a finger to aid in restoring to the throne of his ancestors, Sir Richard and Lady Lovell contented themselves with stimulating the slumbering loyalty of the tenantry by liberal donations, and festivities in honour of the great event. Not all

the entreaties of good Mistress Corbet, now resident in London as carekeeper of the establishment of her son, could induce Lady Lovell to visit the metropolis, and witness the splendid rejoicings of court and city;—not all the invitations of his early friends, the now Lords Anglesey and Hollis, could determine the old general to witness the triumph of the cause for which he had sacrificed so largely.

The veteran felt keenly that it was not from *them* those pressing invitations should have emanated. The smiles of Barbara Grandison, or the buffooneries of Killigrew, need not have effaced from the recollection of Charles Stuart the words wrung from him on the field of Worcester, on beholding the mangled remains of one of the best and bravest of his adherents; that “never king had lost a better subject, and that never subject’s memory should be more honoured than that of the brave Lord Lovell, should fortune ever again establish the throne he had fallen to defend.”

“Was it for a few peevish words spoken by hot Dick Lovell in reprehension of faults that might have moved the man of Uz himself to break bounds,—to efface so sacred an engagement?”—cried the veteran, when discussing with young Master Shum the motives of his refrainment from court. “Nay, nay, nay! ’t is not in visitation upon any error of *mine* that his majesty disdains to show the slightest token of honour to our family. The fellow wants heart. Charles Stuart (that I should have to say as much of the Lord’s anointed!) is the god of his own idolatry. Dick Lovell, and every other Lovell, hath slipped out of his memory: and though ’t is affirmed that this continued sojourn of my graceless nephew in Italy, when everything conspires to recall him to England, is on business undertaken at the king’s instance, I do verily believe that the device of the sheaf of arrows (given to our house, as you may have heard, by Richard the Crusader, in gratitude for a rescue of his person, effected at peril of his life, by Wilfrid the first Baron de Lovelle) hath no more favour in his sight than a cook’s cleaver, or a jester’s cap and bells. For five centuries, Master Shum, hath the loyalty of our line been recorded. Heralds, histories, and tombstones tell of our service to the kings of England. But ’t is as well, perhaps, that the honours of the house will wither in my unfertile branch; for, as I am a christian man, had I a son to train in the way he should go, it should be as the friend of the people, rather than as the slave of the throne.”

“If I might presume to advise your worship’s excellence,” whispered Master Shum, looking cautiously round the steward’s room of Lovell House, wherein these dangerous doctrines were broached, “I would fain remind you that the best house in the land hath eaves-droppers; and that words like these, unhand-somely repeated at Westminster”—

“Might bring down on the head of the old cavalier the same measure of vengeance which yielded to the scaffold the nobleman who at Scone did place a kingly crown on the proscribed head of the second Charles Stuart!”—cried Sir Richard Lovell. “I know it, man,—I know that all record of my faithful service is as fairly evaporated, as that of certain bonds for sums wasted by the king at primero at St. Germain, with Rochester and Killigrew; but economized with hard self-denial by Dick Lovell out of the noble income remitted to his use by his lady niece!”—

“And have you then no document to show for these loans?”—demanded the punctilious auditor, with an air of interest.

“Had I parchments thrice engrossed and attested, I would shred them into tailors’ measures, rather than molest my sovereign with reminders of a debt he seems inclined to forget!” cried the cavalier, twisting his grey moustache. “But, in sooth, I have not so much as the tinder that flitted from the brasier wherein I flung the bonds forced upon me in requital by the king; when, on certain propositions wherewith it is needless now to entertain you, I was moved to indignant contempt of a signature, once loved and honoured as the sign-manual of my sovereign!”

“It was a rash and unadvised proceeding,” observed the formal young auditor; “since, without such evidence of the credit, I fear the sums in question can never be legally recoverable.”

“Who talked of recovery?”—cried Sir Richard, almost in a rage. “I spoke of this only in extenuation of my ill-blood towards this new-fangled court. The king had forgotten his obligations; and though I do not forgive his ingratitude, God witness for me, I forgive him his debt.—What want I of coin?—The noble creature who hath adopted me as a father, and whom I love as dearly as ever father loved a child, provideth for my wants and wishes ere I am conscious of their existence. Substance hath she, even to abounding, that I am relieved from scruple or delicacy touching acceptance. It is not in worldly gear the dear soul is wanting; and as neither the reformation of her scapegrace lord, nor her enfranchisement by divorce, is likely to be accomplished by my reconciliation with the court, no fear of old Dickon’s sacrificing one tittle of his self-respect by prancing at Whitehall among the rope-dancers and led captains that grace the mummeries of the new court.”

But while such were the contempts of a few stanch cavaliers, who kept aloof without being missed or sought for, hundreds and thousands of giddy-witted courtiers were not wanting, to swell the pageants of Whitehall and augment the embarrassments of the king.

“What news to-day, mad wag?” demanded the Duke of Buckingham of Tom Killigrew, as he sauntered into the gallery

leading to the saloon preceding his Majesty's apartment, one fine day in April, the second year following the king's restoration.

"None of any moment," replied the licensed jester of the royal circle, "saving that our Roxana, having thrown aside her Palmer's weeds, is coming into bloom with the daffodils;—having graced the royal supper-table last night in a suit of gold-coloured breast-knots, which tint is henceforward in her honour to be denominated 'king's yellow.'"

"'Tis an ill-boding colour, if the old proverb run true!"—cried Buckingham, with a contemptuous smile. "But what then? Rowley, like the man in the play, doth 'defy augury,' even as this wanton minion doth defy jealousy.—But hast thou no rarer *hors d'œuvre* of scandal to supply me with appetite for the royal breakfast, to which I am a bidden guest?"—

"No scandal, an't like your grace,"—cried Killigrew, brushing a grain of dust from his pourpoint of scabious velvet. "'T is rather a melancholy fact than a tattling jest, that Harry Jermyn, (who hath ever the fortune to inherit the cast suits of the Duke of Buckingham, whether the livery be that of Mary of Orange, or the fair and universal Shrewsbury,) is like to have the colours of the latter plucked from his sleeve by no less a personage than sober Tom Howard,—a man sage and methodical in his loves as others in their devotions. But your grace will need no whet for your chocolate and pasty this morning," continued Killigrew, changing his vein when he observed the duke change colour at his news. "All the evil-speaking, lying, and slandering that all the states of Italy can furnish, await you at table. Lovell arrived last night, some ten minutes after the hour of his majesty's *petit coucher*, and is at this moment enjoying the honours of his majesty's *petit lever*."

"Lovell?"—cried Buckingham, knitting his brows with a still darker expression of displeasure. "It is true, then, that Rowley hath been in close communication with him touching the jades at Parma?"—

"What jades at Parma?"—demanded Killigrew with an air of surprise, that announced him less forward than the arrogant Buckingham in the secrets of his master.

"Nay, a mere purchase of Spanish jennets for the stud-house," said the duke, striving to cover his indiscretion of speech.

"Parma, methinks, were a somewhat outlying market for a commodity that Watteville would have made it his diplomatic pride to purvey to his majesty!"—cried the cunning Tom, too shrewd to be put upon a false scent.

"His majesty may not be minded to accept either gifts or loans tendered him by the ambassador of Spain," replied Buckingham, with ready evasion.

"Still it doth not strike me that because a Spanish branch of

royalty ruleth in the duchy of Parma, its brood-mares, as well as its infants and infantas, must necessarily partake of Spanish blood," persisted Killigrew, directing towards the countenance of Buckingham a scrutinizing glance.

"Trouble thyself no farther with the pedigree of either the jennets or the princes of Parma, excellent Tom!" cried Buckingham, with an ironical smile. "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. Horse-flesh is not the branch of learning in which thou art required to administer to the education of the court."

With all his disdains, however, the Duke of Buckingham was not sorry to have been forewarned by the badinage of the master of the revels, of the encounter awaiting him with an individual against whom he entertained one of those peevish animosities which spring, like fungi, out of the natural dry-rot of a throne. At Breda, jealousies had arisen between them from a defeated suit, or some such courtly toy; and having secretly rejoiced at the unaccountable vagary which carried Lord Lovell post into Italy at the moment when his royal master was carried upon the shoulders of his penitent subjects into Whitehall, his grace had recently heard with regret of a renewed intercourse between Charles and his wayward favourite.

The Duke of Buckingham had means of knowing with certainty that the proposed match between Charles and Dona Caterina di Braganza,—(strenuously promoted by his ally, Cardinal Mazarin, as a means by which succours might be forwarded to Portugal without compromising the existing amity between the courts of France and Spain.)—had met with vehement opposition from the Spanish party, whereof the Earl of Bristol, uncle to Lord Lovell, was a persevering upholder; and while Hyde, Ormond, Southampton, and Nicholas, concurred in forcing upon the king's acceptance the offers made by Portugal through its ambassador, De Mello, of a dower that comprehended a footing in three quarters of the globe, (by the cession of Bombay in Asia, Tangier in Africa, and free trade with the Portuguese colonies in the New World,) Vatteville, the Spanish envoy, tendered, on the other hand, a dower of equivalent extent with the hand of one of the Infantas of Parma. Buckingham had reason to suspect that the king, rendered personally averse to wedlock by the still ascendant influence of Lady Castlemaine and the recent birth of her son, had commissioned Lovell to discover objections against the fair fame or fair persons of the princesses of Parma, just as he had empowered others to spread rumours of the probable infertility of Dona Caterina.

Eager that such might prove the case, and prepared to bury in oblivion his former enmity, provided he found that Lovell was opposed to his uncle the earl touching the eligibility of conceding

to the views of Spain, the duke assumed at once the familiarity of a boon companion; when, ere the well-frothed Barcelona chocolate was discussed, he heard Lord Lovell frankly assert the elder Infanta of Parma to be the ugliest princess of her size, and the younger the biggest of her ugliness, extant in Christian Europe.

“’Tis rumoured,” cried the young lord, ripe with the flippant impertinence derived from foreign travel, “that the stairs of the cathedral have been worn down an extra inch by the heavy ascents of this ponderous piece of piety, and her royal kilogrammes of ‘too, too, solid flesh;’ while, as to her sister, (under your royal pleasure, my liege, who have the happiness to call cousins with her highness,) I have heard it sworn that Mignard, when employed at the court of Parma in copying Correggio’s pictures for the cardinal, made sundry valuable studies from her royal hideousness, for the faces of fiends and imps in his picture of the Temptation of St. Anthony!”

“Nay!” cried Buckingham; “I have heard it averred that the Duchess of Parma makes excuse for the uncouthness of her progeny, by protesting that she was frightened by ——”

“Enough, enough!”—exclaimed Charles. “No need to paint the devil or the Infantas blacker than they are. Small persuasion is needful to determine me to adhere to my engagements with De Mello. Whatever cup we quaff from, the dose of matrimony must have its bitters; but methinks I shall swallow my physic more patiently from the high-gilded Lisbon chalice.”

“Which, I pledge my George and honour, will prove aught save a chalice of tears!”—cried Buckingham gaily.

“But all this talk of wiving and wedlock must be wormwood to thine ears, friend Lovell,”—exclaimed the king, suddenly drawing upon the new comer the attention of Buckingham, Lord Falmouth, and the young Earl of Arran, who formed the royal breakfast party. “I have a notion, Arthur, that nothing short of my sign-manual would have recalled thy wandering steps to a kingdom that contains thy malapert and bumpkin spouse?”

“Your majesty is ever happy in your guesses,” replied Lovell, his cheek flushing with mortification at finding his private affairs thus exposed to comment. “The words ‘native country’ have a tender and majestic sound; but when applied to a country containing within its limits no foot of earth we can call our own, and some five feet five of wife we could willingly call some other man’s, ’faith the temptation to look upon its face is somewhat of the slightest! I beseech your majesty, however, to believe that I have been crying ‘God save the king!’ for the last two years, with strength of lungs to be heard from Messina to Whitehall; and that nothing but virulency of wife-hatred could have surmounted my desire to

breathe the same ejaculation less audibly, but not less fervently, at your feet,"

"*Wife-hatred!*" exclaimed the Duke of Buckingham, greatly surprised. "Have I the sorrow to behold in my Lord Lovell another *martyre de par l'église?*"

"Married?—and how long, pray, my dear Lovell?"—demanded the Earl of Arran, equally astonished.

"Somewhere as long as the besiegement of Troy, if my memory serve me,"—interrupted the king.

"Ten years!—Why, you must have usurped the privilege of royalty, and been noosed in leading-strings!"—cried the Duke of Buckingham, casting an envious glance upon the handsome person of the young lord.

"And, now I remember me, you may even add two more to the cipher," resumed the king. "The match was made on the eve of Wor'ster, (was't not, my dear lord?)—where my friend's good service savoured little of leading-strings, though some year or two younger than the boyish and inexperienced prince he defended at the hazard of his life."

"Your majesty's memory, like a poetical dedication, embellisheth my poor deserts," said Lord Lovell, deeply touched by these proofs of recollection on the part of one, the great fault of whose easy nature was unimpressibility.

"Married twelve heinous years, yet still retain that enviable freshness of complexion and evenness of brow!"—exclaimed the flaunting Buckingham. "A blessed encouragement for the laudable designs of your majesty!"—

"Away with ye, George!"—cried the king with a hearty laugh. "Oddsfish! I would not hesitate to wed with all the Infantas of Spain, Portugal, and Parma, (with De Vatteville's protégée, the red-headed Princess of Denmark, to boot), so I might enjoy the connubial estate on the same free and easy terms upon which my friend Lovell yonder hath played the Benedick."—

"So, so, so!"—replied the duke, with awakened curiosity. "Have I then a lesson to learn in the art of ingenious deconjugation?—Never did it enter into my simple conjectures at Paris, Cologne, or Breda, that the modes or mien of my young Lord Lovell were those of a married man."—

"*Un homme est fils de ses œuvres!*" replied Lovell, with a sneer. "My alliance was none of my own doing;—*ergo* I am, *de facto*, by no means a married man. I hold it doubly hard, moreover, that my Shropshire lands—mine from a dozen generations—should become escheated by my banishment, and fall to the maw of such cormorants as Whalley and Pryme; while my wife, who, as part of my goods and chattels, ought to have been also an escheat, seemed strapped to my shoulders everlastingly, without chance or hope of riddance."

“And what is become of my old Wor’ster friend, Sir Richard?” demanded the king, in an embarrassed manner, of Lord Lovell.

“I should rather put that question to your majesty,” he replied; “seeing that, as he hath ever chosen to side with my crocodile of a wife, I have long discarded him as an uncle. I trust your majesty may not have discarded him as a subject; but ’t is some years since I heard mention of his name.”

“Then I should say that the old fellow was gone dead!”—cried the king, swallowing at a snap a *bouchée aux huitres*, much as one of the spaniels at his side would have swallowed a fly; “or I should most assuredly have distinguished his rubicund face among the legion of musty cavalier visages that for twelve months after my accession beset the court. Thou wert a lucky knave, Lovell, to be spared the spectacle and sound of ‘I that fought with your majesty!’—‘I that bled for your majesty!’—‘I that forfeited my lands!’—‘I that lost a leg!’—‘I, an arm!’—‘I, everything in the world!’—Heaven save them!—not so much as the loyal old gentlewoman, who had been at the pains of preserving the currycombs and leathers used in the royal stables of my late gracious father of blessed memory, but came down upon me with claims for pensions and indemnification!—I who, God wot, had debts enough of my own upon my hands, was modestly requested to discharge the debts of some millions of my subjects!”—

“’Tis to old Dick Lovell’s credit that he disdained to make one of this ragged regiment,” said Lord Lovell, coldly.

“We were on none of the smoothest terms on parting at Paris,” cried the king. “The old knight, when in good humour, used to fight me over that skirmish at Madelèy Bridge, till it became my Bridge of Sighs; and when in ill humour, never ceased from reprehending me for keeping loose company, in the guise of Mistress Lucy of virago memory, and his own still more graceless nephew.”

“I thank his kinsmanly affection!”—ejaculated the young lord, with a sneer. “I have asked none of his news these five years past: and if I sometimes take occasion to inquire touching the health of my mawkin of a wife, ’t is with a view to my personal deliverance. I have hopes afforded me, however, by the doctors of Bologna, (to whom t’other day I submitted translated copies of the deeds by which her meek-mouthed Barabbas of a father and his crop-eared attorney finessed me out of my Northamptonshire estates), that the bond may yet be broken.”

“Northamptonshire!”—exclaimed the young Earl of Arran, with a start that all but dislodged the rosewater of his *rince-bouche* into the yawning morocco boot of the Duke of Buckingham, beside whom he was seated.—“Does your lordship mean that the ‘mawkin,’—‘bumpkin,’—and what other opprobrious names you

have assigned to your lady-wife, can be the self-same lovely Lady Lovell of Lovell House, by Thrapstone, whose charms have set the midland counties into a ferment?"—

"I confess to Lovell House and Thrapstone," replied his lordship; "of the ferment I know nothing more than is reported by the gallantry of my Lord Arran."

"Impart, impart, Dick!"—cried Charles, eagerly addressing the earl. "What can'st tell us concerning Lovell's Elfrida!—Hast seen her?—Prythee, what knowest thou of her by person or renown?"—

"By both, wonders, my gracious liege!—Lady Lovell's renown is that of the most beauteous, most beneficent, most prudent of her sex. For her person, I would, sire, you had been present when I beheld it for the first time!"—

"Ay?" cried the king, in a tone of interest, encouraging him to further disclosure.

"It happened," resumed Lord Arran, "that soon after the marriage of my sister with Chesterfield, I was proceeding post to Bretby on a visit of congratulation, when, having taken my rest at a villanous country inn, whereunto the unsavouriness of a Spanish *posada* were a bouquet, I was proceeding by a short cut across the country, per counsel communicated to my grooms by the filthy Boniface by whom I had been entertained, poisoned, and robbed on the king's highway,—when lo! as I entered certain pastures of a plain betwixt Thrapstone and Oundle, there came upon me a train of gentles with greyhounds in leash, and a sufficient array of mounted serving-men to assure me of the quality of the party. A hearty-looking young country gentleman was at its head, who doffed his beaver courteously in passing. Then came a pretty blushing thing, in a sad-coloured riding-suit: and lastly, a fair creature, mounted on a thorough-bred mare, as black as jet, in the highest condition, and with a cross of the Arabian——"

"Curse the mare!—The lady, the lady!"—cried King Charles, really interested in the narrative.

"The lady, sire, habited in a velvet skirt of Lincoln green, with a sable riding-hat and feather, which, as her impatient mare pressed on, streamed wildly in the wind,—was in person and bearing all that your majesty can conjecture of the fair Hyppolita, when side by side with Theseus."

"Tut, man!—My majesty can conjecture no such apocryphal divinity," cried Rowley, impatiently. "Describe her, with your leave, in unmetaphorical flesh and blood."

"Figure to yourself then, sire, the bloom of my sister Chesterfield,—the liquid glances of my Lady Shrewsbury,—the fine bust and shoulders of fair Mistress Palmer,—the graceful dignity of her

Royal Highness the Duchess,—the freshness of Mistress Robartes,—the——”

“On my royal word, I’ll do no such thing!” cried Charles. “The very surmise of such an angel on horseback would carry me straight down a-coursing to the good shire of Northampton; against which Fotheringay Castle, and the fate of my fair great-grandame inspire me with an ugly prejudice.”

“The face of the young Lady Lovell, my liege, would obliterate impressions twice as gloomy!” cried Arran, with enthusiasm.

“And you are satisfied, of a surety, that the said young Lady Lovell is no other than the wife of his sullen lordship there?”

“I am certain only, sire, that the lady is resident at Lovell House. More I would fain have learned of her; but my brother Chesterfield (who is an occasional visiter at Laxton, within reach of her domicile), informed me that she was a lady of rare merit, who, on family troubles arising out of the civil wars, chose to live in strict seclusion. Above all, he protested that a giddy-pated courtier like myself (as the earl was ungraciously pleased to define me) would find no favour in her sight.”

“Umph!—Methinks the adventure might have been worth attempting!” said Buckingham, coolly.

“My life on’t, it had been tried in vain!” cried Lovell, reddening. “This woman hath neither heart nor soul; but simply a fair body, inspired by the very incarnate demon of obstinacy.”

“With your lordship’s good leave, no woman is conscious of having heart or soul, till taught; and, *sans vous offenseur*, if I rightly disentangle this very confused romance,—beginning, where romances usually end, with a marriage,—Lady Lovell hath been spared all instructions likely to develope the latent tenderness of woman’s nature.”

“I had as lief labour to infuse tenderness into an iceberg or a haystack, as to a woman drilled *bongré malgré* into wedlock, by the manœuvres of a doting father!” cried Lovell, waxing more and more irritable under their bantering.

“Ay, if the dad were to *share* the education of the damsel!” persisted Buckingham, provokingly. “But when the lady presents so fair an apology for the family fault——”

“So handsome an excuse,”—added Arran.

“I should *then* be of opinion ——”

“My Lord of Buckingham, so dainty that scarcely less than a royal shrine is supposed to merit his devotions,” interrupted Lovell, “would, I imagine, be the last man in England to desire that the heirs of his name should have to call a Leicestershire grazier grandsire.”

“Faith, so their right was established to call *me* father, I should scarcely look beyond!” cried the incorrigible duke, “And I have

only to entreat, my lord, that (my duchess waxing infirm) should you ever put away this peerless and injured fair one by legal repudiation, you will give me timely notice; that I may be one of the first to inscribe myself on the list, for a chance of becoming your lordship's successor."

"Book yourself then to-morrow, by all means!" cried Lovell, already heated with the Spanish wines, which, towards the close of the breakfast, had been liberally imbibed by the party; "for it is my intention, my lord, to betake myself *instantly* to the Court of Arches, for all the succours which law or church can yield to annul this incomplete marriage."

"What if I summon the lady to court, and use my best eloquence in persuading her to lend amicable aid towards the furtherance of the suit?" demanded the king, jocosely. 'T is little to be doubted, Love, (if I may still honour thee with a *sobriquet* which thou so grievously beliest), that the lady is, no less than the lord, desirous of release."

"Unless the caprice of woman's nature have operated a change in her ladyship's views since the old knight joined us in Paris, full of the wonders of her magnanimity in having redeemed him from the bondage of the Philistines, and sworn to live and die a virgin bride, there is no hope that even your majesty's powers of persuasion will work the miracle," replied his lordship, carelessly.

"Nevertheless, I would fain hazard the attempt," said the king, eyeing his favourite with half maudlin derision. "It were poetical justice that, in requital for your ridding me of the Infanta of Parma, I released ye from the iron bondage of lawful wedlock."

"I must still presume to doubt the efficacy of your majesty's intervention. The royal touch may work a cure for the evil," quoth Lovell; "but I find it nowhere set down that it yields relief to the sore disease called matrimony."

"Meanwhile I challenge the trial," cried the merry monarch. "Who knows but it may discover to me a hitherto unsuspected prerogative of the crown."

"No difficulty in raising pretexts for citing the lady to appear at Westminster!" exclaimed the Duke of Buckingham. "In these days of sequestration and committees of inquiry into sequestration,—of land-taxing and hearth-taxing,—it will go hard but my lord commissioners may make or find some tangle for disputation, excusing a subpœna."

"If I know her, she will not come!" cried Lord Lovell, tinkling the jewel of the order of the Golden Spur appended to his cloak, in manifest vexation.

"A thousand pistoles that she will!"—cried Buckingham. "So mettlesome and Amazonian a beauty cannot but jump at a pretext for visiting the court. Nay, citation and subpœna apart, I double

my stake that, per force of polite rhetoric, charged only with a gracious message from our liege the king, (whose messages, even to his obstreperous Commons, are ever gracious!) I will make my way into Lady Lovell's enchanted castle, and allure her, within six days' space, to Whitehall!"

"A bet—a bet!"—cried Arran, as the king, by rising from table, gave the signal for breaking up the party.

"With all my soul!"—retorted Lovell, dizzy with the unaccustomed strength of the sherris sack he had unwittingly swallowed.

"I have your lordship's permission, then, to dare the adventure?"

"*Permission?*—My very best wishes towards your success!"—cried Lovell, with emphasis.

"Cousin of Buckingham, be not too bold!" cried the king, setting his wig and pourpoint in order, before he proceeded to the council-chamber.

"'Be bold, be bold! and yet again be bold,'" quoted Lord Arran, in Spenserian strain. "Bring but to Hyde Park the lady of the black mare, and I promise that all existing countesses and duchesses shall hide their diminished heads."

"*Au revoir*, then!" said the king, kissing his finger tops *à l'Italienne* to his noisy companions. "A week hence, my lords, we meet here to decide the wager."

CHAPTER XII.

LITTLE suspecting the existence of a plot against her peace, still less imagining the return to England of one who had long announced, like Bertram in the play, that "till he had no wife, he had nothing in" his own country,—happy and happy-making,—cheerful as Innocence and beautiful as Truth,—Lady Lovell was enjoying, at Lovell House, the brightness of the opening spring.

One day, roused from her slumbers by the reveillée of the hunting-horn and the mellow voice of the jolly old knight calling upon her to rise and accoutre; the next, renouncing her sweeping skirts for the tucked-up garments of the forester, she loved to follow Enoch Shum and his train of woodsmen—marking with her own fair hand the clearings she selected to afford vistas for the embellishment of the estate. A third day, the formal young steward attended her with plans, pencils, and compasses, taking orders for the new plantations destined for the benefit of that far-off posterity in which Lady Lovell possessed no more than a philanthropic interest; while, on a fourth, she was to be seen in the

pleasure-grounds, directing, with sparkling eye and glowing cheek, the sowing of the summer seeds, the raising of new bowers, and the pruning of old arbours; resisting only, as in previous years, the proposals of her new-fangled gardeners, for the embellishment of a certain terrace which, they protested, was a defeature to the place.

“Let neither stone nor plant be displaced!—was ever her reply. “Be the old quince tree looked to, lest its roots be injured by penetrating towards the water; and have the hedge of honey-suckle and sweet brier carefully trimmed. But, beyond such entertainment, see that ye lay not a finger on the old terrace!”

It was, moreover, a noted thing in the establishment, that, when my lady betook herself to her daily promenade on that uninviting spot, none were to approach her with molestation. Young Mistress Shum, a gentle but gay and happy creature, whose company and affections were highly valued by her patroness, never intruded there,—though privileged, she and her two fair babes, to approach with the freedom of friendship in all other times and places; nay, even Sir Richard—the joyous, daring, bantering, unforbearing Sir Richard,—would turn away, and betake himself to the lawn or the shrubberies, if he beheld his fair niece direct her steps towards a spot which observation of the changes of her countenance assured him was consecrated to memories of the past.

So well was all this understood in the household, that Lady Lovell was startled with surprise,—almost with displeasure,—when, one glittering afternoon in April, as she was inhaling the early fragrance of the brier-buds, and admiring that, while the woods were still gloomy and unclothed, her favourite spot was already green with the hardy shoots of the woodbine hedge, she saw advancing to meet her from the house, her favourite page Edmund, the grandson of that dear old nurse who, as well as the venerable Gervas, now rested from her labours.

“May it please your ladyship,”—the boy began.

“It doth *not* please me, Edmy, that you should so disregard my wishes as interrupt my walk,” interrupted the lovely lady, attempting to frown. “The terrace is a forbidden spot.”

“I know it well, madam,” replied the boy; “but Master Shum, though unwilling to break in upon your ladyship’s walk, thought it right you should be instantly apprized that a great lord from court was alighting with his train at the gate.”

“Where is the general?”—cried Lady Lovell, turning very pale. “Hie instantly to the fort, and entreat Sir Richard to visit me without delay.”

“It were a bootless errand, madam,” replied Edmund. “Your ladyship may remember that Sir Richard set off two hours ago for Oakham; to visit, as I believe, with Master Wright, your ladyship’s farms in Rutland.”

“’Tis true, ’tis true!” cried Lady Lovell, growing more and more confused. “That I should have chosen such a moment of all the year, to claim such service of my good uncle!”

“May it please your ladyship,” resumed the boy, gaining courage from her embarrassment, “I heard one of the saucy grooms yonder, who escorted the coach of the stranger lord, cry aloud with an oath to his mates, that ’t was a fitting thing, truly, no greater respect was shown by a horde of Northamptonshire bumpkins, to the retinue of the great Duke of Buckingham.”

“*Buckingham!*”—ejaculated Lady Anne, who, at the moment of the boy’s communication, was directing her steps towards the house—“ar’t sure the fellow said the Duke of *Buckingham?*”—

And on receiving confirmation, from Edmund’s account of the bearings and liveries of the equipage, that her visitor was no other than the man notorious for his excesses and insolence, she determined on regaining the house by a by-path branching from the foot of the terrace. Bidding Edmund return by the grand entrance, and despatch Master Shum to her dressing-room, she hastened her footsteps homeward.

On reaching her chamber, Lady Lovell found that her kind friend Hope had already summoned her tirewomen to provide a change of dress.

“Your ladyship will wear the tunic of pearl-colour satin, which was made for Sir Richard’s last birthday?” demanded Judith, the elder of her maids.

“And the pinnors of Alençon lace?” added Margery, the younger waiting-woman. “Or will your ladyship give me time to arrange your hair with pearls? The wind hath sadly discomposed the curls.”

“For what, pray, am I to make all these splendid preparations?”—demanded Lady Lovell, with a smile. “Away with ye both. Hasten to Thomas Cellerer and Anthony Cook, with my commands that nothing the house can afford be spared in serving up a collation as quickly as possible in the grand eating-chamber.”

“But you will not surely give audience to the Duke of Buckingham in this unseemly trim?” inquired Hope, mortified at the thought that her young lady should not be seen to the best advantage.

“If the Duke of Buckingham purpose to tarry at Lovell House till he obtain audience of *me*, his visit is like to be of inconvenient duration,” replied Lady Lovell. “Ha! my good friend,” cried she, turning towards Master Shum, who at that moment made his appearance in his full-bottom wig and black velvet suit of ceremony, in which he maintained a most respectable and professional appearance, “I pray you, wait in my name upon the unexpected guest who hath dropped upon us from the skies. Acquaint him

that the Lady Lovell receiveth no visitors, and hath delegated *you* to learn from his lips the purport of his coming."

"I greatly fear, madam, that this will scarcely be esteemed a courteous, still less a hospitable reception," replied the auditor.

"It is my intention to accord no other," replied Lady Lovell, in a tone which Master Shum perfectly understood to be decisive; and bowing respectfully, he withdrew to fulfil her commission.

"Thy husband, dearest Hope, is beginning to comprehend the peremptory nature of thy friend," observed her ladyship, drawing down Mistress Shum to a place beside her on the settee.

"Your ladyship well knows that Enoch is anxious to act only for your honour and advantage."

"Had he persisted in forwarding my honour and advantage by advocating an interview with this parlous Duke of Bucks," cried Lady Lovell, recovering her spirits now that she found herself secure in the stronghold of her own chamber,—“I would have requited his sauciness, and promoted his own honour and advantage, by insisting that his pretty wife should bear me company in the audience."

"And why not, madam?" inquired the simple-minded young woman, reared in modest puritanism, and unversed in that gossip of foreign courts which, in spite of her endeavours, the old general chose occasionally to bestow upon his niece.

"Ay, why not, indeed!" cried Lady Lovell, not choosing to enlighten her mind with a sketch of the character and pursuits of the Duke of Bucks; and it was a relief that Judith at that moment returned, panting with inquiries touching the disposal of his grace's retinue. "At what table was my lord's gentleman of the presence to dine?—at what table his ushers and pages?"—

"This is coming down upon us like an ambassador indeed!" cried Lady Lovell, with a smile. "'T is well if Robin Forrester have venison enough at his lodge to make out a fitting entertainment. Your dovecot and poultry-yard, my dear Hope, are, I know, never to be taken at a disadvantage, even by a knight who brings us, like the patriarchs of old, his whole household at his back."

"But while Judith and Mistress Shum were discussing the arrangements to be made, the grave spouse of the latter reappeared; to communicate, with an air of deep deference to his lady, that "the Duke of Buckingham was bearer of a message from the King, which regarded her private ear."

"Have the goodness to explain to his grace," replied Anne, with a harassed look, "that my private ear regardeth my private friends. His Majesty has delegated the duke to signify his pleasure to me,—I select *you* to receive the signification."

"In the absence of better counsellors, such as the general and

my uncle Wright, I presume, madam, to observe to you," said the auditor timidly, "that such marked disrespect towards the representative of the King will excite universal disapproval. If his Majesty's message, for instance, should relate to some law process in contemplation against the title of your ladyship's estate—"

"Thou dreamest of nothing but processes and estates!" cried Lady Lovell, with a smile. "Be assured that were the affair of a legal nature, it would have been communicated to me through a common pursuivant-at-arms, on a skin of parchment, having the great seal of England appended to the corner; lest peradventure any one of the fifty hungry officials having fees to claim upon the deed, should be defrauded of his perquisites. No, no! to interpret the errand from the bearer thereof, his Majesty hath rather some idle project in hand, the report of which is to be dispatched to Italy for the diversion of Sir Richard's nephew. I pray you, therefore, sir, to do my pleasure."

The Duke of Buckingham, meanwhile, who had undertaken the adventure in the mere wantonness of a festive hour, to thwart Lord Lovell, of whose rivalship in the favour of the King he stood somewhat in awe, was now stimulated by all he had heard and seen at Lovell House, to a deeper interest in the business than the winning of his wager. He had prepared himself for the heavy humdrum rusticity of a country seat and country madam, curtsying obsequiously at the first intimation of his arrival; and the proud independence of Lady Lovell commanded his respect. There was something in the very mansion and its ordering, singularly accordant with his tastes, which hitherto in such matters he had esteemed transcendent. Ushered through the suite of state apartments, hung with brocade richly panelled in scroll-work of white and gold, he was at liberty, during the period of Master Shum's negotiations, to penetrate through the grand saloon into a chamber which was evidently the favourite retreat of the lady of Lovell House.

A small bookcase, recessed in the wall, contained exactly the selection, in several languages, of the poets and essayists he loved to make the recreation of his leisure. In an agate cup upon a marble table, was a single spray of a rare exotic of singular beauty. On a bracket nearer the silken lounging-chair, stood a tapestry-frame, the half-finished embroidery of which was such as he had never seen arise under the nimble Parisian fingers, with whose fairy labours he had been recently familiar;—and beside it, a pencil and sketch-book, filled with studies from nature, and *croquis* of the most piquant description, each bearing the initials of A. L.

"Truly, a dainty bower-chamber for the rantipole Blowzabelle described by Arran!" muttered his grace on a first survey of the

little sanctum. But ere he had stood five minutes upon its hallowed ground, the cause of Lady Lovell was sanctified and embalmed by the poetical atmosphere of the spot. "This is the retreat of no ordinary mind," was his secondary reflection; and by the time Master Shum came to deliver the message from his lady, Buckingham had begun to regard an interview with the coy beauty as essential to his happiness.

"My Lady Lovell prays you will partake of the hospitality of her poor roof until your grace's horses and retinue are rested," observed the auditor, with a respectful obeisance. "Her ladyship is grieved to understand that the Duke of Buckingham should have breathed his horses at Thrapstone, after pausing for the night at Wrest Park; but trusts that, after communicating to myself (her agent-at-law) the message of his majesty, he will condescend to accept a collation here ere he retraceth his route."

"Now, out upon this woman and her smooth-spoken agent-at-law!"—was Buckingham's secret reflection on receiving an intimation so worded as clearly to express Lady Lovell's cognizance that short baiting-time was necessary to enable the noble traveller to resume his journey. All, however, that he overtly expressed, was a cheerful acceptance of the latter part of the proposal; trusting that, in the course of the banquet, his hostess might be mollified by a sense of the duties of hospitality, or moved by feminine curiosity, to accord him an interview. While the table was preparing, Master Shum, with the established ceremony of country breeding, proposed to the noble visitor to visit the French garden, the pheasantry and apiary, which were esteemed curious in the neighbourhood; and Buckingham, fresh from the glorious gardens of France and Holland—St. Germain-en-Laye, Fontainebleau, the Louvre, the Hague,—found himself in politeness bound to saunter by the side of the precise Enoch from parterre to parterre, praising fountains which he regarded as threads, and parterres which were as vulgar in his eyes as a judge's posy.

Nevertheless, being persuaded that both the Lady Lovell and a certain fair damsel, of whom he had caught a glimpse on crossing the great hall and little suspected to be the spouse of the steeple-crowned and solemn gentleman by his side, were slyly peeping from the windows to take a survey of an animal so rare in Northamptonshire as a courtier from Whitehall, he demeaned himself with the most courtier-like urbanity. Alack! poor gentleman! his airs of dignity had no worthier spectator than Lady Lovell's favourite spaniel, which went whiffing at his grace's heels, as if trying to make out the meaning of so unusual a display of laces and ribbons, and such vapours of musk and frangipane!

It was fated that the gallant duke should receive rather than create agreeable impressions. On reaching the doors of the great

banqueting-chamber, where a splendid collation had been hastily set forth, his grace was startled by a concert of French horns, such as he had never yet heard save in the establishment of the Duc de Vendôme, *Grand Veneur de France*; nor did the triumphant Enoch think it necessary to diminish the charm by informing him that four of her ladyship's prickers had been instructed in the art by General Lovell, who had perfected himself as an amateur in the school of the Grand Veneur. It had been Lady Lovell's charge to Master Shum that the name of Sir Richard should not be pronounced in presence of the duke; and so strictly was he in the habit of obeying his lady's commands, that when Buckingham, in the course of his morning saunter, struck by the elegant simplicity of the sylvan lodge, made careless inquiries touching its destination, the auditor could find no better reply wherewith to parry the interrogatory, than—"The lodge was built, so please your grace, after a special design of my Lady Lovell, as a residence for—for—an officer—a cavalier—a gentleman of high honour and account, whom her ladyship did not hold it expedient to lodge ostensibly at Lovell House."

"But who *resides* at yonder rustic pavilion?"

"Who resides yonder at the rustic pavilion!"—

Had Enoch Shum been an interpreter of visages, he might have perceived how, from that moment, the countenance of the Duke of Buckingham began to brighten.—All was now explained. The lady's seclusion, his own *exclusion*, and the *confusion* of the steward under his questioning! He freely forgave her *now* the ungraciousness of her reception. This cavalier paramour might be some jealous susceptible Drawcansir, whose chastisement she dared not provoke. Nay! he forgave her even the loss of his wager; for the news he was about to bear to court touching this Lucretia of Northampton, would prove more mortifying to the malapert Lovell than the failure of his bet.

It was this sudden accession of good-humour, perhaps, which caused his grace to estimate so highly the reveillée of the *cors de chasse*; and to whisper within himself, that Chiffinch's *petit couvert* at Whitehall was not more appetizingly served than the viands of my Lord Lovell's bumpkin wife.

"On my soul!" cried he, after tasting a truffled pheasant *pâté à la financière*, a favourite dish with Sir Richard, whose most trifling whims were studied by his niece,—“I passed two days last season at Chantilly, and Vatel himself produced nothing more purely and exquisitely *giboyé* than this *pâté*!”

The wine was equally to his taste. There were Spanish wines of great age, brought over in the latter years of Elizabeth's reign, when a Lord Lovell represented the British court at the Escorial; besides French wines of every kind, recently provided to gratify the

palate of the old general, so long accustomed to the light and sparkling vintages of France.

“My message, good sir, is half answered already, without so much as speech of your invisible lady,” cried Buckingham, behind whose chair Master Shum had made a motion to wait, which was instantly negatived by the high breeding of the guest. “I came hither charged by his majesty to express to the Lady Lovell his earnest hope that one so fitted by birth, fortune, beauty, and accomplishments to do honour to his court, would not longer continue to seclude herself in homely retirement, but deign to accept some post of honour in the establishment about to be formed for our expected queen.”

“The happy news is authentic then, my lord, of his gracious majesty’s marriage?”—cried Shum, interrupting him.

“True as the Talmud,—Alcoran,—Gospel,—or whatever other code, most worshipful sir, may happen to command your faith!”—cried Buckingham, with a sneer. “But (if I may be permitted to continue my exposition) I am already cognizant of the unlikelihood that your lady will be moved to stoop to so uncouth a household as the royal sty at Whitehall. Betwixt ourselves, Rowley’s cooks are mere *gargotiers* compared with the *cordons bleu* entertained by her ladyship; and for plate, saving a few wretched platters, salvers, and flagons for his majesty’s private buffet, pewter is the richest metal that graceth the royal banquets!—The crown-cupboard found its way with the crown jewels to the Hague, in the pouch of the gracious queen-mother, some fifteen years ago, to be changed into ducats and doubloons; and God send our pragmatistical gentry of the parliament may ever find grace to repair the loss by a sufficient grant!—The varlets maintain that a good haunch eats more savourily off the baser metal.—*They* to set up for judges, who have evermore dieted on wether-mutton served upon trenchers, washed down by black jacks of ale.—I crave, fair sir, another glass of the choice Malvoisie with which you just now favoured me, to efface the filthy notion from my palate.”

“Your grace (pardon me) is wholly in error!”—cried the auditor, with rising warmth. “Permit me to declare that my Lady Lovell is as indifferent to creature-comforts as though by profession belonging to the Presbyterian church. Her ladyship’s mind—”

“Is fair as her ladyship’s body, and doubtless a mirror for the reflection of soberness, temperance, and chastity!”—interrupted Buckingham. “Granted,—unheard and uncared-for!—Since the death of Elizabeth the Prudish, I am convinced that so peerless a dame never set the lances of chivalry in rest. Nevertheless, I must still take upon myself to believe that the elegant luxuriousness of Lovell House would ill prepare her for the disorderly *mesquineries* of the royal household.”

“Luxuriousness, my lord, is a word scarcely applicable to a lady of my noble mistress’s active and self-denying habits ;—a lady whose draught is evermore of pure spring water,—the hangings of whose chamber are of simplest linen, while every other apartment here is rich in velvet or brocade ;—who, winter or summer, riseth with the sun, and is galloping over hill and dale while others are yawning away the morning in lounging-chairs, discoursing scandal with their dainty mates.”

“Of the nature of her ladyship’s potations (as she declines to do me the courtesy of a pledge) I pretend not to judge,” replied Buckingham, with ironical solemnity.—“To the hangings of her apartment—less fortunate than yourself, worthy sir—I am equally unable to bear testimony. And with respect to her horse-coursing, hawking, hunting, and other truly feminine pursuits, I am no further qualified to bear witness from my mission to Northampton, than I was to defend her ladyship when these propensities were lately pithily described at Whitehall for the diversion of his majesty. I held it at the time a romantic project on the part of Rowley, to dream of attracting so buxom a peeress to his court !—Yet was he in gallantry bound to attempt the civilization of a lady reputed so fair ; and in taking my leave of Lovell House, as the sinking sun yonder warns me it is time to do, I feel that I shall have the reproaches of the king to add to my own regrets, at proving a disgraced ambassador,—dismissed without an audience.”

“With your grace’s permission, I will once more attempt to move the spirit of my noble lady !”—cried Shum, stumbling towards the door in the earnestness of his desire to exonerate his beloved lady from the ignominious charges circulated against her at court. “I trust I may even now persuade her to receive your grace’s parting salutations.”

“And hark ye, friend,” cried Buckingham, resting his ruffled boot on an adjoining chair, and swallowing a fragment of chocolate macaroon as a zest to his glass of Rivesaltes,—“should her ladyship prove obdurate, after the approved fashion of country-gentlewomen, beseech her to despatch hither as proxy a certain pretty little article in a sad-coloured gown and starched pinders, a vision of whose blue eyes greeted me on my entrance. For want of the mistress, I will allow myself to abide by the maid.”

Fortunately, Master Shum had retreated, without hearing or understanding this unseemly allusion to his fair and modest help-mate ; or his pleading to Lady Lovell to rescind her determination might possible have been less zealous. Nevertheless, when he beheld her seated in a simple undress in her own apartment, wearying, with a book in her hand, till the departure of her troublesome guest should place her once more at liberty, he

perceived in a moment that he might as well attempt to uproot Mountsorrel, as deter her from her purpose of seclusion.

It scarcely surprised him when, on crossing the hall on his return to the banqueting-room, he perceived that on a private command despatched by Lady Lovell to the stables, the equipage and people of the Duke of Buckingham were already in attendance, as the duke must needs perceive from the bay window of the chamber in which he sat; and expecting, in his country breeding, that his grace would be indignant and resentful at so flagrant a breach of courtesy, he was amazed to find the duke, beaver in hand, prepared for instant departure; and pouring forth, with smiling volubility, expressions of regret that it would be impossible for him to protract his stay sufficiently to accept an audience of Lady Lovell.

“I have only this moment become aware of the lateness of the hour,” cried he, with an air of insolent superiority.—“I fancied that your country clocks were as much behindhand as everything else in the country. Nay,” he continued, following Master Shum’s glance towards the setting sun, “I was idiot enough to surmise that the sun went slower here than elsewhere. I shall therefore pray you to commend me to the Lady Lovell, assuring her of due report to his majesty of the splendour and favour with which his messengers are entertained; and an intimation of her ladyship’s humble sense of unworthiness of the honour designed her.”—

“But, my lord duke,” interrupted Shum—

“Leave it to *my* care, excellent sir,” cried Buckingham, waving his hand, “to garnish the message with those common forms of politeness, in which your province is supposed to be deficient. *Foi de chevalier, Monsieur l’Auditeur*,—though my absence from Whitehall will have been but of forty-eight hours duration, I shall make it a duty to go through a course of *douches* and fumigations at the hands of my French *baigneur*, ere I present myself in his majesty’s presence; lest the bumpkin atmosphere should adhere to my garments, and discredit me in the eyes of the decent class of the community. Farewell, sir!—Not a step further, I beseech ye!”—

And crossing the hall with an easy picktooth gait which left Master Shum in open-mouthed amazement at his *sang froid*, he tossed a purse of gold pieces to the page, as vails for the household; which, according to the custom of the times, would have been freely accepted but for the established regulations of Lovell House.

“Send it as alms, then, to the parish church!”—cried Buckingham, with a scornful smile, when, to his amazement, the old steward advanced to the portal of the courtier’s painted coach, and requested him to resume a gift which was contrary to the forms of the house. “Since the customs of civilization do not

yet obtain here, it is to be hoped that your beggars have still the grace to be thankful."

"We have *no* beggars hereabouts, my lord duke," replied the old man, tossing the purse to the duke's groom of the chambers, much as it had been thrown by the duke to little Edmund. And the glass being that instant indignantly drawn up by Buckingham in the face of the presumptuous menial, a signal was given to the *cortège* to proceed.

Glancing back at the old mansion, as a turn towards the lodges brought him once more within view of the house, the duke was astonished to perceive that, instead of the rustic household bursting forth from the porch to stare upon the departing train of carriages, which displayed a degree of magnificence at that period rarely witnessed beyond the limits of the capital, not so much as a groom or chambermaid was at the trouble to play spectator!—There was not a single consolatory circumstance by which his wounded vanity could be appeased.—

"The devil fetch this untaught wench!"—cried he, as he mused sullenly in a corner of his unwieldy carriage. "Though it goes against me to take up the gauntlet she has presumed to throw down, my honour is concerned in bringing her to shame!—Let her look to it!—Never did man or woman provoke with impunity the vengeance of a Villiers."

CHAPTER XIII.

LABOUR lost were the ponderings of the Duke of Bucks on his way back to London, concerning the most plausible pretexts to be assigned for his defeat!—Whether his wager were paid with a swaggering air of inuendo, or a frank avowal of the truth, mattered not a grain of the dust raised by his gilded wheels. By the time he arrived at Whitehall, not a living soul save Lord Lovell bore recollection of the bet: Arran being engrossed by the loss of an old mistress, and Rowley by the impending arrival of a new wife!—A schooner, despatched by the Earl of Sandwich from Lisbon, had arrived at Spithead, announcing that the English fleet, after receiving from the Portuguese the cession of Tangier as part of the portion of Dona Caterina, had sailed from the Tagus with the future Queen of England!

What a turmoil at court!—From day to day, the princess might be expected on the coast!—Miss Palmer in hysterics on one side,—Vatteville in the sullens, on the other;—the chancellor labouring to preserve such equanimity of countenance as might prove to the nation that he had not abetted the match with a

Catholic princess, and to Mazarin that he did not oppose it;—while not a woman of quality from Temple Bar to Whitehall,—nay, from Westminster to Berwick-upon-Tweed,—but was caballing to obtain some post of honour in the new household. Every morning the printed playbills, laid by royal command upon the breakfast-table of the king, were accompanied by perfumed packets, marked “particularly private,” or “eminently confidential,” containing powerful appeals to his protection from duchesses, countesses, viscountesses, and damsels of honour; setting forth that there was no life or satisfaction for them on earth, unless they could obtain the blessed privilege or being cooped up in a chamber six feet square, at Whitehall or Richmond; or figuring in the royal coaches and the court calendar, as mistress of the robes, bedchamber woman, or maid of honour. So malapert in their own households, so indolent in their personal habits, that at home they must needs entertain pages to fan the summer midges from their cheek, these pretty coveters of the glare and gauds of life would hear of nothing but making menials of themselves, so that the magniloquent term salary were substituted for the ignominious word wages. They were ready to air linen, pick up fans, carry handkerchiefs, and comb lapdogs, for the untold beatitude of being proclaimed as of the court, courtly.

““Satan sends the breeze that blows good to no man!”—quoth the proverb,” said Buckingham, as, gathering up a handful of similar applications, he proceeded to the breakfast appointed for rendering an account of his adventure. “I have despatched to Lovell his sack of two thousand pistoles; and instead of having to appear in presence with pendent ears and hanging tail, like one of Rowley’s spaniels after being whipped for picking and stealing, I shall enter, radiant with triumph, as having avoided to encumber the memoranda of royal promises with the name of a hundred and fourteenth lady of the bedchamber. My life on’t, I am thanked rather than bantered for my mischance!—Rowley will have enough on his hands with trying on new perukes, and essaying new washes upon a complexion somewhat of the swarthiest for a bridegroom, to trouble himself further touching the airs and graces of this bumpkin Venus of Thrapston!”

The king’s mind was, in truth, in the most feverish state of excitement. A new wife, writes La Bruyère, “*l’emporte sur une ancienne maîtresse!*” and so satisfactory were the reports which reached England of the southern brilliancy of Dona Caterina’s large dark eyes, her good grace, and, above all, her desire to please the capricious fancy of her future lord and master, that, strange to relate, his Majesty’s thoughts were bent rather upon the Infanta than upon the duchesses, countesses, and viscountesses, tormenting themselves and *him* to promote their elevation at court.

“Out upon the jades!—all in the same vein—all bent upon the same design!”—cried Charles, thrusting across the table the packets of perfumed memorials and petitions with which his favourite came charged to swell the amount of his previous embarrassment. “Seeing that I have provided myself with a wife, they would fain metamorphose the gender of my whole household, and set up a petticoat government to my very teeth!—*Grand merci, mesdames!*—As the royal cut-throat says in the play—‘There’ll come a time for *that* hereafter!’ Meanwhile, here!—Harris, May, Chiffinch, Sawtre—*one of you!*—bear me this bale of sweet commodities to the chancellor, to keep company with those I remitted to his hands last night; and pray him to provide fair ladies to his liking for her majesty’s household, and fair answers of apology to the ladies of his *disliking*, who pester us with their importunities.”

“A household chosen by Sir Edward were a sight to see!”—exclaimed Buckingham, delighted at the verification of his hopes.—“Yet I would fain beseech you, sire, to take into consideration the high birth and breeding of Lord Shrewsbury’s noble countess!”—

“*Whose* noble countess, George?”—cried the king with a laugh. “Would you have me insult her majesty the queen with the services of a quean so notorious?”—

“I beseech your majesty’s pardon,” replied the duke, with saucy freedom. “I heard it announced last night that a countess belonging to one Master Roger Palmer,—another quean of some notoriety,—had been appointed by your majesty to the bed-chamber.”

“They lied who said it, George!” cried the king, who was in one of his most cordial veins of good-humour. “The new countess appointed *herself!*—would take no denial from *me!*—would listen to no objections from the chancellor!—Nay, so furious is the poor soul at the necessity for her dismissal from my favour, that at one time I feared even the promised coronet would scarcely bribe her from her design of selling her soul to the Lapland witches for a wind to sink the fleet and the Infanta; as the law-pleas of our sapient kingdom of Scotland avouch to have been done, to delay the coming of my grandsire James’s red-poll’d Danish bride!”—

“Your majesty need entertain no present uneasiness. The wind sets fair for the Downs,” observed Lord Lovell, glancing towards the window, in no mind to have the cause of their meeting overlooked.

“So that I may chance be summoned to Portsmouth before set of sun!” cried the king. “I, who had promised Barbe to sup with her for the last time!—And by the way, Lovell, thou who art so forward to promise me a wife, what news of thy own?—Buckingham, we look to *you* on that score.”

“My Lord Lovell has received the amount of his wager, sire,” interrupted the duke, “and your majesty should receive the confession of my defeat, did it contain any incident more diverting than the event of a lady’s ill manners. I went—(according to your majesty’s commands)—but neither saw nor conquered. Whether refused admittance to see lest I should *succeed* in conquering, I leave to the decision of your penetration; but as I am ready to swear that my Lord Arran saw double in the case, I more readily pardon fate and the lady that I was not permitted to see at all!”—

“Admit, at least, that I did my best to spare your grace and your grace’s road-horses unnecessary pains,” cried Lovell, with a self-sufficient smile. “The Duke of Buckingham is a wizard of renown; yet I am as satisfied of the inefficacy of his incantations to draw my wife to court, as to sink the precious flotilla which bears her Highness of Braganza at this moment into the Channel.”

“The brag is of the boldest, Arthur,” exclaimed the king. “Recollect meanwhile that, *at present*, I choose to hear no profane mention of a lady to whom it is promised me that I am to lose my heart at sight. And, faith, I little doubt it. ’Tis a winged toy ever on the perch for a flight; and, like a carrier pigeon, comes back as fast as it goes, to be ready for an excursion in some opposite direction.”

“Your majesty is fortunate in being able to make so light of your coming cares!” cried Buckingham, with an affected sigh. “There are two of us here present who, or I mistake, could furnish you to a hundred weight, with a computation of the oppression of the chains of matrimony. Yet neither my Lord Lovell nor myself had mortgages on our single estate to increase their irksomeness, such as may chance to be insisted upon by my Lady Barbara of the new earldom.”

“*Au jour, le jour!*”—cried the king cheerfully. “Destiny is still in my arrear a world of joys, to compensate for the out-at-elbow days of penance of my principedom. I have promised the chancellor and myself to be the best of husbands; and the king over the water, and his cardinal, promise *me* that the Infanta shall render me the happiest.”

“God send it, sire!” cried the duke, with pretended fervency. “I would only that we could add—the richest. But I greatly fear that his Spanish excellency’s prediction will prove true, that Dona Caterina’s dower will cost its weight in gold to keep our own.”

“And if it do, George, nearly four hundred thousand pounds in gold will go far towards the maintenance,” said the king, sharply.

“I pray your majesty may ever be so fortunate as to receive half the sum,” retorted his grace; “or, I might say, a quarter; since, after all De Mello’s mighty protestations, King Alphonso entreateth

us like some usurer of the Old Jewry;—sending so much in bullion, and so much in commodities. 'Tis rumoured on 'Change that your majesty's name is in the market, as part owner of fifty puncheons of Val de Penas.—a hundred barrels of potash,—besides the Lord and the Board of Trade know how many bags of Lisbon sugar!"—

Within a week of this carouse, his majesty, fresh from the tears and shrieks of the new Lady Castlemaine, was on his road to Portsmouth to welcome the new queen; and, in the first frank impulse of his heart, avowed in his letters to the chancellor, that the timid young foreign princess, whose dark eyes were so languishing, and whose voice so sweet and low, had produced a most favourable impression on his heart. "You would much wonder to see how well we are acquainted already," said he. "In a word, I think myself very happy." (1)

For a king to aspire to "happiness" is a pretension beyond his condition in life. It suited Lady Castlemaine as little that Charles should be "well acquainted" with his youthful bride, as it suited the courtiers that he should think himself happy in wedlock. Before the royal party arrived at Hampton Court for the enjoyment of the honeymoon, mischief had been at work; and though the month was May (a season that seems expressly created by nature for royal honeymoons), breezes were blowing more boisterous than the turbulent equinox.

Stimulated by the bad advice of Rochester, Jermyn, Killigrew, and Hamilton, Lady Castlemaine strenuously insisted upon the king's performance of a promise given in love's melting hour to elevate her to the rank of lady of the bedchamber, from which every circumstance but her birth tended to exclude her; in spite of the entreaties of Clarendon and Ormond that he would not overlook the scandal to good manners, and the ill example afforded to the kingdom, by so unprovoked an insult to the unoffending queen.

"Supposing, sire, as I can well suppose, that no intermeddling person ventures to apprise her majesty of the relationship held towards her sovereign by the young son of the countess," pleaded Ormond, presuming on his grey hairs to play the monitor,——"may I inquire whether a woman, jealous of her hold on your majesty's affections, is not likely to mislead her legitimate rival as to the modes and habits by which those affections are to be moved?—May I presume to ask whether Lady Castlemaine is likely to prove a prudent counsellor for a virtuous woman,—or a safe companion for an unsuspecting one?"—

"Ask what you will, and I can give but such answers as I may;—that my kingly word is pledged, and that my kingly palace of Hampton would be too hot to hold me, did I so much as dream of

(1) Macpherson Papers, I. 22. note.

evading the performance of my promise," said Charles. "Flesh is frail, my lord duke, albeit your mellow years may have forgotten the fact; and I am free to confess that my heart is not proof against the influence of woman's tears."

"And does your majesty suppose, then, that the eyes of the queen are insured against weeping, and her heart against the tenderness and sensibility of her sex?"—cried his grave admonitor, with indignation. But Ormond spoke in vain. The king, who, like all men of easy, indolent, selfish habits, detested a scene, was already out of hearing; and on the morrow night, upon the return of the court to Whitehall, the mistress was presented to the wife; and the whole court stood by to watch the triumph of the sinner, and the anguish of the saint.

But, in spite of the manœuvres of the libertine associates of the king by whom the injury had been wantonly prepared, the inoffensive Katherine had already partisans in the country. It was easy to make a jest of the sallow uncouthness of her six broad-nosed narrow-shouldered Portuguese maidens of honour; to deride, at the instance of the Duke of Buckingham, her majesty's equerry, Dom Pedro de Silva, under the name of Pierre Dubois or Peter Wood; or to find it passing absurd that her majesty's coëffeur should be breveted under the name of barber. But nationalities are themes of contempt only to the narrow-minded; and the most prejudiced of the court were fain to admit that the manners of the queen and of her *grande maîtresse*, the Countess de Panétra, were as perfect as if modelled in that court and parliament of love,—the circle of the queen-mother of France.

From Whitehall, this decree went rapidly forth to the city and the provinces. Her Majesty's position begat pity, and pity being akin to love, the acclamations of "Long live the queen!" which assailed her whenever, either in her barge or coach, she attempted to take the air, waxed more loud, and fully as sincere as those of "God save the king!" which, for five years past, had been wearing out the echoes of London and Westminster. No sooner was the little world apprised, by the indiscreet whispers of the great, that upon the public presentation of Lady Castlemaine to the queen by the hands of his majesty, Katherine, though for a moment able to control her emotion, had, in a few minutes, been seized with convulsions, and carried from the chamber with the blood bursting from her lips, than, perceiving that her brief reign of conjugal ascendancy was over, they began to honour as a martyr her whom they already loved as a queen.

But, while the kind and generous compassionated her position, the worldly-wise of a court, which, modelled upon that of France, was a college of shrewdness and double dealing, decreed that her majesty was grievously to blame. She was guilty of a blunder,

and at court a blunder is more exceptionable than a crime. What business had she to give way to her feelings?—Nay, what business had a queen *with* feelings?—Convulsions and hysterics are the constitutional frailties of a chambermaid or sempstress. To be the daughter and mother of kings,—to say nothing of the wife,—it is indispensable that the impulses of the mind should overmaster the impulses of the body; and as for jealousy, had his majesty required her to take to her arms a score of the mistresses he had notoriously taken to his, it was her policy to submit. And is not policy both law and gospel to a royal conscience?—

So reasoned the Buckhursts, Rochesters, Buckinghamhs,—and so, alas! *pretended* to reason one whose principles should have been of firmer texture. Clarendon was required by his royal master not only to be of the same opinion, but with all his force of eloquence impress it upon the queen; and whereas the chancellor, like the devil, could quote scripture to his purpose, he succeeded in proving to the weeping Caterina, by means of a hundred of the proverbs of Solomon and fifty of the precepts of St. Paul, that it was the duty of the wife to submit to every mode and modification of insult and injury inflicted upon her patience by her lawful husband. Had not Hyde already held the seals, his loyal sophistry would have merited a mitre!

The queen submitted;—whether to the eloquence of Clarendon, or because her countrywomen having been sent back to Lisbon on pretence of the displeasure of the people, she feared she might be sent after them. At the close of a painful struggle, which tarnished the lustre of her dark eyes and withered her young cheek, she consented to accept the services of Lady Castlemaine as her lady in waiting; and while the wedded courtiers of King Charles exclaimed to their chaste spouses, “Behold a model for wives!—honour to the royal Griselda!”—the courtiers, who had condemned her sullenness when she ventured to oppose the pleasure of the king, despised her instability now that she gave in her submission. They were angry with the patience with which she resigned herself to become the most unhappy of women.

For so amiable was the unpretending character of the queen, that it was no consolation to *her*, when, soon afterwards, her insolent rival was visited by humiliations equal to her own,—though carefully apprized by the gossip of Miss Middleton and others of her maids of honour, with whom, as nearest of her own age, she chiefly associated, that it was no longer the bright eyes of the countess which nightly attracted the king to sup in her apartments at Whitehall, his majesty having made it the condition of his visits that the young and lovely grand-daughter of Lord Blantyre should never be absent from her entertainments;—while the homage tendered to Miss Stewart, by Buckingham and the rest of the

courtiers left not the countess a moment in doubt of the estrangement of the affections of her royal lover.

In this new scandal, the queen saw only cause for sorrow. It was no comfort to her that others were to be made as miserable as herself. Her wife-like resignation, meanwhile, afforded no pretext to the king for further harshness or discourtesy. In the intervals of his banquets with the Castlemaine, and flirtations with the Stewart, he deported himself with decency towards the poor moping sallow thing from whom his unkindness had extracted all the bloom and sprightliness of youth; and as Katherine was constantly assured by the selfishness of her ladies, that the only mode to attract the king to her society was to maintain the brilliancy of the court by a series of entertainments such as he had been in the habit of enjoying previous to her arrival in England, her majesty willingly lent herself to the suggestion. The summer was come,—the session over.—The court was enjoying itself at Hampton,—a spot endeared to Katherine by the memory of those happy hopes with which it had inspired her bridal hours; and though the transient dream had vanished, it was something to linger in the place by whose associations it was recalled to mind.

To the common routine of balls, given alternately by her majesty and the Duchess of York, and kept up chiefly by the members of their united households, a charming variation was proposed by the Comte de Comminges; a suggestion borrowed from the fêtes he had witnessed at Fontainebleau and St. Germain on occasion of the marriage of the young king his master with the Infanta of Spain. Instructions were given by his excellency's secretaries with a degree of zeal becoming the occasion, for the ordering of a *bal costumé* at court; and the Chevalier de Grammont, and other foreign adventurers by whom the circle of the easy monarch was beset, exerted themselves to do honour to the occasion by the exercise of the utmost magnificence and taste. Her majesty, whose notions did not overstep the common-place freedoms of the masquerades in vogue at the court of Lisbon, hailed with delight the prospect of an entertainment where brilliancy was not to be purchased at the cost of decorum.

It was but a few days previous to the promised fête, that Charles, at the conclusion of the hasty yet ceremonious morning visit to the queen which comprised his conjugal civilities for the day, expressed a desire that, in addition to the invitations issued, a list of which had been submitted to his approval, there might be despatched in her majesty's name a command to attend the fête, to "the Lady Lovell."

"The name methinks is unfamiliar to me?"—observed the queen, musingly.

"The lady, a peeress by estate, having been resident in the pro-

vinces since your majesty's arrival in this country, hath not yet enjoyed the honour of a presentation," replied the king. "But being at present detained in Westminster by the process of a law-plea, I am desirous that a personage of such rare merit and distinction should, on her return to her estates, bear back to her country-cousins tidings of the hospitalities and refinements of the court of her sovereign."

Had his majesty seen fit to add "rare beauty" to his communications of the excellencies of Lady Lovell, there had been more virtue in the ready acquiescence with which his request was fulfilled by the queen.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was at the malicious suggestion of the Duke of Bucks, that this royal invitation had been devised. After paying two thousand pistoles for the *dissatisfaction* of *not* beholding Lord Lovell's wife, he was determined to enjoy the satisfaction and revenge of *beholding* her at the expense of his lordship.

Lady Lovell had been reluctantly compelled to visit the metropolis, by a citation from the high court of Exchequer, at the suit of her husband; and generously apprehensive of entangling the hot temper of the old general in family disputes, or an over-frank exposition of his grievances against the king, she had declined the escort of Sir Richard.

"'Tis natural she should have more confidence in a younger head and younger arm, than in those of the old Cavalier!" reflected Sir Richard, after hearing from his fair niece an entreaty that she might be accompanied only by Master Shum and his wife.—"But no matter!—With God's blessing, she will need no aid of mine.—Dame Corbet's son, as they tell me, holds high office in chancery; and as Nancy is to abide under his roof, no fear of her wanting protection!"—

Nevertheless, when fairly established in the household of the somewhat pragmatical son of her excellent governess, Lady Lovell, though satisfied as ever that the choleric old soldier was not exactly the man to advance her law-plea or escort her through the silken mazes of a court, could not help longing for companionship of a more suitable nature than that of her demure auditor; or the mouthing master in chancery, who bewildered her understanding with technical phrases, instead of enlightening it with facts. Good old Elias Wright was now infirm beyond all power of rendering her assistance; and though, previous to his surrender of her affairs, he had carefully instructed his nephew in all matters appertaining to the mortgage of the Lovell estates, Lady Lovell

foresaw that she had lost much in the warmth and circumstantiality of evidence derivable from eye-witness alone. Neither Master Shum nor herself would be able to do justice to the disinterestedness of all parties in the transaction, saving that sullen son and husband, who, after rejecting as a gift the property preserved from sequestration by a deed in which even the searching eyes of the Commonwealth were unable to find a flaw, was now eager to invade with the strong arm of the law the estates he had not chosen to accept as a freewill offering.

As far, however, as the professional prolixity of Master Corbet enabled her to approach an opinion, Lady Lovell understood that she had nothing to fear from the proceedings instituted against her, beyond the unpleasant exposure of her family disagreements. Nay, it was shrewdly hinted by certain of the long heads and big wigs retained in her behalf, that Lord Lovell had commenced his suit only as an appeal to the liberality of his royal master; by proving to him in open court that he was *minus* an estate most dear to him, and *plus* a wife most detested, because the last gold piece of that faithful subject, his sire, had been sacrificed to the interests of that faithless king, his sovereign.—A stronger bond of family obligation could scarcely be shown on record!—

But this version of the case was indignantly rejected by the fair defendant in the cause of “*Lovell versus the trustees of Lovell.*” Grounding her judgment rather on the physiognomical traits displayed in his portrait than upon the moral traits evinced in his proceedings, she chose to attribute his opposition to pride and a sense of justice; prone, like all generous spirits, to measure the conscientiousness of others by her own.

Provoked by her wilful blindness, Master Corbet next suggested that,—notwithstanding the worthiness of her cause as a matter of law,—that subtle essence of jurisprudence called equity might in the hour of trial appear to hover, like a freakish Will-o'-the-wisp, over the adverse party; and by some concatenation of arguments which her ladyship found it difficult to follow, even advised her that, if she possessed influential friends either *in court* or *at court*, Madame Themis might be made to see the clearer for a pair of spectacles of their providing.—But, at the mere hint of such corrupt practices, Lady Lovell's indignation burst forth. She would hear of no deviation from the strictest and most straightforward path of rectitude and course of law!—

“Under your ladyship's favour, madam,” remonstrated Master Corbet, “if your object be, as I conclude, *success*, no reasonable means ought to be neglected. For weeks and months hath my Lord Lovell been occupied in creating a party for himself to the prejudice of your ladyship. To the great world, you are personally unknown; to the legal world, represented as a despoiler,—

may, almost as an impostor ;—a woman of low birth and habits, engrafted by chicanery upon the noble stock of a ruined house. It is vitally important that this dire impression should be counteracted.”

“Be it effected, then, by fair and open means!” cried Lady Lovell, with glowing cheeks. “If it be needful to establish my respectability in the eyes of the world, my father’s kinswoman, the old Countess of Carlisle, shall present me at court, according to her frequent proposition. As a peccress of the realm, I am entitled to a private audience of their majesties.”

Scarcely an hour after despatching a formal request to the lady in waiting for the appointment of a suitable occasion for this purpose, the royal invitation was placed in the hands of Lady Lovell! —It was now too late to retract her petition; nor did she altogether regret that a private presentation was to preface the courtly publicity of the royal ball.

A day and an hour were instantly appointed. A small summer drawing-room of the old palace of Hampton Court, in the suite of state apartments overlooking the river, was usually selected by Queen Katherine for receiving those privileged persons admitted to private audience. Nothing could be simpler than this unadorned chamber. The mouldings and wainscotings were of pure white, and the hangings of pale sea-green damask; a chair and footstool, somewhat richer than the rest, alone indicating the place of the queen, whose appearance and demeanour were far from an imposing character.

Dingy in complexion, heavy in countenance and deportment, Katherine was seen to peculiar disadvantage amid the bevy of youthful beauties selected to compose her household. But though the first impressions produced by the young queen were far from favourable, scarcely had she given utterance to the customary compliments, when Lady Lovell felt prepossessed in her behalf. In speaking, her large dark eyes became, if not animated, expressive and benign; and there was an indication of helplessness in her broken English, which accorded well with her foreign and almost girlish appearance. The blazing and audacious beauty of Lady Castlemaine “paled its ineffectual fires” before the mild lustre of her meekness; which well became the august position of one who has nothing to attain by self-assumption.

To the venerable countess, the deportment of the youthful queen was almost respectful;—to the country lady, her protégée, simply gracious. But while Lady Carlisle regarded her sovereign in admiration of a deportment so different from that of the haughty lady she had last beheld inhabiting those walls,—the domineering Henrietta Maria,—Lady Lovell regarded her with far deeper interest as an unhappy woman, heart-broken by the indifference of her husband.

There is something peculiarly touching in the melancholy of a young heart stript suddenly of its illusions, and wrecked upon the arid and flinty shore of the world. Reared in that absolute ignorance of all things needful peculiar to the insulated education of royalty, Katherine of Braganza, tenderly beloved by her brother Don Alphonso, had been taught to expect from her future consort the same affectionate deference she received at the court of Portugal; and from the moment the policy of Mazarin decreed that the balance of power in Europe could only be maintained by the transference of so slight a weight in the scale as the hand of the princess of Braganza to the endurance of a king of England, Katherine was instructed that Britain was the garden of the world, and Charles Stuart an English mirror of the graces of Iberian chivalry. In becoming his wife, she was to become the most fortunate of women and of queens!

In this charming illusion, had she bidden adieu to the orange groves of Belem; and from her embarkation in the Tagus to the hour of setting foot on British ground, the gallantry of Lord Sandwich and his fleet was taxed to the utmost to maintain the deceit. Even her first interview with the king had failed to disenchant her imagination. The excitement of that moment imparted a charm to her countenance which the attraction of novelty in any shape served to enhance in the eyes of her fickle husband; nor was it till after the expiration of a week or two, that the attentions paid in her presence to the favourite mistress having roused her indignation, and her indignation been publicly reprimanded by the dismissal of her Portuguese attendants, the queen gave way to a despair which with the king's courtiers passed under the name of sullenness.

The heart of Charles II.—if so flimsy a thing deserve to pass under that noble designation,—resembled certain birds which, though easily brought down by a first shot, are never to be re-approached if once suffered to get wing.—The queen had lost that golden opportunity which she had misconstrued into the prelude to a life of happiness, and the advantage was never to be regained. All was over,—love, hope, joy,—the prospects of domestic life, of loving children,—of a calm and contented decline brightened by the reminiscences of a happy youth!—Deserted, despised, an object of pity to some and contempt to others, Katherine beheld the homage of the courtiers dedicated before her face to Lady Castlemaine; leaving her abandoned and desolate in a foreign country,—no tender hand to dry her tears,—no friendly spirit to afford her counsel;—her only chance of securing even the decent courtesies of her husband, depending upon the degree of patience with which she might be disposed to support the insults of a rival.

With a sympathy readily to be understood, did Lady Lovell

regard the dispirited young foreigner ; who, having the misfortune to be a queen in addition to that of being a neglected wife, was debarred the consolations of independence and personal enjoyment which brightened her own career ; and, as if conscious of the kindly thoughts passing in her bosom, Katherine, perceiving that her fair visitor was able to converse fluently in French, entered readily into conversation.

It was a bright sunny autumnal day. Miss Middleton and Miss Warmester, the attendant maids of honour, had profited by the momentary absence of the lady-in-waiting to saunter forth into a stone balcony abutting from the adjoining chamber, in order to display themselves to the admiration of a few idlers in the gardens below, and indulge in criticisms at their expense. The queen, left alone with the Countess di Panétra and her guests, felt comparatively happy and at ease ; when suddenly, repeated bursts of laughter from the antechamber caused the brow of Katherine to become overclouded, and the eyes of the Panétra to sparkle with indignation.

The aged Countess of Carlisle, a rare visitor at court, expected every moment to find her majesty's page-in-waiting despatched to inquire the origin of this indecorous mirth ; but to her surprise, no notice was taken. It was in this guise that the approach of the king usually announced itself to his wife. But Lady Lovell was wholly unsuspecting of his majesty's proximity ; when the precipitate return of the Lady Berkeley managed to precede by a moment the entrance of a tall, heavy-looking, richly-accounted personage remarkable chiefly for an air of slouching self-possession ; who, but for the humility of the queen's countenance as she rose from her seat to do him honour, it would have been difficult to invest with the poetical " divinity which doth hedge a king." Her fancy had depicted him better looking,—better bred ; for in place of the deference testified by his consort to the grey hairs of the Countess of Carlisle, he noticed the old lady's obeisance merely by a careless inclination of the head ; and, in pure listlessness, suffered both her majesty and her companions to remain standing, while, with an abstracted air, he went through the ceremonies of an inquiry touching her majesty's projects of pastime for the morning.

It was not till the close of Katherine's almost tremulous replies to a long series of idle questions, that the eyes of the king chanced to fall upon a graceful form, half-hidden behind the yellow satin vertugadin of the Countess di Panétra. In a moment his whole demeanour changed. The careless husband disappeared, and the graceful cavalier stood in his place ; as, bending towards her majesty, he inquired the name of the stranger.

" I conceived it unnecessary, sir, to present the Lady Lovell to your notice ; conceiving, from your observations of yesterday,

that her ladyship was well known to you," replied Katherine, a slight tinge of red becoming perceptible on her swarthy cheek as she glanced suspiciously towards her guest.

"I regret to own myself less fortunate than your majesty hath been pleased to suppose me," replied the king, coolly; and with a more respectful air, he signified his desire for presentation. An ironical smile passed between the two damsels of honour, who had now taken up their position behind the chair of Katherine, on perceiving a certain unusual air of embarrassment pervade the deportment of the king, when he found that of the country lady wholly devoid of flurry or confusion. The noble countenance of Lady Lovell remained unchanged, and her air serene, while he addressed her; for it was not the witty companion of Etherege and Buckhurst, it was not the gay comrade of Buckingham and Rochester, she discerned in the dangerous Charles Stuart. She beheld in him only a man who neglected to pay his debts of honour to a living subject, and his debts of gratitude to a dead one; and in spite of the easy grace of his person, and gallantry of his address, despised the unprincipled and ungenerous master of the elder Lovells.

That the impression produced by her own beauty upon his majesty was of a very different nature, was perceptible to every witness of the scene. The transitory bloom produced by his arrival faded from the cheek of the queen when she observed the king gradually recede to the window overlooking the gardens, so as to compel Lady Lovell to follow him, and stand somewhat apart from the circle, while he proceeded to interrogate her touching the progress of the law-proceedings instituted against her. Already, poor Katherine beheld in Lady Carlisle's protégée a new enemy arrayed against her peace; and no longer inclined to pursue her cheerful chat with the venerable countess, who, nearly fifty years before had been resident, with the earl her husband, at the court of Lisbon, sank into a desponding reverie.

"Much as I could desire that this suit were amicably adjusted, and inexplicable as *now* appear to me the differences subsisting between your ladyship and Lord Lovell," observed the king, in reply to the exposition of facts he had demanded, "I grieve to be under the necessity of avowing that I foresee no conclusion to the dispute, save under the rigid interpretation of the law. Hitherto, madam, let me admit that my wishes have sided with an old companion in arms, the son of a most loyal subject; but since, from the moment of this interview, I feel it impossible to remain the partizan of my friend, I shall strive to dismiss the matter from my thoughts, till the issue be formally communicated to me by the Lord Chancellor. Meanwhile, be the Lady Lovell assured that whatever sentence is decreed by the wisdom of the law, it will at all times be

most gratifying to her majesty and myself to welcome her at court with the attentions due to her personal merit."

A silent obeisance was the only answer to be tendered to so flattering an intimation; but when, after a moment's silence, the king proceeded in a lower voice to express his hopes that her ladyship had received an invitation to the approaching fête, Lady Lovell ventered to outrage the rules of etiquette by an entreaty that, in her present unprotected and delicate situation, she might be permitted to absent herself from the brilliant scene. It would be extremely painful to her feelings, she said, to hazard a personal encounter with Lord Lovell.

"His lordship's presence at court, madam, depends for the future upon the signification of your wishes," replied the king, still more and more fascinated by the sensibility glowing in the countenance of the fair stranger; "for hitherto it has depended upon mine. No invitation will be issued to his lordship that can place an impediment to the satisfaction I promise myself in your ladyship's presence at Hampton."

And straightway quitting the window with a profound bow, which admitted of no rejoinder or expostulation, the king bent his steps towards Katherine; with whom he entered into conversation in so gracious and confidential a tone, that the circle accepted it as a token of dismissal; and retiring in a group into the adjoining antechamber, the countess and her protégée found themselves at liberty to depart.

But the odour of royal favour had now sanctified the fair stranger! Without an exception, the ladies present crowded round the countess to claim an introduction to her lovely kinswoman. Lady Berkeley was at the trouble to inform her of the precise moment at which it would be desirable to enter the ball-room on the following evening, so as to be in waiting for the appearance of their majesties; and had not Lady Carlisle interfered with an assurance that her niece, Lady Capel, had already undertaken to escort her rustic cousin to the ball, Lord Lovell's rejected wife would have been overpowered by the chaperonage of as many fair courtieresses as are ever to be found at the service of any fortunate individual illustrated by the light of a king's countenance.

"You have succeeded to a miracle, my dear child!" said the old lady, as she settled herself for a doze in the carriage, on their way to town. "During my fifty years' experience, I remember no such successful *début*. In the whole course of my service, I never received from the queen-mother a tenth part of the courtesies bestowed upon us this single morning by her majesty; and, as to the king, I could only desire that his homage were somewhat less warmly demonstrated. How is all this, my dear Lady Lovell?—Are you sincere in your assurance that this is the first time of your

quitting your rural seclusion?—Yet why should I feel amazed.—*Beau sang se fait connaître*; and the best blood in England was intermingled in the veins of your father.”

CHAPTER XV.

HAD the Lady Capel been aware of the number of the candidates for the office peremptorily assigned by her wealthy and heirless aunt, she had perhaps been better reconciled to the prospect of appearing at court as the bear-leader of a country cousin.

Herself the daughter of one of the few noble adherents who had followed to the continent the widow of the unfortunate Charles, her ladyship was educated in a convent at Paris, under the auspices of the queen-mother; and dire was her disappointment, when, on finding her dowerless hand unsolicited among the mercenary nobles of the court of Louis XIV., her father saw fit to bestow it upon a wealthy English baronet, who had been captivated by her beauty;—an alliance which condemned her to exchange the airy nothings of delightful France for the ponderous substantiality and foggy climate of her native country.

From her French education, Lady Capel derived little beyond a passion for dress, and conversancy with the mincing affectation of a fine lady. Her refinement was wholly superficial; and she prepared herself accordingly to be as ungracious as decency would permit, towards the uncivilized kinswoman for whom Lady Carlisle had bespoken her services at court. The eloquence of the old countess's strong-box had alone prevailed over her scruples on the occasion; and as the journey to Hampton required in those times more than four hours to perform, and the royal fête commenced at the unseemly hour of eight, she expected, when her gaudy equipage drew up by daylight before a dingy house in Duke Street, Westminster, to be excruciated by the spectacle of Lady Lovell's high head and scanty skirts, embellished by the tinsel fineries of a provincial belle.

It may be doubted, however, whether her surprise on beholding the elegant and lovely being who was to be her companion, afforded not a still more disagreeable surprise. Obeying the injunctions of the old countess, Lady Lovell had suffered herself to be provided with a habit of the most costly and becoming description, and the services of the newest Parisian coëffeur imported by the Duchesse de Mazarin and Chevalier de Grammont; and elaborate as was the elegance of Lady Capel, she saw that she had a lesson to learn, in the art of which she had hitherto esteemed herself a professor. After

eying askance the graceful figure by her side, she grew out of conceit with her own frippery garlands, and unmeaning draperies.

Piqued beyond her patience, and persuaded that, though transcendent in purchasable fashion, Lady Lovell would soon betray her real rusticity by some breach of that courtly etiquette which the court-bred denominate good manners, Lady Capel condescendingly proceeded to instruct her in the course to be pursued.

“As I enjoy *at present* no appointment in the household,” said she, in a tone of patronage, “it is impossible for me to promise to your ladyship a place within view of their majesties. Though the ball is to be held to-night in the Cardinal’s Hall, yet, as seven hundred invitations have been issued, our only hope of obtaining a seat is by making at once towards the lower end, by which their majesties and the household enter the gallery.”

Lady Lovell smiled, and was content. All she desired was to obtain the least ostensible place, and quit the ball at the earliest hour; for though unusually elated by the certainty she enjoyed, for the first time since her sojourn in the metropolis, of security from an accidental encounter with Lord Lovell, she recoiled from the publicity into which she was forced by the arbitrary caprice of the king. Yet, when they entered the stately hall of entrance, lined with yeomen of the guard, and resounding with the inspiring strains of a military band, gleaming with lights and covered with a carpeting of scarlet cloth, an irresistible consciousness assailed her that she was now in her fitting station; and that under any other circumstances, she should have been gratified at entering the palace of her sovereign as a bidden and honoured guest.

Secretly indignant, meanwhile, that the unwonted spectacle of the splendours around her should extract no comment from her companion, Lady Capel set down her country cousin as the most stupid and insensible of ninnies. With an air of scarcely concealed disdain, she tendered their names to the usher in waiting, when, to her surprise, she was immediately accosted with an inquiry whether “he had the honour of addressing the Lady Lovell?”—

The insult was scarcely to be endured. *She*, the favourite of queens and foster-sister of princesses; *she*, the pupil of St. Evremont and flattered of the Chevalier de Grammont;—*she* to be mistaken for the Lady Bountiful of a Northamptonshire village!—Still greater, however, was her amazement when, the real criminal having been pointed out, she was requested to accept a counter-mark for the queen’s private entrance;—a place being reserved for her, by their majesty’s desire, among the ladies of the royal household!

Though almost moved to exclaim, like Shakspeare’s Old Lady to Anna Boleyn,

I have been begging sixteen years in court,
 Am still a courtier, beggarly; while you,
 A very fresh fish here, (lie! lie! upon
 This compell'd fortune!) have your mouth fill'd up
 Before you open it—

Lady Capel experienced a paltry delight in having so much as arrived in company with one thus singularly distinguished by royal favour.

To Lady Lovell, meanwhile, the honours heaped upon her were as the crackling of thorns. Though the royal party had not yet entered the hall, hundreds of the brilliant assemblage were already ranged around, awaiting their majesties' arrival, while the officers of the court and numerous gentlemen of condition sauntered in the open central space, ready to place themselves in file on the signal of the music. At the extremity of the hall, a sort of platform or dais was erected for the accommodation of the royal party; in which privileged sanctuary, not a creature was to be seen, when Lady Lovell, conducted thither with much form and ceremony by the usher-in-waiting, was placed in her allotted seat, a single and solitary mark for the curiosity of hundreds.—A new face at court—and such a face!—A stranger at Hampton—and a stranger so memorably honoured!—In the murmurs that arose as she took her seat, while all eyes were directed towards her, it was difficult to distinguish between the ejaculations of admiration caused by her beauty, and the exclamations of inquiry touching her name and condition.

“*The Lady Lovell*, sayest thou?”—demanded the Duke of Buckingham of Baptist May, who was in attendance near the private door devoted to the use of the king and queen.—“Go to!—this is some idle mystification!—Yonder queen of the graces, my malapert hostess of Lovell House?—I tell thee, fellow, 'tis some noble kinswoman of Grammont or Comminges, freshly arrived from the Louvre!—*Je m'y connais!*—That graceful yet majestic deportment was never acquired elsewhere than in the ‘*città ridente*.’—My life on 't, the charming creature is Parisian born or bred.”—

Their colloquy was interrupted by the announcement and entrance of the court; and brilliant as was the effect produced by the sudden appearance of so many fair faces, rich uniforms, and sparkling jewels, more than one admiring eye still wandered from the gorgeous cortège towards the single beautiful figure standing alone in her flowing robes of glistening white satin, and an attitude of courtly dignity, such as might have drawn Van Dyk from his grave to delineate. She seemed as if stationed there to do the honours of the palace to the king and queen!

Whispers ran from lip to lip among the ladies of the household

as they took their seats.—“Who can it be?”—“How provoking that the queen should order a stranger placed among us!” which soon deepened into—“Let Miss Stewart look to herself!” “Let the Castlemaine bless her stars that she is not brought to-night into competition with this overpowering rival.”—For after conducting the queen to her chair of state, and returning the salutations of those nearest to him, Charles made his way at once towards the seat of the fair stranger, to demand the name of the lady of the court she desired to have stationed by her side.

“The Lady Chesterfield, sire, is the only lady present with whom I have the honour to be acquainted,” replied the fair stranger; and those who heard the answer, and beheld the King proceed to request the presence of the fairest and brightest of countesses, smiled at the simplicity of a woman who had thus ventured to display herself in perilous contrast with one of the most popular beauties of the court. Their next movement was to inveigh against her cunning, when they noticed to what advantage her dark hair and expressive countenance were seen beside the unmeaning blue eyes and golden ringlets of Lady Chesterfield; to say nothing of the lustre imparted to her countenance by the animation of familiar conversation with an intimate acquaintance.

The ball commenced with minuets, the dignified formality of which soon gave place to ballets, executed in costume by the leading ladies of the court; the principal group being headed by the Duchess of York, and composed of the Misses Stewart, Middleton, Price, Hamilton, the Ladies Radnor, Chesterfield, and Denham, led by the Lords Ossory and Arran, by Grammont, Hamilton, Jermyn, and *le beau* Sydney.

Scarcely had they taken their places, when the King, reapproaching the seat beside Lady Lovell left vacant by the absence of the Countess of Chesterfield, commenced a conversation which the brilliant crowd soon began to notice as momentarily particular.

“I am a suitor to your ladyship in the name and behalf of my friend the Duke of Buckingham,” said Charles, with an ingratiating smile; “who labours under the mortification of apprehending that, in fulfilling my behest, he must have given unintentional offence to one whose gentleness and courtesy are a guarantee that she would not otherwise have driven from her gates a gentleman who had performed a pilgrimage of one hundred miles in the dog-days, in the hope of being permitted to salute the point of her slipper.”

“That so trifling an incident, sire, should not yet have escaped his grace’s recollection,” replied Lady Lovell, “is a sufficient proof how little the duke is accustomed to be received with coolness. But I pray your majesty to consider my ill manners exte-

nuated by the peculiar delicacy of my situation, which determines me to decline all presentation of strangers, or intimacy with persons on whose character in the world my Lord Lovell could ground an imputation of levity."

"I am to understand, then," cried the king, not sorry for a pretext to avoid the promised introduction of his dangerous favourite, "that you would again refuse an interview with the Duke?"—

"If proposed by any voice less authoritative than that which now addresses me," replied Lady Lovell.

"You judge not, I trust, so harshly of me," retorted the King, in a lower tone, "as to imagine that I would repay the amiable concession of your visit here, by forcing upon you a distasteful acquaintance?—You exacted, madam, that Lord Lovell should be absent from our fête—you are obeyed!—You desire that the Duke of Buckingham shall not approach you—he must submit!—Grant me only a slight reward for my concession, by acquainting me whether it be your wish that, on any future occasion, the cavalier, whom I understand to be your ladyship's inmate at Lovell House, should be included in your invitations to court?"

Instead of the conscious blushes the king had intended to call up into the cheeks of Lady Lovell by this searching insinuation, an arch smile illuminated her fine features, as she replied, "I am largely indebted, sire, to the good offices of the Duke of Buckingham, who seems to have taken ample note of my domestic arrangements. But to your majesty's interrogatory I have only to reply, that not even a royal invitation would avail to withdraw the gentleman in question from his rural seclusion."

"So *proud*?"—cried the king, with one of the good-humoured laughs which evinced his constitutional inaptitude to take offence.

"So *independent*, sire!" replied Lady Lovell, with firmness.

"You will at least enable me to make the attempt," observed the king, bending towards her in a closer whisper, "by instructing me in the name of your mysterious friend."

"I must again entreat your majesty's indulgence," she replied. "It would grieve me, sire, to pronounce a name in your hearing, which is likely to conjure up unpleasant recollections."

"Am I to learn then," demanded the king, more gravely, "that disaffected or perhaps disloyal persons are harboured at Lovell House?"—

"Under your pardon, sire," replied his companion, with dignity, "were I at liberty to breathe the name of my friend in your majesty's presence, it would be recognized as one that commands, or *ought* to command, your majesty's gratitude and affection."

“I no longer wonder at Lovell’s repugnance to this beauteous creature!” mused the King when, thus defied, he soon afterwards resigned his place to Lady Chesterfield. “She lays down the law even to *me*, as coolly as the saucy Castlemaine. I dare no more present George or Buckhurst to her, according to my engagement, than bring Mrs. Nelly to sup here at Hampton with the Queen!”—

And both Buckhurst and “George,” who awaited at some distance his majesty’s summons, were surprised and indignant when they beheld Lady Lovell led in to supper by the Earl of Arran, whom his sister, Lady Chesterfield, had recommended to her good graces as a cavalier.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON the following day, a single name invaded all the echoes of Hampton Court, and hovered on every idle lip that vented its gossiping in the playhouses of London.—“Lady Lovell,”—the Cynthia of the minute,—was enskied and sainted without opposition or deliberation. King, courtiers, and at length the nobodies ever on the watch to ape and parody the somebodies, could talk of nothing but “Lady Lovell!”—Her beauty, accomplishments, elegance, riches, splendour, taste, came in enhancement of the romantic interest of her situation; and because her husband disdained her as a wife, every woman wanted to be her friend,—every man desired to become her lover!—

Unconscious of half her triumph, and indifferent to the other, the lady calmly recounted to the admiring ears of Mistress Corbet the distinctions conferred on her at court; and was indignant to perceive that Mistress Corbet’s son considered her cause secured by the admiration excited in a ball-room by her stomacher and breast-knots. That very morning, the names of half the nobles in the land figured in the list of inquirers after her health; nay, Lady Capel forced her way in with such perseverance of servility, and tendered her compliments so far more respectfully than she had done to the Queen the previous night, that Lady Lovell was almost moved to exclaim, “Suspend, I pray you, this adulation, and trust to my kinswomanly regard, madam, to apprise you, should there be any prospect of my driving Lady Castlemaine from her post.”

It was only her gentle friend, Mistress Shum, who could be moved to participate in her disgust at finding herself promoted in the eyes of the world by the attentions of a royal libertine.

Her own husband, meanwhile, was sorely puzzled by this sud-

den change of politics. Lord Lovell began to regret that he had not suffered his projects to remain dormant, rather than, by summoning her to town, create hundreds of partisans for one whom, unknown, all were eager to condemn. His pretensions to the recovery of his estates were, he knew, legally untenable; and even the sympathy with which he had been hitherto regarded was now evaporating.

Whichever way he turned, he heard mention of no name but Lady Lovell's. Never, since the reign of Cinderella, had any heroine of a ball-room created such a sensation! Lord Buckhurst endited a madrigal in her honour, which, set to a fashionable tune, was carolled by every fashionable mouth; while Grammont protested that he had at length beheld the one thing wanting to convert Great Britain into a garden of Eden—a lovely English soul inhabiting a lovely English body. Seeing, as it was then the custom to see, with the eyes of the King, all were unanimous in asserting the Northamptonshire beauty to be a paragon,—“*la belle parmi les belles.*”—

“Wer't not for the shame of the thing, I would fain have a look at her among the rest,” mused Lord Lovell, after sauntering home from the playhouse, where Nell Gwyn was venting her sallies in vain, so pre-engaged were the lords of her train in discussing the new divinity. “The sapling is not always to be taken as a specimen of the tree, nor the colt of the managed steed. Were this woman the property of another, I should hasten to stare among the other gaping fools of London; and why am I alone to be debarred the sight of a fair face, because the commodity happens to be my own?”

But to accomplish his wish, in the second place, was almost as difficult as to surmount his pride in the first. Piqued at his pointed exclusion from the fêtes at court, Lovell disdained to so much as pay further respects to a prince with whom a new fair face could obliterate the claims of an old fair friendship; and it was understood that Lady Lovell moved not abroad, save to accept the invitations of the king and queen. Nevertheless, he felt persuaded that curiosity to view the capital, or devotion, or some other feminine foible, would sooner or later lure her forth, and he loitered accordingly in the neighbourhood at those hours when he knew that her ladyship's movements and his own would be most secure from observation.

On the Sabbath morning after her first appearance at court, at that early hour when

Duns at his lordship's door began to meet,

he had the satisfaction of perceiving that Madam Corbet was accompanied to church by the object of his hatred and curiosity; and

trusting to the changes effected by the lapse of twelve years in his own appearance to remain undetected, he crossed the ladies on their path.

“’Tis her own fault,” quoth his lordship, “if, even at this barbarous hour of morning, she choose to traverse the parks unmasked and on foot, instead of decently preferring a chair.”

It mortified his vanity to perceive with how strange an emotion of curiosity he was pursuing a person towards whom he had so long maintained such contemptuous indifference; and indescribable was his triumph when after contriving to obtain a full view of Mistress Corbet’s companion, he beheld a face which, though he admitted its fairness, produced no further effect on his feelings than when his girlish bride stood beside him at the Dalesdene altar.

“I had fancied her twice as handsome!”—he exclaimed, with a scornful smile. “Is *this* the moppet which, per force of kingly caprice, hath been exalted in public estimation?—’Od’s death!—Rowley must have lost all perception since his return to Fogland, to fancy this blushing gawky a divinity!—Low as I ever valued her charms, methought she would mature into somewhat better than *this*!”—

“Mere spite and envy!”—was the cry of Arran and Rochester, when, joining them some hours afterwards in the Mall, he presumed to disparage the lady whom he stated himself to have accidentally encountered.

“Lely, who at the command of their majesties, waited upon her yesterday with a request for permission to add her portrait to his gallery, protests that it is the fairest face and fairest form he ever looked on,” persisted the younger earl.

“He would say as much of Madam Chiffinch’s ape, were the king to declare himself captivated by the physiognomy of the beast!” retorted Lovell. “And faith it would not surprise me; for, from the crooked policy of Harry Bennet to the upright gawkiness of my pseudo wife, Rowley’s favour seems to run upon things ungainly. That he would but take her, and in lieu give me back my estate!—I should hold it virtue to perjure my immortal soul for the chance of a divorce!”—

“If Buckingham be to be credited, you might obtain one on easier terms,” observed Rochester, Lord Arran having at that moment withdrawn from their company.—“I myself heard him acquaint the king that this peerless lady, who would not so much as abide his presence, entertained at Lovell House some led captain as her paramour.”

Lord Lovell grew flushed with instant fever, then cold as death. For some moments he could not command himself to utter a syllable.

“You’re *sure* of this?”—were his first intelligible words.

“Sure that I heard the Duke *assert* as much,” persisted Rochester.

“Let us go wait on him!”—cried Lord Lovell, pressing towards the turnstile leading from the crowded Mall. “To be certified of such a fact, would save me a world of coin and care!—Let us to Saville House.”

“It proves the prolongation of your residence abroad to propose such a measure to *me*,” cried Rochester, drawing up. “I would as lief make my apprenticeship in a pest-house!—His grace and I are too big with mutual grievances to amalgamate as the contents of one room. But let me not obstruct your lordship’s project. I will meet you to-night at Shaftesbury’s, and learn the result. *Au revoir.*”

With as unconcerned a mien and spirit, as though he had been making some idle remark on the news or the weather, did Rochester saunter away from the man in whose bosom he had planted daggers! For instead of welcoming the intelligence which was to liberate him from his bonds, Lovell received with equal scorn and indignation the tale of his dishonour! Unconsciously to himself, he had taken pride in the high renown of her who bore his name; and he chose not that the frail divinity should be shivered into dust by any other hands than his own.

Pride was, in truth, the besetting sin of Lord Lovell’s nature. In the generous warm-hearted boy the fault might have been subdued by the wise guidance of education; or even trained to become a virtue of that aristocratic estate in which it had its origin, and which it was intended by Providence to adorn. But Lord Digby’s haughty daughter, mistaking for a merit in her son that which at best could but become the origin of merit, had suffered the ripeness of the soil to give birth to weeds and briars, instead of cultivating its produce for purposes of use or ornament.

Such was the cause of Lord Lovell’s first and only rebellion against his father; such the motive of his irrational opposition to an alliance with the granddaughter of a boor—of his wilful exile and malignant hatred against his wife. Despising her in the first instance for her ignoble birth, he at length detested the very virtues which gave the lie to his aristocratic theories. But while detesting them, as proving him in the wrong, he was proud to know that their lustre reflected itself on the name of Lovell. It was not such a name which was to be brought to shame. It was not such a name which was to be trailed in the dust by the vulgar tongues of antechambers and street-corners. The degradation of Lady Lovell’s disgrace must recoil more or less upon himself;—the scorn, the stigma, must adhere to *him*;—a dire addition to the weight of evils entailed upon him by his unlucky marriage!—

It was under the irritation of these reflections that, escaping

from the more crowded avenues of the park, Lord Lovell took his way towards the Birdcage Walk, with an intention of reaching the river-side from Scotland Yard, and thence taking boat to Saville House. Alone and self-absorbed, he had no one to whom to unburthen his budget of miseries; and however a man's inward soul may cajole and flatter him in the hour of wantonness, in the hour of care it becomes the least sympathizing and most truth-dealing of monitors. While Lord Lovell exclaimed that he was "sinned against," the still small voice within began to accuse him audibly of "sinning!"—His conscience reminded him, with a sneer, how small was the alliance owed him by his wife;—that the mischief was of his own creation;—that he had sowed the wind to reap the whirlwind.

"Still," argued the selfishness of the lordly egotist, "though little indebted unto *me*, this woman hath now lost sight of all she owes herself. Her father was a gentleman of honour; her mother, though of ungentle blood, an honest matron. She herself, prudent and discerning as she is said to be, must be aware how vast a load of responsibility falls upon the woman to whom is committed the charge of a noble and stainless name. And above all, her self-respect, her personal and inward sense of chastity, to be sacrificed to so foul a temptation!—Some starveling cavalier,—some led captain,—to tempt her from her lofty eminence!—Fie on't—fie on them both!—The fellow dies by my hand, though the next hour I fling his paramour forth to the scorn and loathing of the world,—discharged from the slight and irresponsible bond that hath hitherto held us together."

The progress of his lordship's reflections next stumbled into a quarrel with the originator of his sad enlightenment. Why should he gratify the vindictive spirit of the Duke of Buckingham by repairing to him for confirmation of his ill reports? It would be impossible to listen dispassionately to a tale that touched him so nearly; and bitter would be his grace's triumph in watching, and whispering thereafter at Whitehall, the agonies of his wounded spirit. No!—he would proceed at once to the fountain-head!—Three days were still to elapse, previous to the first hearing of his petition to chancery. There was time for him to ride post into Northamptonshire. Lady Lovell's absence would favour the process of investigation. The paramour was left behind in enjoyment of the princely ancestral seat of the Lovells. It was *there* he would seek him,—*there* slay him,—*there* pour forth his blood as a libation to the earth, whose rightful owner he had dishonoured!—

Blinded by the intemperate emotions swelling in his veins, Lord Lovell quitted the park, and was taking his way towards his lodgings, near Whitehall, when, in the narrow turning towards Charles Street, his attention was attracted towards a sedan, the chairmen

of which were, or pretended to be, inebriated; for in spite of the remonstrances of a stout country servant by whom it was escorted, they persisted in jesting and sporting with several fellows of suspicious appearance, who had apparently been drinking in their company. Dusk was drawing on. At this season of the year, and during the absence of the court, the streets in that quarter of the town were nearly deserted; and it occurred to his lordship, on hearing the reiterated remonstrances of the serving-man, that some act of robbery or violence was intended.

Without wishing to entangle himself in a street brawl for the sake of a stranger, he determined at least to keep the parties in view till he could be assured that no iniquity was in hand. Following silently and as though unconcernedly, he overheard one of the ruffianly-looking crew remark to another, that they were "ten minutes past their time; and that the Duke would perhaps be up with them afore matters were ripe for his coming."

"What the plague kept her then a quarter beyond her usual stint?"—replied his comrade. "A man can but do his best. Master Matthew said it was the Duke's pleasure we should——"

But having imprudently advanced too near, in order to make himself master of their whispers, Lord Lovell's appearance now admonished them to silence. A moment afterwards, the conduct of the chairmen became more than ever obstreperous: and ere Lovell had leisure to form surmises concerning the "Duke" who owned so beggarly a set of retainers, he found his own progress impeded by two of the gang, while a fight, real or pretended, commenced between the rest and the footman escorting the chair. It was an unlucky moment for such an outrage. No lamps were yet lighted,—no patrol was astir.—Of all the twenty-four the hour was most propitious for an act of outrage.

So, apparently, thought the tenant of the sedan. For at that moment a piercing shriek met his ears; and finding himself assailed with blows, his lordship no longer scrupled to draw and force his way through the villanous crew.

The sudden inbreak of a man of his appearance into the midst of them seemed (rather than the blows which he distributed right and left as he made his way to the assistance of the victim of this evidently premeditated attack,) to startle the cluster of cutpurses; and just as he attained the chair which the porters had set down on the causeway while they engaged in the conflict, and from which a lady was now vehemently struggling to extricate herself, one of the ruffians exclaimed aloud to his companions—"Heels and away!—'Tis the Duke of Buckingham himself!—I tell you 'tis the Duke of Buckingham!"—

Rejoicing in a mistake which had at least the effect of putting the enemy to flight, Lord Lovell proceeded to swing away by the collar

one of the miscreants who was attempting to force back the lady into her place of durance; and who, finding her attendant driven from the field, fancied herself abandoned to the atrocities of a gang of bravos.

“Compose yourself, madam,” said Lovell, soothingly “you are safe. These cowardly blackguards have taken the alarm.”

And sustaining her on his arm towards the nearest house, he knocked loudly to obtain assistance. The lady had fainted; and when, having borne her into the hall to the amazement of the terrified woman-servant who obeyed his summons, the light he called for fell upon her face, he was alike distressed and interested to perceive that she was young, richly attired, and singularly beautiful. Had it been otherwise, Lord Lovell would have probably left her to the charge of the horror-struck waiting-maid in attendance; and followed in pursuit of the lawless ruffians by whom the stranger was thus frightened from her propriety. But she was too lovely to be left; and verily he had his reward, for, on unclosing her eyes, her first movement was to cling to her deliverer, —her first words were an appeal to his protection. The lady’s terrors seemed to have overmastered her reason.

“Fear nothing, madam,” whispered Lord Lovell, without relinquishing his hold; “you are in safety—you are in honourable hands. These villains have fled the place.”

“They may return though,” suggested the stupid maid, who in her fright had neglected to close the doors.

“They will not dare attack you in a dwelling-house. I *pledge* myself to your security.”

The lady, who had now in some degree recovered her self-possession, started up at this assertion, and gazed earnestly upon her deliverer. On recollecting herself to be under the protection of a stranger, she seemed to imbibe new apprehensions; for, on the renewal of Lord Lovell’s protestations, the tears gushed from her eyes.

“That I should be thus abandoned to insult and shame!”—cried she, incoherently. “I must go home,—I must go hence,—do not detain me,—let me instantly quit this place.”—

“Under your favour, madam, whether your residence be far or near, you are in no condition to attempt the streets on foot,” interposed Lord Lovell. “If you choose to remain under this person’s charge, I will hasten to procure a chair, in which you may depart hence under my guardianship.”

Scarcely capable of utterance, the lady replied by a sign of affirmation; and having enjoined the old woman to afford no access to strangers during his absence, Lovell proceeded on his errand. Aware that a stand of hackney chairs occupied the still-unencumbered area of Palace Yard, he directed his footsteps to the spot.

But on re-approaching the obscure house in Charles Street, in

which he had deposited his charge, accompanied by the chairmen hired for her behoof, a painful presentiment assailed his feelings on beholding a coach attended by several servants drawn up before the door. Equipages were then so rare, that Lord Lovell rightly conjectured it to belong to the "Duke" obscurely alluded to by the wretches he put to flight. It was not, however, till he reached the door, and by the reflected light of the links borne by the running footmen detected their colour and bearings, that he perceived them to be the people of *Buckingham*!—

At that moment, Lord Lovell was as little disposed to confront his grace as to face the archdemon. There was but one tone in which he could accost the man who had propagated, for the derision of the court, the infamy of Lady Lovell and his own disgrace; and that was of a nature too violent to beseem the presence of a woman. Since his grace had been admitted to an interview with the fair stranger, it was probable that she bore some immediate relation to him. For aught that Lovell knew, she might be his sister, mistress, daughter. It was not in *her* presence, therefore, that vengeance was to be taken.

Having, however, no grounds for his surmise, it became his duty to see her again, reward the zeal of the people who had afforded her shelter, resign her to the Duke if there appeared to be justification of the measure, or rescue her from his hands if she still made claim to assistance. When the people of the Duke of Buckingham strenuously opposed his entrance into the house, Lord Lovell grew more earnest than ever in his perseverance. Backed by the aid of the men by whom he was accompanied, he raised so powerful a din that the door unclosed to him; then, rushing into the parlour where he had left the lady, in full expectation of being hailed and welcomed as a deliverer, he was surprised to find her not only restored to self-possession, but in calm conversation with the Duke, who stood deferentially and mildly addressing her.

"I gladly accept your grace's offer to convey me in safety home," she observed, with stern decision, the moment Lovell made his appearance,—“requesting my Lord Lovell, meanwhile, to accept my acknowledgments for his good offices.”

Then, taking the hand offered by the duke to lead her to the hall without further courtesey or apology to the gentleman by whom she had been so gallantly defended and generously assisted, she was about to pass with a look of scorn the person of the indignant Lovell, when his lordship, having no reasonable pretext to quarrel with the duke for being at hand to render aid, which *he* was equally willing to afford, or for being arrayed with precise and foppish elegance, while *he*, in his combat with the chairmen, had disordered to utter confusion his previously simple costume,—

hastily recalled to mind the grievances of the morning, and arrested for a moment the stately movements of his triumphant rival.

“When your grace shall have discharged your task as guardian of *one* lady,” he exclaimed with bitterness, “I have a word or two to crave in atonement to *another* for certain aspersions, which in three days’ space I pledge myself to prove calumnious.”

“At any hour and moment I am at your lordship’s service,” replied Buckingham, undisturbed;—“praying only that the aspersions of which you speak may not prove to be illusions of the brain-sick fancy, to which I am fain to attribute the present excitement of your lordship’s manner, and unseemliness of your address.”

And with a courtly bow, the duke, and the heavenly creature who had made election of his hand, passed on, leaving to Lovell the agreeable task of requiting the civilities of the old woman, and listening, while the pungent fumes of her candle irritated his nostrils, to her recital of the surprise with which the beautiful lady had hailed the arrival of the grand gentleman in the velvet suit, and the gratitude with which she had accepted his offers of protection.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN the morrow dawned, and Lord Lovell, in the mist of a chilly autumnal morning, found his horse waiting according to previous order for a journey into Northamptonshire, he began to regret that a hasty pledge, given in a moment of violence, should compel him to quit the city without having elucidated by further investigation the mysterious adventure of the preceding evening.

He had sought Lord Rochester according to appointment, but without obtaining a syllable of information tending to throw light either upon the charge involving his family honour, or his adventure with Buckingham’s mysterious beauty; and harassed by the disappointment, had given utterance to expressions alternately injurious to the veracity of the duke and the fame of Lady Lovell, which the malice of the earl took care should be overheard by many, and the malice of many took care should be speedily reported to the two individuals personally concerned.

His lordship’s journey meanwhile proved far from a sedative to his irritation. His thoughts were divided between the attractions of the lovely being he had so lately held in his arms, and the hateful one he entertained hopes of being shortly enabled to dismiss for ever from all claim to such a privilege. He passed over in deliberate review those manifold attractions,—those finely-

formed features,—that lofty brow,—that faultless development of person,—the velvet texture of the skin,—the fragrance of the breath that had fanned his cheek as she revived to consciousness upon his shoulder!—The expression of the countenance was familiar to him; yet, with all his searching of recollection, he could not call to mind whether it was in England or on the continent it had become so; or whether the illusion might not arise from an accidental resemblance with some favourite painting or statue.

It seemed but a moment before that his arms had enlaced the beauteous form which it was more than probable he should never again behold. But yesterday, so thoroughly in his power;—to-day, as lost to him as the morning dew evaporating in the sun!—He fancied himself mocked by the united force and feebleness of his impressions. Though the dignity and purity of demeanour which, even more than her beauty, distinguished the fair stranger, forbad all deteriorating inferences, yet her acquaintance with the Duke of Buckingham, and the almost unprotected guise in which she was traversing the streets in the dusk of evening, seemed to justify mistrust; and dearly did Lord Lovell long to feel assured of the lady's irreproachability, though the certitude must reinforce the barrier which her capricious conduct had already raised between them.

It were tedious to detail the fitful fancies of the perplexed man throughout his journey. On the second noon, he reached Thrapstone; and having ascertained, by a personal encounter with the host of an inn he had frequented in boyhood with his father, that the progress of time had effaced all trace of the stripling Arthur from the presentment of Lord Lovell, he again took horse and pushed on for Lovell House, intending to obtain admission on pretence of having a subpoena to serve upon the Lady Lovell.

It was twelve years since he quitted the place; and with so much bitterness had he taught himself to regard the spot of earth inhabited by his wife, that he was not prepared for the rush of tender emotions that assailed him on entering the village. His youth, his friends, his father, seemed to rise around and call upon his name; and though the improvements effected by his lady, the school and almshouses she had erected, and the highways and byways she had created or perfected, might have perplexed a steadier memory, the scene came familiar to his mind. The first point he visited was the village church; where the old sexton was sorely scandalized at the disregard with which the silent stranger listened to his description of the ancient tombs of the house of Lovell; his eyes having wandered therefrom towards a sarcophagus of black marble placed in the furthest recess, and bearing only the date of the battle of Worcester. The aged man attempted indeed to explain that this simple record was dedi-

cated to the memory of the late gallant lord, whose remains had been removed by stealth from Worcester, at the cost of the present lady. But his labour was lost. The visitor, after bestowing on him a liberal donation, went his way out of the church, and answered not a word.

Some short exposure to the refreshment of the air was indispensable, ere Lord Lovell sufficiently recovered himself to proceed towards the park. There was a side entrance leading direct from the church towards the house; and having tied to the landing-stile the jaded brute on which he had reached the place, Lord Lovell betook himself to a beaten path, over which the withered leaves of autumn were plenteously scattered.—Ever and anon, he paused to contemplate the scene around him; and obtained, through vistas of an intervening grove, glimpses of the abode of his fathers. The view seemed changed. He could have sworn that the approach from the village skirted the southern side of the grove. But the growth of twelve years necessarily imparted a different aspect to the plantations, and varied the character of the scene.

At length, the cause of his perplexity became apparent. At the extremity of the beechwood, he saw clearly that the direction of the path was changed. The fatal sylvan lodge was now in view:—a new and mysterious erection, to which he had no difficulty, after Rochester's explanations, in assigning an origin. With hurried breath, he demanded of a labourer, at work in a neighbouring watercourse, whether the house was inhabited.

“It was.”

“Who resided there?”

“The general.”

“Was the general living there at present?”

“Ay, zure,” replied the man, who did not so much as raise his eyes from his spade towards the ignorant stranger. And without pausing to take breath, or inquire the name of the “general,” the infuriated Lord Lovell dashed onwards up the green knoll towards the lodge.

But whatever might be his lordship's estimation of his right of intrusion, Stark and Sturm were of opinion that strangers had no business at Dickon's Fort during the absence of their master, who happened to have strolled up to the house; and so vehement was their defence, that it was some relief to his lordship when, just as a smart stroke from his riding-wand had provoked old Sturm to fasten his fangs into the instrument, a whistle was heard, which produced the immediate submission of the infuriated beast, and the intruder found himself interrogated by a rough voice touching his errand at Lovell House.

Planted sturdily upon his timber leg,—pipe in mouth and arms akimbo,—stood the general's old sergeant, in his half military

livery : occupying the crown of the causeway, and refreshing his lordship's ears with a volley of English, (clearly the King's English, not the Protector's), such as they had scarcely encountered since his secession from military life.

"Sheer off and be cursed to ye!" cried the sergeant. "Just let his honour the general find ye worrying the dogs, and I warrant he'll make short work of having your ears nailed to the keeper's lodge, among kites, crows, and other queer carrion. Off, I say, and—blessed God, be good to me—'t is my young lord!"—cried the old fellow, interrupting himself, and lowering his voice as he obtained a clearer view of the intruder ; and off went the barret-cap, and away went the pipe. For in the flurry of the moment, old Swatchem saw in the gentleman before him only the noble nephew of his honoured master.

"Down, Stark !—down, blackguard curs that ye are!" cried he, putting aside the hounds, and ushering onwards Lord Lovell, who, as he passively entered the lodge, tried in vain to recall to mind the singular individual by whom he was thus opportunely recognized; nor was it till he had fairly installed himself in Sir Richard's barrack-room, thrown himself into the seat pressed upon him by the old sergeant, and cast his eyes upon the Guiana curiosities and miniatures of himself and his late father gracing the mantel, that the simple truth glanced at once into his mind !—The veteran before him was his uncle's favourite body-servant, and his lady's supposed minion no other than the sturdy Sir Richard Lovell!

Starting from his place as this humiliating explanation burst upon him, he was about to take a precipitate departure, and disentangle himself from the snare into which he had been self-betrayed, when the sergeant's remonstrances recalled him to himself. "Long absent come at last" was not to be so lightly parted with. The veteran had the two hounds keep watch over my lord, while he proceeded to sound the horn, which was his daily signal when the general was wanted at the fort ; and the low growl with which the faithful beasts exhibited their tremendous fangs every time his lordship presumed to make movements of impatience, warned him that he had only to put a good face upon his imprisonment.

"I have waited, sir, your return, for the honour of paying my devoirs to you," said he, rising deliberately, when at length the astonished general made his appearance ; "a respect which the absence of Lady Lovell from my house at length, though tardily, enables me to tender."

But Sir Richard Lovell was a less able dissembler than his nephew. *He* at least was unable to conceal in his reply, first, his unqualified amazement, and secondly, his deep-seated displeasure.

Having readily overmastered the emotion caused by the sight of Lovell's countenance, which singularly recalled the person of his lamented brother, Sir Richard gave vent to his long-suppressed indignation. His words were high in tone and meaning. He evaded no part of the question of Lord Lovell's conduct. He called it by the name he felt it to deserve; and so great was the force of eloquence imparted by passion to his address, that at the close, Lord Lovell, instead of being roused to resentment, was subdued almost to tears. Sir Richard spoke of Lady Lovell's wrongs, her patience, her sweetness, her exemplary career, her benevolence to all, her pious honour to the memory of his late father, her generous care of the maintenance of his late mother.

"She hath her reward," said Lord Lovell, with bitterness, finding his uncle at length paused for a reply.—"Lady Lovell is rich in the favour of the world;—I a beggar and an outcast,—and *she* a queen in the land!—Peace and prosperity are her compensations for the defection of an indifferent husband."

"They are *not* her compensations!" cried Sir Richard, with rising choler. "Would that they were!—for, God knows, the blessed creature deserves a better destiny than to pine away her youth after a cold-blooded reprobate, whose better were easily found wherever she list to cast her eyes. I swear to you, Arthur Lovell, that never do I behold that lovely woman fix her tearful eyes upon your picture, and sit gazing upon it by the hour, as though transported back into her brighter dreams of youth, without feeling that to rid her of so cruel a clog upon the happiness elsewhere in store for her, I could myself lay hands upon a fellow unworthy to call her wife!"—

"It is no news to me, sir," replied Lord Lovell, "that this lady hath succeeded in estranging from me the regard of those upon whose affections nature had provided me the stronger claim. So runs the fashion of the world. She hath beauty and prosperity on her side; while I——"

"Urge no such argument on *me*!" cried the indignant old man; "for it is my conscience that pronounceth against you, Arthur, my brother's son.—*My* days are numbered in the land; but were they like to be twice as many, I would yield them up a willing sacrifice for the assurance that but a span of your own would be devoted to repentance of the anguish you have inflicted on a wronged and lovely woman!"

The heart of Lovell was irresistibly touched by the unction of his kinsman's adjuration. Sir Richard had placed the position of the deserted wife in a new light. Lord Lovell had never accustomed himself to consider her otherwise than as the gainer by her marriage. To hear her described as wronged and unhappy, as well as young and fair, afforded a new feature to the case. In her

moral conduct, malice itself was unable to detect a flaw. Lord Arran, an able connoisseur, described her charms as unexcelled. Could it be true that one thus beautiful was thus attached to the shadowy image of the boy-husband to whom her childhood had been rashly plighted?—Had the twelve intervening years failed to efface from the heart of the woman the impression produced upon the child of fifteen?—

Detecting in the reverie into which his nephew was falling, the happy influence of his address, Sir Richard resolved to pursue his advantage by conciliatory means. He proposed to him to visit the house, the grounds, the old terrace, which Anne Lovell had preserved intact in honour of the predilections of Anne Heneage; and when his lordship pleaded the indelicacy of entering as a surreptitious guest the mansion to whose possession he was preferring claims at law, every objection was overruled by the positiveness of his uncle.

“You are here, man, by my invitation,” said he; “and since you state yourself to have travelled post from town for the purpose of testifying respect towards your nearest kinsman, prove at least your regard for him by complying with the sole request it may ever be his to make you. You must dine with me, Arthur, ay, ’odsdeath—and you must *sleep* under my roof!—Dickon’s Fort is not accountable for its guests to Lovell House; and even were it so, *who* will recognize your person?—But for his subsequent knowledge of you at St. Germain’s, the old Stump, my serving-man, had never discovered you; and he shall be admonished anon to keep his discoveries to himself. Come, sir, lend me your arm, and we shall visit together the chamber where your father first showed you to me sleeping by your mother’s side, and wept as he told me that he was father of a son!”

“Little imagining that you would one day cease to consider that son your nephew, and transfer your favour to a stranger and an alien,” observed Lord Lovell, deeply moved.

“With his own hand, and perhaps in the last words he ever penned in this world, did my brother commend that stranger to my dearest affections,” cried the general. “Stay!” he continued, unlocking a strong drawer of his *scrutoire*, and producing the letter addressed to him from Dalesdene upon Arthur’s wedding-day, “behold the warrant of my conduct.”

Having in silence perused the solemn apostrophe, Arthur resigned himself without further struggle to the invitations of his uncle; and seemed to give way with pleasure to the emotions excited in his bosom by revisiting the home of his childhood. His father seemed to walk visibly by his side,—his father seemed to breathe audibly in his ear. The letter he had just perused was as a voice from the dead, awakening a thousand tender associations.

The sun was setting with a mellow light over the park and gardens. The flowers sent forth a faint melancholy autumnal fragrance. The year and the hour were in their decline; and as he sauntered beside the veteran through pathways every shrub of which had a recollection of his childhood attached to its decaying branches, Lord Lovell recalled mournfully to mind that he had attained to middle age, that his brightest days were gone, and gone without leaving a single cheering trace, a single honourable testimony. He had suffered his antipathies to obtain too great a predominance over his destiny. He had suffered his whole career to be marred and withered at the instigation of the irrational and empty arrogance of his mother. Youth and beauty had wooed him into sorts with fortune; yet he had chosen to remain a vagrant and a beggar, to prove his resentment of the arbitrary disposal of his hand, and his superiority to all commixture with plebeian blood.

There are moments in the life of every proud man, when the sacrifices enacted by his rapacious idol stand forth trebly apparent, and convict him as a dupe. Lord Lovell saw his wasted years arrayed in judgment before him; and were it not for the transient glimpse he had obtained of the fair but insipid face of his wife, might still have been tempted to request the good offices of the general as mediator between them. Had Lady Lovell possessed a fiftieth part of the attractions of the mysterious protégée of the Duke of Buckingham, he would have cheerfully confessed his fault, and by atonement secured the happiness of his future life. Throughout the evening, a heavy oppression sat upon his spirits, which induced Sir Richard to flatter himself that some such project was brooding in the mind of his nephew; and when they parted for the night, and the good uncle, who, in spite of former provocations, experienced a natural yearning of the heart towards the latest scion of his house with whom he could talk over its early troubles, parted with him at the door of the guest's chamber which divided with his own the upper floor of Dickon's Fort, satisfied that the reflexions of the night would complete the charm, and that on the morrow some accommodation would be proposed by Lord Lovell. The point had as yet been expressly avoided by his lordship; just as the general had declined all allusion to the present measures and position of the king and court.

They had sat late; the old knight choosing to moisten the details of their talk with copious potations of sack-posset, the fumes of which rendered his sleep as heavy as his heart was light. It was nearly half an hour later than his usual time of rising that the sudden entrance of the sergeant into his chamber caused him to rub his eyes and ask tidings of his guest.

“An express from her ladyship's honour!” — replied old

Swatchem, who would have given precedence to Lady Lovell over royalty itself. And delivering a letter into the general's hands, he informed him that a special post from London had that moment alighted at the stables. The seal and handwriting of his beloved niece!—No wonder the veteran's outcry for his spectacles was so loud and earnest.

"It has been hitherto your dearest wish, my kind uncle and friend,"—ran the tenor of the letter,—"that your seclusion should be undisturbed, and your name unmingled with the list of claimants upon the justice and bounty of the king. But from our mutual affection and the strictness of your retirement at Lovell House, have arisen (would you believe it?) rumours injurious to my honour!—Lord Lovell, ungenerous in his surmises touching this matter, as in every other movement towards me, hath caused it to be reported throughout the court that a nameless paramour is entertained in my household; till, in the midst of a thousand favours from the queen, I find myself, on a sudden, coldly looked on.—I entreat, therefore, your release from my engagement to refrain from naming you to his majesty. Suffer me to give such explanation as I may;—and believe me, in haste, but in all love and honour,

"Your dutiful niece ANNE
(scarcely justified in signing herself)

LOVELL."

"A paramour!—her honour tarnished for my sake!"—cried the choleric old man; and while throwing on his roquelaure, a thousand imprecations against his nephew issued incoherently from his lips. "Where is this fellow,—this slanderer?—Ho! Swatchem, I say, and be damned to you!—is my nephew yet stirring?"—

"*Stirring*, your honour?"—reiterated the sergeant, stupefied by his master's sudden outburst of passion.

"Bid him attend me!—'T is his business to pay me his morning devoirs, not mine to wait upon his toilet,"—roared the general, falling almost breathless into a chair.—"*This*, then, was the motive of the pitiful varlet's journey to Lovell House!—He came but as a spy to pry into the secrets of her household!—The glosing knave—with his pretences of duty to his old uncle!—But he shall know my notions of his proceedings!—Why comes he not?—Didst give him my message, stockfish?"—he continued, perceiving that the old sergeant stood gaping open-mouthed at his violence.

"Verily I had needed a faster nag than my timber shank to have overtaken his lordship!"—replied Swatchem, striking his wooden leg stoutly upon the floor. His lordship was off an hour before day-light; and is three posts off by this time!"—

“Off!”—And you suffered him to quit the house without so much as the decency of leave-taking?”—

“I thought the matter was settled atwixt you, to spare your honour untimely disturbance,” replied the sergeant. “It was not for the like of me to interfere with his lordship’s proceedings; more especially within bounds of his lordship’s own place of Lovell House.”

“Tis *not* his place!—How often must I explain to you, block-head, that the house and all that it containeth are the inheritance of my lady-niece?”—

“Be it in sooth?”—replied Swatchem, as with pretended carelessness he proceeded in his capacity of valet-de-chambre to prepare the toilet of his master, on whose ill-humour his habitual mode of inflicting punishment was by attacking the rights of Lady Lovell. “In course your honour knows best.—Only, having heard you so often declare, general, that woman be the weaker vessel, bound to submit herself to her spouse, a nonentity in the eye of the law, and so forth, I fancied——”

“Keep your foolish fancies to yourself, sir! Lay out my riding-suit, and let Robin Groom bring round Tinkler and Bannerman to the door within half an hour’s space!”—cried the general. “I am for London; so have a careful eye to things, sirrah, during my absence!”

“Ho, ho, ho!—your honour post a journey at this time of the day, with the roads as heavy as the mains of a Guelderland farm?—I hope, general, you do n’t fancy I am going to let you make an end of yourself without benefit of clargy?—What would my lady say to me, who gave your honour into my charge at parting? ‘Swatchem,’ quoth she, ‘have good care of my uncle during my absence,’ just for all the world as your honour was pleased to say just now; ‘Sirrah!’ quoth you, ‘you’ll have an eye to——’”

“Keep your old tongue still, or ’t will be the worse for you!”—cried Sir Richard, evidently in no mood to be trifled with. And long before the general’s frugal breakfast was despatched, his esquire of the body had completed, without further comment or expostulation, the preparations for his journey.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LORD LOVELL’S sleepless night had, in truth, according to the general’s anticipation, been fruitful in honourable resolves. But he chose that the result should appear the working of his spontaneous will, not the effect either of his uncle’s bullying, or his uncle’s persuasions. On this account had he evaded, by precipi-

tate departure, all further intercourse with the old gentleman. His object was to reach London, so as to redeem his pledge and demand satisfaction of the Duke of Buckingham, after having freely, and with ample confession of error, withdrawn his suit for restitution against the trustees of Anne his wife.

On reaching his lodging, however, after a journey still more disquieting than that which took him into Northamptonshire, Lord Lovell discovered that he had a duty anterior to his business with the duke. A message from the king, requiring his immediate presence at Whitehall, had been delivered that evening to his servant by a personage no less consequential than Baptist May; and having refreshed himself with a bath and a change of dress, he proceeded to obey the summons. He had the satisfaction of learning, on his arrival at the palace, that the king, being slightly indisposed, had not proceeded to the playhouse, as was his custom in these occasional visits to town during the non-residence of the court; but having passed the guard-room and antechamber, his lordship's further progress was arrested by an intimation from the usher of the presence that he must wait,—“that his majesty was engaged.”

“I come by appointment,” replied Lord Lovell, with impatient hauteur.

“So doth the lady, sir, who now enjoys the honour of an audience,” replied the usher, to whom the person of Lovell, a late arrival and rare visitant at court, happened to be unknown.

“Have the goodness, at least, to announce my name to the king,” persisted Lovell, advancing resolutely into the gallery preceding the royal closet.

Startled by the wilfulness of his deportment, the man first demanded, and straightway announced to his majesty, the title of the petulant intruder.

“’Tis well,” cried the king, in a voice so loud as to be distinctly heard by Lovell. “Bid his lordship enter! I crave leave of your ladyship to remain present during our interview.”

Surprised to find that the fair one favoured with a private audience at that hour was neither Mistress Nelly nor Miss Stewart, but apparently some woman of condition, Lord Lovell advanced respectfully into the presence of his sovereign: and the amazement with which he discovered that the lady honoured with a chair of state opposite to that of Charles was none other than the mysterious beauty of the sedan chair, prevented his even noticing the unusual coldness of the reception bestowed upon him by the king. Nay, his own obeisances of ceremony were somewhat curtailed of their fair proportions, by his eagerness to infuse deference into the salutation by which he trusted to demonstrate to the lovely

stranger his delight at finding himself once more in her presence. But his reverences were as haughtily received by the lady as by Charles. Nothing could be more coldly distant than the demeanour which belied the blushes mantling on her cheek.

“In consequence of my absence from town, sire, I have been only this moment honoured with your majesty’s commands,” said Lord Lovell, embarrassed by the stateliness of the king and his companion.

“No matter,” replied Charles, who remained standing after the entrance of Lord Lovell. “Your absence from town sufficed the purpose of my message. A challenge, I understand, hath passed between your lordship and the Duke of Buckingham. Let the matter, my lord, be instantly disposed of. Our starchamber privilege may be abrogated; yet I will have no offence to good morals or public example, offered within the precincts of my court. I have already signified to his grace, and I now signify to your lordship, my pleasure that the affair should drop. The Duke of Buckingham’s safety is too dear to me, to have it perilled in a worthless quarrel.”

“I can well understand, sire,” replied Lovell with warmth, hazarding a look towards the lovely countenance whose eyes were now cast down as if to avoid meeting the indignant glances of his own,—“at *whose* gentle intercession this impunity is granted to his grace. *You, madam,*” he continued, pointedly addressing her, “who have thought proper to communicate to his majesty my appeal to the Duke of Buckingham, must lend your attention to the cause of quarrel, ere you suggest its peaceful adjustment.”

“Is it your ladyship’s pleasure that my Lord Lovell proceed in his explanation?”—demanded the king, in a tone of such deprecating courtesy as caused the blood to tingle in the cheeks of Lovell. For the stately bend of assent vouchsafed, was such as Queen Bess might have bestowed from the highest summit of her royal dignity, upon some crawling parasite!—

“In a word, sire,” cried Lovell, piqued out of his self-possession, “though compelled to submit to your majesty’s decree against any hostile encounter with the Duke of Buckingham within the precincts of the court——”

“Within the precincts of the British dominions,”—sternly amended the king.

“I must be permitted to state that I shall hold the Duke of Buckingham, and proclaim him in all reputable societies, a dishonoured man, should he refuse to cross the water with me, and grant me, at Ambleteuse or Calais, the satisfaction which your majesty does not appear to consider due to me on English ground. The Duke of Buckingham, after devising and uttering a vile calumny upon the lady bearing my name, is accountable to me for the

offence on every other spot of earth than the one where he is sheltered from chastisement by the partiality of his sovereign."

The amazement of Charles at this bold address seemed to amount almost to confusion of mind; for he looked from Lovell to his fair companion, and from the lady to Lovell, as if requiring further explanation.

"You were witness, madam," resumed his lordship, addressing the former, "to my pledge to his grace to prove within three days, the groundlessness of certain scandals. The means were then out of my power. Disunited by family grievances from the lady whose fair fame he had presumed to discredit,—nay, having for twelve years banished myself from her very presence,—it was impossible for me to afford demonstration of facts of which my feelings prompted the assertion. I then surmised this gallant gentleman—this *preux chevalier*,—this Buckingham,—to be a liar and a slanderer. I now affirm it of my knowledge; and, as the unworthy husband of an injured woman, will prove it upon his person, or hold myself faithless as himself!"—

"Am I to understand then, my lord, that you accuse the Duke of Buckingham as author of the defamations of Lady Lovell, supposed to have originated with yourself?"—demanded the King, after a momentary pause, which seemed to enlighten his perplexities.

"I had it, sire, from the lips of Lord Rochester, that his grace, on returning from the errand to Northamptonshire sanctioned by your Majesty's authority and my own unjustifiable connivance, did assert in all companies, that my Lady Lovell entertained a disbanded captain as her paramour!—This talk regarded too nearly the honour of my house, to be overlooked. I have visited the lady's retirement, sire;—I have visited the disbanded captain—"

"There is a lover in the case, then?"—interrupted the King, glancing archly towards the fair protégée of the Duke of Bucks.

"As true a lover as ever defended the cause of an injured and virtuous woman!"—cried Lovell;—"a lover whose testimony to the virtues of the lady bearing my name hath wrung my heart with anguish!—His name may produce a consciousness equally painful in that of your Majesty. Nevertheless, in justice to my Lady Lovell, I must presume to allude to so faithful and neglected a servant of your Majesty, as my uncle Sir Richard Lovell."

"Old Dickon still alive?—The hot-headed general a resident at Lovell House?"—interrupted the King, evidently sincere in his outcry of surprise. "Faith, I'm glad on't!—I owe him reparation for much forgetfulness, to say nothing of the interest and capital of the heavens above know how many thousand florins.—But why have I been kept ignorant of this?"—

“I leave it to the veteran and the lady, sire, to reply to the question,” said his lordship, fancying that it was to himself the inquiry was addressed. “Meanwhile I crave your Majesty and this lady to admit me justified in my resentment against the individual honoured by your protection.”

Again the King eyed a moment in silence the countenances of Lord Lovell and his fair friend.

“I presume not to answer for this lady,” cried Charles, a smile overspreading, for the first time during the interview, his sallow features; “but, for my own part, I scarcely understand such vehement advocacy of the cause of one against whom you have a suit still pending; and have been railing, without rhyme or reason, for these twelve years past!—Nay, sit, madam!”—cried the King, laying his hand upon the silken robe of his lovely visitor, who now made a movement to rise and depart. “You, who have required my intervention to suppress this duel, are bound to listen to every detail tending to its justification.”

“They are not such as ought to be unacceptable to a female ear,” observed Lord Lovell with dignity, “for they purport to elevate the character and honour of the sex. That my antipathy to the lady bearing my name arose from the lessons of pride of a mother inheriting the high blood and lofty spirit of the Digbys, your Majesty, so familiar with the pride of that unhappy family, hath not now to learn. My own selfish presumption confirmed the error. My character for consistency seemed pledged to maintain the animosity my petulant boyhood had avouched. I closed my heart and understanding against the claims of the most meritorious of her sex, only to prove myself an idiot, undeserving the favour of Providence. The result hath been, to myself, a life of recklessness and care; to *her*, a happy security from companionship with one so graceless!—And how hath this lady avenged herself upon my misdoings?—By generosity to my unfortunate mother,—by respect to the memory of my father,—by dutiful affection to the poor old general,—by careful stewardship over the estates I had lacked grace to govern. The most illustrious of noble matrons could not have more honoured her station, than the patient creature whom my obstinacy so long presumed to disparage. Sire, I own my fault. Already I have despatched instructions to my lawyers, to withdraw all proceedings against her; admitting, in full court, my consciousness of the injustice of my cause; nor does there exist the reparation I would not offer to Lady Lovell, short of pretending to those tender distinctions of which I hold myself unworthy.”—

“But if the lady herself judged you deserving?”—cried the King, while Lovell, following his glance towards the countenance of his fair friend, beheld there so strange an admixture of blushes and tears, confusion and curiosity, that the vanity of man instantly

suggested the possibility of her being interested in hearing him proclaim his indifference towards Lady Lovell.

“Had your Majesty deigned *last week* to make the inquiry,” he replied, “I might have answered, ‘Heaven send her forgiveness of my faults and blindness to her wrongs!—But it were *now* a breach of sincerity, did I pretend to do more than render justice to her virtues.’”

“You would willingly, in short, still dissolve your marriage?”—demanded the King, exultingly.

“Never, sire!—unless such a measure should appear essential to the happiness of one whose conduct is an honour to my name.—It is my misfortune that, within one little week, a view of her person hath decided that the beauty so commended of the world is devoid of all charm or attraction in my eyes; while in the person of another,—(involuntarily the eyes of Lovell glanced towards the dulcinea of the Duke of Buckingham)—I have beheld concentrated those graces which exalt the soul of man to frenzy, or reduce it to the most abject submission.”

“You have seen Lady Lovell since her sojourn in the metropolis?”—demanded Charles, with surprise. Yet methinks that from her Majesty’s fête—”

“I absented myself, sire, at your command,” replied Lord Lovell, with dignity. “It was a brief encounter in the park, which enabled me to decide that her mild and featureless beauty could produce no impression on my heart.”

“Every man to his taste!”—cried the King, no longer able to repress a laugh; “I have only further to inquire whether, if the Duke of Buckingham should retract his aspersions upon the fame of this ‘mild and featureless lady,’ you are disposed to retract your cartel?”—

“That portion of the case I beseech your Majesty to leave to *my* adjustment,” cried the lovely friend of the duke, whose cheeks were now flushed to a permanent crimson, and whose impatience to depart was no longer controllable even by the authority of the King. “Now that I am acquainted with the cause of dispute, I pledge myself to make such explanations to his grace, as will insure the utmost satisfaction demanded by my Lord Lovell.”

She rose, curtsied with graceful respect, and withdrew.

CHAPTER XIX.

LORD LOVELL, forgetful that the doors of the closet were kept by the usher and page in waiting, and that another formal-looking individual in flowing peruke and suit of sable velvet stood in

attendance without, involuntarily moved towards the doors as attendant upon Lady Lovell's rapid passage.

A word from the king recalled him to himself. Instead of commanding him to escort the lady to her carriage, or see that her people were in attendance, his majesty commenced a string of interrogatories touching Sir Richard Lovell,—his health, happiness, prospects, and intentions.—

“How comes it that the old knight hath never visited us since our return?”—demanded Charles.

“Your majesty hath, perhaps, too openly resented the importunity of needy cavaliers,” replied Lovell. “Sir Richard could not presume to pay his court without an express invitation.”

“An invitation!—when I knew not whether to address it to heaven or hell, or the intermediary stage!”—cried the king. “Since the old man gave no signs of life, I was bound to conclude him dead. *He*, at least, could not return the compliment. Old Dick was scarcely ignorant of the existence of a man called Charles the Second.”

“Nor your majesty of the fidelity of his service to Charles the First. The general is proud and susceptible, and fancies that some slight portion of the favour lavished by your majesty upon Buckingham, Rochester, and Buckhurst, might be spared to the memory of his brother.”

“He is right!”—said the king, with a countenance suddenly overcast. “Between the claims of the dead and living, and my own scarcity of time and means, I seem to be converting more friends into enemies by neglect, than enemies into friends by favour. In this case, atonement is happily in my power. Prythee, signify to Sir Richard Lovell my desire of immediately renewing acquaintanceship with so old a friend. Or stay,—it is my own hand that must repair my fault.”—And hastening to the table, the king rapidly indited a few lines expressive of the good-natured regrets by which, at that moment, his fickle nature was inspired. It was a comfort to him when Lord Lovell, in respectfully taking leave, pledged himself to have the letter conveyed to his uncle.

“All then is well.—At length—at length—all will be happily arranged!” cried Mistress Corbet, when Lady Lovell, on her return home that evening, communicated to her attached friends the singular incidents which had befallen her, and the strange misconception perplexing the mind of Lord Lovell.

“So far, at least,” replied her ladyship, trying to calm back her excited spirits into their habitual repose, “that my lord is convinced of the utter malignancy of the reports affecting my reputation.”

“As well as of the unsoundness of the plea affecting your lady-

ship's estates," interposed the worthy Enoch, to whom the quashing of a costly lawsuit afforded one of the happiest features of the case.

"T is neither of suits nor duels I am thinking !—" persisted the good governante. "*These* are transitory evils. I look to the permanent happiness of my child. Lord Lovell avows his repentance and betrays his passion; and years of domestic comfort are in store to repay the mortifications of her girlhood."

"From whence are they to arise?"—calmly demanded Lady Lovell. "Is it to suffice, that the man who for twelve years hath aggrieved and insulted me, shall cast his eyes upon the house I have governed with prudence, to render me tardy justice?—What knoweth Lord Lovell of me to-day, more than yesterday was to be known, had he deigned to take cognizance of my conduct?—And for the passion wherewith you compliment me, behold and admire what were his sense of justice towards his wife, had the fair face which his sickly fancy despiseth, been, as he supposes, that of the Lady Lovell, rather than of her gentle friend?—Alas, dear mother, my vanity may have cause to triumph in these recent events, but my peace of mind is scarcely less shadowed than before!"—

"Trifle not, dear lady, with the relents of Providence," interposed the demure auditor, who had never before pretended to play the admonitor with his patroness. "The evils we have so long deplored are passing away. Lord Lovell avows himself sensible to your merit,—sensible to your charms,—and—"

"Long and severe must be the probation which avouches his stedfastness of purpose and feeling, ere I give ear to the suggestions of either my friends or my heart," replied Lady Lovell, mildly, but decisively. "My self-respect, no less than the dignity of my sex, is involved in this thing."

"Make no rash resolves!"—cried Mistress Corbet, dreading some irrevocable resolution. "There is a soul of goodness in things evil. Lord Lovell's contentious opposition hath driven you perforce into your fitting sphere. You are appreciated, loved, worshipped, by those to whom you had otherwise remained a mark of derision."

"Of what import to me the favour of the court?"—exclaimed Lady Lovell, impatiently. "To-morrow (if the matters connected with this abandoned plea may be so speedily wound up) I shall return to Lovell-house; to the retreat for which, till my right of possession was invaded, I knew not half my attachment. Henceforth, my life will be the calmer that I am secure from the malpractices of my husband; but with this impunity, begin and end the advantages resulting from my harassing visit to the metropolis."

On the morrow, however, long ere Enoch's hum had gathered

up his documents, and scattered forth his disbursements preparatory to departure, arrived the good general to tender to his niece's appeal a reply no longer needful. It was with difficulty Lady Lovell could obtain his patient attention to her assurances that an *amende honorable* had been already made by her lord,—that he had withdrawn his accusations and allegations,—that the duel and the lawsuit were quashed for ever.

Still, Sir Richard burned to wreak upon the offender the explosion of his wrath; to revile him for having stolen ere daybreak from his gates; to reproach him that neither kinsmanly eloquence nor sack-posset had sufficed to attenate his stubborn heart. To calm the veteran's irritation, Lady Lovell acquainted him with the compunctious visitings of King Charles's conscience on hearing mention of his name; and though at first the old man pished and pshawed away the tale, and to every further allusion to the regard avouched towards him by his sovereign, replied by a torrent of invectives against the ingratitude and fickleness of the Stuarts,—he expressed, in the sequel, an earnest desire for a few minutes' colloquy with his nephew; and, since decorum forbad that Lord Lovell should be invited into a mansion tenanted by his wife, it was settled that a link should forthwith attend Sir Richard to his lordship's lodgings at Whitehall.

The only particulars connected with her recent arrangements which Lady Lovell saw fit to withhold from the rash old gentleman, were the curious blunders entertained by her wayward lord, touching the identity of his consort.

“Too early seen unknown, and known too late,”—

She did not choose to expose herself to Sir Richard's raileries, touching the passion she had excited in her own person, and cooled in that of another; and he accordingly reached his nephew's domicile, divided between anxiety to learn the discourse held concerning him by the king, and to promote some expectancy of eventful reunion between the wedded pair.

But though on the first point his resentments were speedily mollified by Lord Lovell's recital of the letter indited by his Lord the King, his nephew's obstinate opposition to all proposal of further accommodation with his wife stung him to the quick.

“I admit,” cried the young lord, “that she may be as you describe her,—gentle, modest, wise,—all that wives and women ought to be. Full justice, public and private, am I willing to render to Lady Lovell. But, as regards the tribute of my affections, sir, I am bound to protest that my fancies are engaged elsewhere. I have seen the woman, unto whom, were she poor in every gift wherewith your lady niece aboundeth, I would still dedicate the earnest tribute of my affections.”

“And where are we to look for this all-peerless dame?”—demanded Sir Richard, with a sneer. “Is it some Statira of the playhouses, or——”

“I know no more, sir, than yourself,” cried Lord Lovell, “and make it even a point of conscience to refrain from inquiring. Maid, wife, or widow,—*my* pretensions were alike fruitless; and I spare myself the vexation of defeat.”

“You do wisely, Arthur,” sternly replied his uncle; “for it were fitting retribution that you should learn, by experience, to appreciate the bitter pangs of unrequited love!—If, however, the wanton to whom you have pledged the worthless gift of your attachment——”

“Speak heedfully of her, sir, or speak not at all!”—interrupted his lordship. “I pledge my life upon her worthiness. She is only too fair—too pure—too all excelling,—for the place and company in which we have been fated to encounter.”

Thwarted by the young man’s pertinacity, Sir Richard returned to the question of the king. Though the royal message had crossed him on the road, Lord Lovell assured him that were the secret of his arrival in town to transpire at Whitehall, his absence from court must be interpreted into wanton disrespect.

“The king holds a levee to-morrow, previous to his return to Hampton,” observed his lordship. “It were well that we both attended, in forestalment of misreport.”

“I am unprovided for such a ceremony,” said the general, doggedly. “My uniform lies moth-fretted at Dickon’s Fort. Wait till I am fitly accoutred to parade, like old Ormond, the old age of a general of Charles I., in presence of the gimerack court of Charles II.”

“To-morrow, sir, or never!”—was the impetuous Lovell’s reply.—“On the day following, I sail from Harwich to Helvoetsluys. Bound to no spot of earth, I would fain visit the cities of the empire, and forget, in hurriedness of travel, the curse that desecrates my hearth. There are matters stirring on the Danube which tempt me to trail a pike in Hungary, rather than mope away my days in obscure poverty, mortified by the gibes and bravery of more prosperous courtiers. To-morrow, sir, at noon, (since I may not wait upon you under the roof of one who, for all our sakes, shall never be insulted by my presence,) I shall entreat you to take me on your way to Whitehall, that for the last time, the two last of our house may abide together in presence of their sovereign.”

It was observed with regret by Lady Lovell and her little household, that, during the remainder of the day, the general appeared harassed and dispirited. It was idle to attribute his discomfiture wholly to the fatigues of his journey. Vexations were evidently weighing on his mind. The mingled feelings with which he was

prepared to enter the presence of the king for whom he had suffered wounds, imprisonment, insult, confiscation, were gradually concentrating into a resolve to appeal to his majesty's authority against the self-expatriation of Arthur Lovell.

The over-wearied veteran retired to rest early, and rose late. Such preparations as the time would admit were hastily made by Lady Lovell for his appearance at court; and rich point and sweeping plumes threw a grace over the tarnished doublet of the proud old soldier.

"I must have my cavalier of Lovell-house do honour to his lady-love!" said his niece, as with a melancholy smile she fastened on his sword-knot and scarf. "Thou art the only knight, dear uncle, I am fated to arm for the field. But, thank Heaven, to *thee* I can, in all reliance of spirit, say,—'Go forth, and prosper.'"

Avoiding the display of having her equipage in attendance to convey her uncle and lord to court, Lady Lovell had provided a coach of rich but simple appearance, into which Sir Richard threw himself, in a fit of distemperature that might have better become the arrival of a cart purporting to draw him to Tyburn Fields.

"This is a sorry errand!" was his peevish musing, as he entered the narrow street in which Lord Lovell had taken up his residence, in the immediate vicinity of Westminster Hall. "God send the fellow keep me not waiting. I am in no mood for further harassment or care."

But, so far from keeping him waiting, a message was delivered by his lordship's Italian valet to Sir Richard's lacqueys, entreating that the general would proceed without delay to court;—"Lord Lovell, having been unexpectedly called out of town, was unable to have the honour of bearing him company."

"This is some damnable evasion!—I read a lie in yonder sneaking varlet's looks!"—exclaimed the general, tumbling forth from the coach. "Show me to his chamber, sirrah!—Either Lovell hath *not* left town, or he hath left his service to me in writing."

In utter consternation, the man now entreated Sir Richard to forbear from forcing his way into the house.

"What mischiefs are afoot, that I may not enter?"—cried the general, threatening annihilation to the terrified Neapolitan,—"*Is your lord under arrest, or in assignation, or mad, or drunk?*"—

And pushing aside the trembling Mateo, he pursued his way towards the chamber in which on the previous day he had visited his nephew. But at the door, stood a grave-looking personage, calmly interdicting all access to the room.

"A bailiff, by all that's damnable!"—I guessed as much!"—cried the general, crushing the crown of his rich beaver by the vehemence of his gesticulation.

"The surgeons are at this moment examining the wound," ob-

served the stranger, in a solemn whisper; "should it be declared mortal, the duke, your master, must instantly speed into concealment; for already it is known that this duel hath been persisted in, despite his majesty's absolute interdiction. On his lordship's demise, a price would probably be placed on the head of his grace of Buckingham."

The agitated, the almost convulsed aspect of the old gentleman, instantly avouched that so far from being an emissary of the duke, sent to watch the course of events in the habitation of the dying man, he was a near kinsman or friend of the sufferer; and rashly as the surgeon's mate had previously announced the worst to Sir Richard Lovell, did he now admit him into the chamber.

Three professional men were around the bed, one of them being engaged in a cautious removal of bandages from the side of the sufferer. Faint and exhausted as he was, Lord Lovell turned his head at the sound of his uncle's irrepressible exclamation of horror.

"Forgive me," said he, feebly extending his hand. "I trusted that the unlucky affair which weighed yesterday upon my hands would have been so adjusted as to leave me this day at your disposal. To-morrow, I was to have quitted England! What matters it to any living soul that my journey is to be of wider limit?—My last act hath been an act of atonement.—Buckingham hath retracted his slanders."—

"Fie on a reparation obtained at such a cost!"—cried the old man, clasping his hands; and the surgeons, seeing him incapable of the smallest self-control, insisted on removing him from the chamber during the ensuing operation.

"Will he die?"—demanded Sir Richard, in a low stern voice, when, at the expiration of half an hour, the chief surgeon issued gravely from Lord Lovell's chamber, and traversed the apartment in which he had taken refuge.

"My hopes are slighter than they were this morning," replied the professional oracle, without moving a muscle of his countenance.—"Nevertheless art is powerful. Nature is great against us, but art——"

"Be damned in thy company!" cried Sir Richard, disgusted by his callous sententiousness. "Will he die?"—reiterated he, seizing the arm of the operating surgeon, who now followed the steps of his superior.

"The present danger is not imminent," he replied, perceiving that his commander-in-chief was out of hearing. "His lordship's constitution is vigorous. If his mind can be kept calm, and his body free from fever——"

The entrance of No. 3 and his instruments warned the second in command that he was overstepping his functions. But Sir

Richard's worst apprehensions were relieved. The case was not altogether hopeless. Claspings with emotion the hand of the merciful surgeon who had scorned to increase his own importance at the expense of the feelings of a fellow-creature, the general sank back into a chair; and the moment the scientific slaughterers had closed the door, gave free course to his tears.

CHAPTER XX.

To keep calm the mind and cool the frame of a man struggling with the contending passions of love and hate, is no such easy task!—The impossibility of coming to an amicable arrangement with the Duke of Buckingham had arisen less from his grace's reluctance to do justice to the fame of Lady Lovell, than from Lord Lovell's jealousy of the influence exercised by his grace over the mind of the lovely stranger,—a jealousy which rendered him fractious, overbearing, and unjust; and the same frailty which had urged him on to the duel now augmented his danger.

Lord Lovell was furious to find himself pinned to an untimely deathbed, by the superior address of the man to whose protection the beautiful stranger had retreated from his own. It was afflicting enough to have his plans of departure impeded,—to have his defeat at arms rumoured abroad by the same breath which circulated the withdrawal of his claims and accusations against his wife;—but it was doubly so to surmise that Buckingham was figuring in the eyes of the loveliest of her sex, as triumphant over his rashness and lack of swordsmanship. On the return of the surgeons to the sick-bed beside which the general had installed himself, even the most sanguine of them shook his head. That night the patient became delirious. Next morning they avowed his case to be desperate!

Never till then had the general been aware how ardently his hopes were fixed upon the reformation of his nephew. Never had he suspected how sanguine were his expectations of an eventual reconciliation between Arthur and his wife. As he gazed upon the flushed cheek and listened to the frenzied outcries of the man to whose countenance fever imparted supernatural beauty, he had scarcely fortitude to reflect that this frail relic of mortality was the last of his time-honoured race;—that the name of Lovell was going down into the grave,—that *he* was to be the survivor, not only of his brother's son, but of the mouldering fabric of his house!

It was indispensable to apprise his niece of the afflicting cause that detained him from home. Sir Richard even felt it his duty to

acquaint her that her enemy was upon his deathbed,—already deprived of reason, and soon to be deprived of life.

Within an hour, she was sharing with Sir Richard Lovell his painful task ; and what hireling nurse would have fulfilled with half the zeal the duties to which she devoted herself !—With patient self-command, she ministered to the wants of the unhappy being who lay stretched before her as if in atonement of her wrongs ; and who, even in his delirium, seemed to distinguish the softness of her touch, and the adroitness of her service. Amid the tortures he endured, it was *her* voice only that could recall him to tranquillity. In the darkened chamber of death, her person, even had he been capable of observation, was undistinguishable. The surgeons and servants were taught, at her desire, by Sir Richard, to regard her as nurse ; and more than once, they congratulated the general on the good woman's singular intelligence and care.

Often when, after the dressing of his wound, the sufferer sank into a state of collapse, every moment of which threatened to be his last, the old soldier attempted to lead her from the bed beside which she was kneeling, that she might be spared the spectacle of her husband's dying agonies.—But the good creature would not be persuaded.—The restoratives, administered by her hand, might once more revive him ; and how could she desert the one so abandoned of all the world ?—

It was a rich reward for this devotion when, as she reclined in the dead of night on a pallet at the foot of the bed, she heard the unhappy being invoke, in his intervals of pain, the name of his wife, with many a passionate avowal of cruelty and folly ; then, seeming to live over again his interview with the lovely protégée of Buckingham, he once more offered her his protection, appealed against her mistrust, and implored her to reveal herself to the truest and most impassioned of lovers. Amid threats and imprecations against the favoured Buckingham, his voice died away into extinction : till Anne Lovell trembled and wept with alarm, lest she should have heard it for the last time,—lest the erring man should be already precipitated into the dread abyss of eternity !—

Great was her joy when the morning light, struggling into the chamber, showed her that he did but sleep ; and though his brow was now contracted with pain, and his features wasted, yet in that altered countenance she beheld all that remained to her of the visions of her youth.—How she watched every change of countenance—how she listened to every quickening breath—When Sir Richard arrived to relieve her from her guard, it was to *her*, rather than the surgeons, he turned for an account of the patient ; and when, towards evening, she protested that there was an amend-

ment, it was in vain the doctors continued to assert that the danger was immediate.

That night, during the third watch, her opinion was confirmed by a brief interval of reason vouchsafed to the sufferer.

“Who is beside me?”—he suddenly inquired, as if waking from a deep sleep.

“I, sir,—your nurse!”—replied a gentle voice, which appeared strangely grateful to his ear.

“I have a kind and considerate nurse,” he faintly replied. “I never miss you from my side.—Surely my head has been wandering?—Tell me—where am I?—Prythee, was not the Duke of Buckingham here anon?—Was there none with him?—Has no person approached me but yourself?”—

“Only your lordship’s kinsman, General Lovell,”—faltered his agitated wife.

“Where is Sir Richard?—let me see Sir Richard?”—

“The old gentleman is gone home for the night,” she replied, unwilling to disturb the general’s rest, or her own enjoyment of so happy a moment.

“*Home!*”—reiterated the sick man, in a troubled voice. “Ay, home to her who is more than friend or daughter to him!—Every one hath a home—every one a friend but *me.*”—And once more, he relapsed into reverie.

“Speak to me, good nurse,” said he, at length, stretching out his hand over the coverlid, in search of the comforting touch of human sympathy. “Your mild voice consoles me;—but for *you*, I should be left to die alone.—At some future time, nurse, cherish the recollection that your kindness cheered the last anguish of a friendless, helpless man; deserted by all the world,—deserted as a just punishment of his waywardness and pride.—When I am gone, prythee hie to Lady Lovell, and tell her this.—Bear her a lock of my hair (the only gift in my power to bestow), as a token that I am gone.—Tell her how well you served me, and she will reward you, for her heart and hand are generous as the open day. Bid her deal mercifully with my memory; and say how dear a comfort it was to my dying moments, that I resigned my life in her defence. You are weeping, good nurse,”—he resumed, when he found that his attendant made no answer to his appeal.—“You must be good and gentle-hearted, to shed these tears for a stranger,—a stranger whose life hath been a curse to all his kin.—Draw nearer, I pray you, and shred a tress of hair from my brow.—I would not that when it is borne to my poor Anne, the lock should be damp and heavy with the dews of death.”

Complying in agonized silence, Lady Lovell could scarcely refrain from imprinting a kiss of peace upon his head,—scarcely refrain from discovering herself.—But that the agitation of such

a moment must shake the last sands from his ebbing glass, she would fain have thrown herself by Lord Lovell's side, and sobbed out assurances of forgiveness and love.

A happier feeling, however, soon inspired her with caution. The crisis of danger was announced by the surgeons to be past. Lord Lovell's mind became free from illusions;—the fever subsided;—and it was clear that the disguised nurse must depart also.—The patient was accordingly informed by Sir Richard that his faithful attendant was gone to fulfil another engagement. “God prosper her, for verily her care hath been a benediction to me!”—was his only comment. But every hour, he missed her more and more; fretting unceasingly after her prompt and tender vigilance. “It may seem a weakness,” said he one day to General Lovell, “but, so long as that good woman abided here, I experienced the indescribable charm of female companionship. There were times when I could have sworn that a voice was sounding in my ears, dearer than any earthly sound. I even fancied, in moments half dream,—half waking,—that a beloved face was bending over me and watching my slumbers. I could almost wish my days of peril to return, to restore such exquisite illusions.”

The general, meanwhile, had not been inactive. At the earliest moment of Lord Lovell's convalescence, he hastened to reply in person to the royal missive which had at last reached his hands; and to entreat, in his nephew's name, that the king would graciously please to withdraw his displeasure from the Duke of Buckingham. The court was now settled for the winter at Whitehall. During Lord Lovell's danger, the duke had remained in concealment, and was still under sentence of proscription; but by taking upon himself the whole blame of the duel, Lovell gave a welcome plea for the ready clemency of the king.

“You have craved my indulgence for Buckingham in my friend Arthur's name,” observed Charles, after gracefully according the petition, “why not in your own?—Reflect how much I am your debtor, beyond the paltry sums whereof Clarendon hath already secured you payment; and gratify me, my dear general, by some personal request?”—

“*My* days are done,—I have nothing to hope or to desire!”—replied the blunt old man.

“*Nothing?*—I wish you heartily joy!”—retorted Charles with a smile. “Oddsfish, if that's the case, man, you're happier than the king!”—

“Your majesty remembers me of old, a murmuring and discontented man,” observed Sir Richard. “But the event which I wasted my days and nights in fretting for is, by the mercy of Providence, achieved. The throne and the altar are re-established in the land of my forefathers.”

“Have at least the grace to say that my majesty is restored to the throne of *his!*”—cried the king with a smile, perceiving that nobody was within hearing. “So may the cordiality of your congratulations make up for their tardiness!”—

But Sir Richard made no reply.

“If his memory can compass so wide a span as a quarter of a century,” resumed the king, “let Sir Richard Lovell recall the period when his daily lesson to a wilful boy, committed by the tenderest of fathers to his charge, was—‘Forgive your enemies, that your enemies may become friends!—Pardon the trespasses of others, that your own may be pardoned.’—That boy hath grown into a man,—among whose countless faults vindictiveness was never yet detected. Hath the governor contracted that unchristianly failing from which his lessons so happily secured his pupil?—No, no;—your hand, sir! Let us be friends; and be the first proof of your good will an appeal to mine. Our prerogatives of the crown are somewhat abridged, my dear general, since you first impressed upon your pupil the value of the word. Nevertheless, some virtue yet resides in it.—Tell me—how can I serve you?”

The tone and look with which these affectionate words were spoken thawed the long-congealed loyalty of Sir Richard Lovell. He was unable to withhold his hand from the outstretched hand of the king.

“By assisting in bringing together, in happy wedlock, those whom God hath joined and evil thoughts divided!” was his reply. “I should die content, sire, could I behold my nephew and niece dwelling together in peaceful union at Lovell House.”

“Tut, man!—’t is surely no such hard matter to bring a fine young man into grace with a fine young woman, and *vice versa!*”—cried the king. “’Twill need no stretch of tyranny to make matters even betwixt them. Leave Arthur Lovell to my guidance; and the queen will desire no better task than to try *her* eloquence upon the perverse lady, who, of all our English dames, hath won furthest into the heart of her majesty. If we can only so far amend your motion, as to fix the happy couple one part of the year in our household at Whitehall, I shall be as pleased as yourself with my office.”

As soon, therefore, as Lord Lovell was able to sit up, the good-humoured monarch sauntered as a familiar friend to his chamber; and bestowed, with due liberality, on the sick man, all that was harboured in his memory of such sermons and orations in praise of matrimony, as, for the last twelve months, had been dinned into his royal ears. But the effort was unavailing. Both master and scholar soon grew weary of the theme.

“By St. Ursula and her eleven thousand! ’t will never do,”

cried Charles, expanding into a hearty laugh. "I can never put the right serious face upon the matter. I see you look askance at me, Arthur, my lad; just as *I* used to glance at poor Clarendon, when meditating an escape from one of his matrimonific homilies.—One word must serve for all.—Next week, you are to come abroad and look about you. Your first visit is due to *me*, in gratitude for my clemency towards the disobedience which had all but deprived me of one old friend, and made me send to Newgate another. On Monday, my dear Lovell, I shall expect you. The queen hears music in her private apartments. Among her majesty's guests, remember, will be one whom I would fain have you fairly contemplate, ere you finally decline all overture of reconciliation. The presence of a certain fair lady, whom I understand from his grace of Buckingham you rescued from a mysterious ambuscade some two months ago, need not, I trust, interfere with your consideration of Lady Lovell."

Interdicting all reply, the king took leave of the invalid; and Lord Lovell was provoked beyond measure to find himself pledged to an engagement so unsatisfactory. But elated to the highest pitch by the idea of accompanying his nephew to a court in which he was beginning to found hopes of prosperity for the nation, and of gratification for himself, Sir Richard would hear of no pretext for absenting himself.

"I see through your design,—I clearly discern your intention to flurry me into entanglements with Lady Lovell, from which I may not afterwards recede.—You will take advantage of an unguarded moment, to betray me into advances which I forewarn you, my dear uncle, can be productive of no result," cried the invalid.

"Fore heaven! the fellow's obstinacy waxes greater than ever!"—cried the old man. "I had hoped that so much probing and leeching would relieve your veins of their bitter Digby blood. Trust me, Arthur, I have better sport in hand than to trouble myself with your likings or dislikings, your freezings or thawings. The king hath invited all the old Wor'ster men to do honour to my reappearance at court; and, betwixt ourselves, a royal order is already issued to old Cibber, the marble-carver, for a monument of honour to the memory of one most dear to us, of which the old Abbey yonder will have news to tell, for centuries to come.—Rowley hath wiped off scores with the house of Lovell.—Let us not be churlish in refusing to acknowledge his just payment of the family debt."

It was with a heavy heart, however, that Lovell suffered Mateo to arrange the points of the rich suit of garnet-coloured velvet, with facings of sable fur, provided by the general to cherish his invalid condition; and the paleness of his face and sharpness of

his handsome features became doubly apparent when arrayed in the flowing richness of courtly gear. Leaning on the arm of Sir Richard, he traversed the state apartments.

Already, a brilliant crowd was assembled; and as the doors of the music-room were thrown open, the Duke and Duchess of York, with their suite, made their appearance. Brilliantly illuminated, the gallery seemed doubly resplendent with the sparkling of female beauty. Ranged around the queen, sat the Ladies Chesterfield, Radnor, Shrewsbury, Montagu, Bedford, Falmouth, Southesk, Feversham, Lyttleton;—while in the recess of the window, behind the throne, stood five out of the six lovely maids of honour, whose freaks were supposed to tax just then to the utmost the patience of Mademoiselle de la Garde, the far-famed “mother of the maids.” Those beauteous faces which the pencil of Lely has immortalised, with their sleepy eyes, velvet skins, and pouting lips, were there in all their winning plenitude of youth and loveliness.

But amid the blooming groups assembled, like knots of clustering flowers, the agitated Lovell looked in vain for the demure countenance and downcast eyes of his wife. It was not at Whitehall that he could be guided to recognition of her person, as in the Mall, from her leaning upon the arm of his old aversion, Mistress Corbet; and he had unluckily exacted a promise from his uncle, that no step should be taken to point them out to each other.

The concert commenced. One of the fine symphonies recently composed by Matthew Locke, to be introduced into the play of Macbeth, filled the groined ceiling with its fine imaginative harmonies; and during the performance, the eyes of Lord Lovell, who was reclining pale and anxious against one of the columns of the gallery, wandered from point to point, in search of one whom they longed yet dreaded to behold. The general, out of patience with his abstraction, had made off to the opposite extremity of the gallery, in company with old Russell, of the Foot Guards, of minuet celebrity; and was watching from afar the movements of more than one member of the gay assemblage. At last, he detected a faint start; and in a moment, a hectic flush overspread the pale face of Lord Lovell.

Beside the venerable Countess of Carlisle, who had been induced by the personal request of the queen to forego for once her beloved retirement, sat the beautiful friend of the Duke of Buckingham;—her snowy draperies looped with orient pearl,—a circlet of brilliants confining the rich tresses of her raven hair.—At the close of a military symphony, which appeared the signal for a general movement, Lord Lovell ventured to approach her; and the heart of the attentive veteran beat quicker than it had done for twenty years before, as he watched the event of the interview.

Again, Lord Lovell started, when, after a low obeisance, his compliments of ceremony elicited a brief reply from the lovely lady.—It was the voice of his gentle nurse.—The mild eyes fixed upon him were hers,—the sweet breath uttering his name was her own,—a pang of mingled wonder and delight, too acute to bear, rushed through his fainting heart; and Sir Richard reached the spot scarcely in time to assist in bearing him from the gallery. With the aid of Lord Arran, Lovell was quickly conveyed into a small withdrawing-room, adjoining the private entrance of the queen.

“I was to blame not to foresee this!” cried Charles, who, on the rumour of the sudden illness of Lord Lovell, had followed the party. “Stand aside, my dear general.—’T is neither your face nor mine he must gain sight of when he comes to himself.—Nay, madam, draw not away!—Remember, your word is pledged to Charles Stuart, that my friend’s probation is at an end.—Look up, Arthur!—revive to happiness and love!—I ask you again, as you were asked aforetime at the altar—‘Wilt thou take this woman to be thy wedded wife?’—*Your* indulgence, fair lady, is still to be entreated.—Let the silence of his deep emotion plead for him. No bending of knees, Arthur, you are still under my word of command; but lo! from this hour, your king and governor delegates his authority over you to the noblest of women and of wives.—Cherish her as she deserves. Her forbearance hath been tried enough to last out the remnant of both your lives!”—

* * * * *

I do not write for that dull maid,
To whom it must in terms be said

that the happiness of this second union effaced all memory of the misfortunes attending the first.—Lovell House became renowned in the history of the times for its princely hospitalities and domestic peace; and though upon old Elias Wright’s entreaty that his old age might be comforted by the return of his nephew and niece to Dalesdene, now that the presence of the auditor was no longer of daily import, yet to the last day of his life, the general remained a happy inmate at Dickon’s Fort; where it was part of the serjeant’s duty to train old Stark and Sturm into good manners, so as not to interfere with the visits of little Arthur Lovell to his grand-uncle.

Once a-year, the families of Corbet, Shum, and Wright, made it a point of conscience, in compliance with the earnest invitations of their benefactress, to unite under her roof; when, if an accidental pleasantry served for a moment to recall the misunderstandings of less happy days, a guilty blush would overspread the countenance of Lovell, till cheered by the affectionate smiles of his wife.

To the invitations of his majesty that the last of the Lovells should accept some permanent office in the royal household, the prudent husband showed himself less subservient; the lingering effects of his wound enabling him to plead ill health as a pretext for respectful refusal.

We read of the Lovells as occasional sharers in the princely hospitalities of Whitehall; but it is not till the reign of Anne, and in the person of their eldest son, that we find the name inscribed in the annals of public life.

Some trifling mementos of this singular family history are still in existence.—The terrace, the canal, the old quince tree, retain their primitive simplicity; the portrait by Vandyke, almost its original strength of colouring.—Within sight of these memorials, and aided by a diligent perusal of family records, we have communicated, under fictitious names, the true history of a **COURTIER OF CHARLES II.**

THE LEPER-HOUSE OF JANVAL.



AMONG the unquiet reigns succeeding the epoch of the Norman conquest, which established a third race of aliens and foreigners in authority over the harassed mother country, that of Stephen,—harassed by perpetual struggles with the Empress Matilda and her son,—was, perhaps, the most uneasy to the sovereign, the most unsatisfactory to the people.

Henry I. had been endured on the throne by his English subjects, chiefly in deference to his union with a Saxon princess, the niece of Edgar Atheling. Though the haughty manners of the queen estranged from her, in the sequel, the hearts of her own people, while the Normans, instead of being propitiated by her renouncement of her Saxon name of Edith for the Norman one of Matilda, persisted in asserting the Saxon princess to be a recanted nun, devoted in childhood to the altar by her aunt, the Abbess of Wilton,—still, her influence promoted peace in the land.—There was every prospect that, in the person of her son, Prince William, the Saxon and Norman races united, would uphold undisputed sway over the kingdom.

There were those, however, among the English, who still predicted evil from the results of a sacrilegious marriage. Many were heard to declare that, so long as Edgar Atheling survived in exile in Normandy, the representatives of his niece could have no lawful claim to the English throne; while others boldly related reports of Prince William's animosity to his maternal kindred;—the son of Maud, reared by Norman preceptors, having been heard to protest that his English subjects should be trained like oxen to the plough, as worthy only to become beasts of burden to the Normans.

The evil intentions of the heir-apparent were fated to be frustrated by that fatal catastrophe, which history commemorates as having filled with lamentations not only the palace of the sovereign, but the mansions of the Norman nobility. King Henry, when on the point of embarking from Harfleur for England with his court, after pacificating the Dukedom of Normandy, was unluckily accosted by a Norman privateer, who, after presenting on the strand a mark of gold to the king, in token of feudal service, made claim to the monopoly of conveying the royal *cortège* across the channel;

and, lo ! at midnight, on the eve of St. Catherine, the *Blanche Nef*, manned by fifty gallant oarsmen, and bearing the two sons, the daughter and nephew of the King of England, quitted the port ; and, in a tranquil sea, without visible motive for the calamity, struck upon a fatal ledge of a rock, then known as the *Ras de Catte*.

The cries of the crew reached even unto the king's ship ; but so little was Henry prepared for the calamity, that, on landing in England, he persisted in asserting that the *Blanche Nef* had put back into port ; nor was it till the sole survivor of the crew made known the piteous fact that Prince William, having fairly escaped the wreck, had returned to receive on board a favourite daughter of his father, and been lost, through a number of his noble companions leaping into the boat, that Henry became convinced of the extent of his misfortune.

From that hour to the day of his death, the countenance of the afflicted king was unvisited by a smile. Beholding in this severe dispensation of Providence the chastisement of his cruelties towards his brother Robert, and of his unlawful marriage, he began to apprehend that his fated line was destined never to reign in England.

“ I have failed to propitiate the wrath of Providence ! ” murmured the King. “ Albeit the rich foundation of Reading Abbey hath appeased the rancour of the clergy, it hath done nought to conciliate the indignation of a jealous GOD. The line of William the Norman is a destined line. It is written—*La race de l'enfant bâtard périra !* ”

The prudent counsels of Anselmus, the Archbishop, suggested, however, that, instead of indulging in unavailing regrets, much might be done to secure the succession to the throne for his daughter,—the youthful widow of the Emperor, Henry V. of Germany ; in obedience to which advice, the Empress Maud was invited and welcomed with royal state to Windsor Castle, to receive the allegiance of the barons of England, as heiress-apparent to the crown.

The pride of a warlike nation might have been expected to rebel against this substitution of a female ruler, at a period when every man's foot was in the stirrup, and every man's hand on his sword. But pity pleaded for King Henry. It was no moment to thwart the desires of the afflicted man. The youth and beauty of the imperial widow wrought wonders in her favour with the chivalrous youth of the kingdom. Certain of the higher nobility cherished secret hopes of being honoured by the king with her hand. Others venerated the Empress as the sole representative, in name and nature, of her Saxon mother (styled on her tomb at Winchester—*MATILDIS REGINA, ab Aglis vocata MOLD, THE GODE QUENE* ;⁽¹⁾), and not a few mentally reserved to themselves absolvment from their oath of allegiance, in case the young Earl of Blois, son to Adela,

(1) *Apſtſia Sacra*, p. 397.

sister of the Conqueror, could be prevailed on to attempt a second invasion.

The Empress, meanwhile, in the fullest bloom of youth and beauty, gave herself up to the propitious seeming of the time, without much heed of the secret intentions of her obsequious vassals. As yet, too young and fair for ambition, her youth was spent among the deteriorating brilliancies of a court. Transplanted, in thoughtless girlhood, from the somewhat pedantic precincts of the palace of Westminster, beset at that period by learned clerks and ambitious priests, to the gay imperial court, with all its array of chivalry, its vivid heraldry, joyous tournaments, and gentle arts of poesy and song, the young empress had passed in review the gallant nobles of Hainault, Brabant, Saxony, ere, in her early widowhood, she returned to present herself before the iron-handed barons of Britain; and though she came prepared to be an object of idolatry to the courtiers of her father, and to see the knees of men and the eyes of women bend down before her, she was pre-resolved that neither the savage English thanes (her father's reluctant subjects), nor the rude Norman barons (her mother's ferocious enemies), should obtain an ascendancy over her heart. She would be a queen,—every inch a queen! She would enjoy the revenues of the crown, trifle with the liberties of the people, repress the insolence of the barons, and enjoy the sports and pastimes of her sex, without paying a tribute in return to its feelings or frailties. Love was not for one of royal degree. There were chancellors and archbishops to hold in charge her conscience and her immortal soul. The youthful sovereign reserved to herself the care of her heart.

This resolution was speedily put to the proof. In the course of the jousts and tournaments which followed the solemn convocation confirming the succession in the female line, the youthful Empress was more than once required to bestow the palm of victory upon a certain Sir Kenric Ceorcil, only son of the Saxon earl Waltham; a youth whose high accomplishments threw into the shade those of the gallant Norman nobles flourishing under the protection of the court.

Now Sir Kenric was regarded as the flower of English knights; and when, at the close of the day, the young Empress invested him with a scarf of gold, embroidered by her own fair hands, and woven in her colours, the Harcourts, Montaignes, Alyottes, Mortemers, Noels, and all the horde of foreign adventurers, honoured with posts of state, bit their tilting-gloves for very shame at being thus overmastered by one of the native boors of the uncivilised land they deigned to plunder for a maintenance. But the fault was their own. Their presumption of skill and valour had suggested a challenge to all England, in honour of the fair Matilda;

else had not the son of a Saxon *Tiern* presumed to wield arms within the privileged lists of the royal castle of Windsor.

Still deeper was their shame when, at the banquet and ball following this chivalrous display, they beheld Sir Kenric graced with the especial notice of their future queen and the noble ladies glittering in her train. King Henry, on dissolving the baronial council held in the grand hall of the castle, had entreated pardon for absenting himself from the ensuing entertainments in a spot where, but a year before, his gallant son had borne off the prizes of the tourney; and the youthful Empress was consequently sole occupant of the throne of state; but it was judged no derogation that she should mingle in the dance, led successively by the earls of Devon and Hereford, and young Geoffrey, son to Fulk, Earl of Anjou, the ward of King Henry during his father's absence in the Holy Land; and Maud,—who united the accomplishments of foreign countries with the fair-visagedness and modesty of her own,—acquitted herself so gracefully under the guidance of these distinguished cavaliers, that even the Lady Godfreda d'Ypres—(the favoured friend of her deceased mother, appointed by King Henry, as a woman of renowned virtue and prudence, to officiate as keeper of his daughter's household)—could espy nothing to amend in the deportment of her charge.

The Norman lords, however, saw much cause for blame, when—under sanction, as they supposed, of the Lady Godfreda, the English governante, the Saxon duenna,—her Majesty dismounted once more from the throne to the dancing-floor, conducted by a partner no less obnoxious than Sir Kenric of Waltheam!—An unseemly murmur arose in the hall, which nought but the presence of the solemn chamberlains with their wands, and the attendance of yeomen with their partisans, availed to subdue into decorum.

Indignant at this presumptuous show of displeasure on the part of her vassals, her mother's haughty spirit broke out for the first time in Matilda. Instead of shrinking rebuked by the dissatisfaction of the court, the Empress redoubled her show of favour towards the noble Saxon she was honouring with her hand. On her other partners, she had scarcely deigned to bestow a token of notice: with Sir Kenric, she entered cheerfully into conversation. The young knight was recently returned from Ratisbon, where the Empress flattered herself she had made a highly advantageous impression; and to his replies to her interrogatories touching the friends she had reluctantly left behind, Matilda listened with such sparkling eyes and varying complexion, that the Lady Godfreda, uninstructed of the cause of her pupil's emotion, began to view with some uneasiness a scene likely to give rise to cruel misconstructions.

“My gentle friend, the Princess Isolina, should have furnished

you with a token to my presence," observed the Empress, on learning that the young knight had been her highness's inmate in her castle of St. Poltz. "Tidings from her friends in Germany, are ever welcome to Matilda."

"I had the glory, madam," returned the knight, with grace and dignity, "of bearing to England, both from the Earl of Hainault, and the Duchess of Austria, gifts and letters for your Majesty, which I duly delivered to the hands of your seneschal, to be entrusted to those of the Lady Godfreda."

"Letters,—gifts?"—cried the Empress, with surprise.

"A cross and chalice of gold of Augsburg work," replied Sir Kenric, "and a chaplet of onyx, consecrated at the shrine of Maria Zell."

"And how came it," demanded the Empress, turning by sudden impulse towards her duenna, "that these tokens were remitted to my hand without intimation that they were intended to bespeak my favour for the bearer?"—

"I crave your Majesty's pardon," replied the Lady Godfreda, (using her native dialect, in trust not to be understood by the Normans by whom they stood surrounded,) "for having adhered so closely to your royal father's instructions as to recognise the imprudence of bestowing public notice upon an English subject, whereat the foreign favourites, cheered by the sunshine of the throne, might be moved to take umbrage."

This reproof, intended to recall the empress to a sense of her indiscretion in prolonging a parley with the English knight honoured with her colours in the lists, and her hand in the dance, served only to aggravate the mischief. A sense of her recent accession of consequence swelled in the bosom of the youthful sovereign. She was a woman,—had been an empress,—was to be a queen! Why submit to be lectured by a prudish woman, who had survived the age of grace and gallantry?

Aloud, in French, and with marked significance, accordingly, did Maud intimate to Sir Kenric of Waltham her commands to present himself on the morrow at her apartments in the eastern tower of Windsor Castle.

The graceful, silent, and reverent obeisance with which this dangerous token of favour was received by the English knight, would probably have provoked a second murmur from the courtly throng, had not Maud, directing at that moment round the circle a stern glance of her clear blue eye, imposed silence upon the malcontents. Not a word was spoken, not a look adventured towards the graceful form of the retreating cavalier, who had accepted the words of the empress as a form of dismissal.

The lovely daughter of the king retired to dream of the noble person, expressive countenance, and mellifluous voice of the young

Saxon, who had thrown all competitors for her smiles into eclipse; while the discontented barons were scarcely less excited by newly-awakened apprehensions that they might behold an English subject promoted to the English throne, and be compelled to bow the knee to one whom the rules of precedence and laws of conquest pointed out as their inferior.

Their fears, however, were premature. No Sir Kenric presented himself to do homage to the royal lady, who esteemed herself more highly as queen of human hearts, than as a dowager empress, or sovereign expectant. Vainly did Maud chafe and wonder at the absence of her protégé; vainly dispatch her maids of honour and waiting gentlewomen, to inquire of this usher and that seneschal, whether a young knight, wearing a scarf of crimson and blue, had sued for admittance to her presence. The English knight was seen no more at Windsor Castle. Either the prudence of the Lady Godfreda had alarmed the precautions of the king, and secured his banishment from court; or the callous coldness of his English nature rendered him insensible to favours, the mere witnessing of which had set the blood of the Norman nobility in a ferment.

If, however, the interference of the king purported to obliterate the dangerous impression made on the heart of the future queen of England by one whom policy forbade her to elevate to the throne, the project evinced little knowledge of the human heart. Matilda, who would have perhaps seen less to admire in Sir Kenric on a more familiar acquaintance, began to dwell perilously on his attractions the moment she conceived him to be forcibly detained from her presence. Every word of their interview was recalled and re-recalled; every look stored in her memory; every gesture remembered with partiality. She felt that she had lost a friend in the gallant partisan who had so chivalrously won and so gracefully worn her colours.

In vain did the Lady Godfreda remonstrate against the indelicacy of her inquiries, and the imprudence of her regrets. The young empress scrupled not to avow that, were she assured of the interposition of the king, her father, in preventing the advances of Sir Kenric, she would abide no longer at Windsor Castle to be subjected to espionage and tyranny; but, returning to Germany, live frugally but independently upon her dower, with the privilege of enjoying the society of her choice, and treading a measure when and where she listed, with partners of suitable degree.

“I pray your majesty to recollect, ere these imprudent sayings transpire, and alienate from your royal person the hearts of the commons of England,” quoth Lady Godfreda, “that the fair and fertile island over which your future sovereignty is appointed, is well worth the sacrifice of a coranto. It were a degrading fact to be commented upon by the princesses of Christendom, that the

widow of the German Cæsar sat wailing in her bower chamber, because a fair-visaged adventurer scorned to avail himself of her too gracious invitations. The man may be wedded, madam, or betrothed; and his affianced lady evince reluctance to have his feelings exposed to the courtesies of one whose happiness her friends ardently desire to see secured by prudent wedlock."

"Sir Kenric of Waltheam is neither wed nor like to wed!"—retorted Maud. "Thus far my inquiries have determined. What further they may detect concerning him, I know not. But should harshness or evil dealing be included in my discoveries, I make the cause of the innocent my own, and pledge my word to repay heavily hereafter the smallest injury sustained in my behalf by my noble champion."

Induced by the remarks of her lady governante, whom she knew to be honoured with her father's confidence, to fear that Sir Kenric might in sooth be made to pay a heavy penalty for the distinctions she had rashly accorded him, the young empress applied to her half-brother, Robert Fitzroy, Earl of Gloucester (an illegitimate son, on whom King Henry had recently bestowed a name, a title, and a wealthy bride), to ascertain the cause of Ceoreil's absenting himself from court.

But the answers hazarded by Gloucester served only to augment her vexation. He replied by entreating his sister to banish Sir Kenric from her recollection, since it needed but a show of further favour on her part, to draw down on the object of her care the most cruel persecutions of the king.

"Be warned by the fate of our uncle Robert!"—whispered the Earl of Gloucester. "That he was an obstacle to the projects of the king, sufficed to condemn him to a barbarous extinction of sight, and eighteen years' imprisonment."

Against the frightful inference thus hinted, the young empress began loudly to exclaim. But, in the midst of her anxieties on account of one whom a single interview had thus unaccountably promoted to her good graces, King Henry signified his intention to proceed to Normandy, to demand from his vassals the same pledge of allegiance to his daughter, which he had received from his commons of England; and Matilda, who, from her early marriage and long residence in Germany had been prevented accompanying her father in former expeditions, was gladdened by the prospect of beholding the cradle of her illustrious ancestors,—the castle of Rollo, the founder of her line,—the early abode of her grandfather, the Conqueror,—the sunny meads of the Seine,—the gorgeous churches,—the princely dwellings of Caen and Rouen.

With the versatility of her sex, she soon ceased to trouble her thoughts for the courteous knight who had done service for her in the lists; and, though Sir Kenric was known to have disappeared

mysteriously from the dwelling of Earl Waltheam, and was lamented of the English nobility as a most accomplished youth, who, by force or stratagem had come to wrong, Matilda embarked in her gorgeous galley, without so much as a prayer to the king that search might be made into the affair, and the aggressors yielded to punishment.

Glad was the heart of the lovely young empress when, after a day's propitious sailing, the white cliffs of Fécamp appeared in sight. Her life had been a series of progresses and triumphs. She had become habituated to the glare and tumult of festivity, till the heart within her was hardened by the atmosphere of pomp and ostentation. The wrongs of the oppressed, the sorrows of the poor, were forgotten, while her young eye dwelt upon glittering jewels, shining silks, and waving plumes. As she presided peerless over the lists, or sat aloft listening to the minstrelsies and clashing goblets of the gorgeous banquet, there was no world elsewhere for Matilda!—

A heavy lesson, however, was in store for her. The Saxon parentage which so recommended her to her English subjects, created an equal prejudice against her among the Norman lieges of King Henry. The bold barons of the duchy swore that they would rather groan again under the sceptre of Robert the Devil, than submit to be swayed by a distaff; and, contrary to all that might have been anticipated from a country so civilized, her beauty, instead of working miracles in her favour, was converted into a cause of offence.

“This woman,” cried the rough barons of Tancarville, Eu, and Harcourt, “hath no thought save for the jingling of minstrels, and garniture of robes of estate. Give her the jewels and carcanets of the duchesses of Normandy, and a tiring-glass wherein to view her fair visage, and send her back content to Westminster!—But for *us*, a warrior for time of need;—for *us*, a grave councillor for strait of peril;—for *us*, a chief who, in his chain-mail, and mounted on a gallant war-horse, can lead us on to victory!—No mincing woman-sovereigns for Normandy!—’Tis contrary to feudal usage,—’tis contrary to decent usage,—’tis contrary to sense and judgment!—If King Henry must choose a successor, be it his young nephew, Stephen of Blois, whom he might have wedded with this fair-faced widow, ere the count took to himself a bride of his own selection.—Stephen is a brave and stalwart man. To Stephen will we gladly do service for our land. But away with this woman-prince, whose sceptre is a gittern, and whose senate a council of coifs and stomachers!” The gauntlet thus thrown down, all Normandy stood forward to resist the summons of the king. Instead of the triumphs predicted to her, the young Empress found herself contemned as the illegitimate off-

spring of a revolted nun,—as a pretender and usurper. Ecclesiastics, from the pulpit, denounced the daughter of “Sister Edith, of Wilton Abbey, falsely styled Matilda, Queen of England.”—

“Behold!” said they, “the hand of Providence is on the generation of the blasphemer of the altar. With the prince, her son, perished the pride and prime of the noble houses of Normandy; and, for the princess, her daughter, a yet more fearful sentence shall be accomplished!—The man who weds with Maud shall be stricken with the sword; and with foul disease the children born unto them.—Therefore, oh therefore, be the race accursed in Normandy! Let them not sit in the seat of our rulers. Let them not defile the steps of our altars. Home with them to the land of the Saxon and the idolater!”

These hostilities were clearly stirred up by the party which, from the catastrophe of Prince William’s grievous end, had been rallying round the standard of the Earl of Blois. But they were not the less alarming to Henry and his daughter. The king, who, from the agonizing hour which bereaved him of three of his offspring, had been overwhelmed with melancholy, appeared to hearken with peculiar despondence to the denunciations of the church. Though aware of the falsehood of the allegation against his wife, (who, though bred in a convent, had, from personal repugnance, refused to pronounce the vows of the order,) the unhappy king doubted not that his cruelty to his captive brother had called down upon his head the ire of Providence. The premature death of his sons and son-in-law seemed to inspire terror of his alliance; for no suitors presented themselves for the hand of his daughter, whose beauty and heirship to the throne of England placed her above all other princesses of Christendom.

“I shall not live to fold a grandchild in my arms,” was the ever-recurring cry of King Henry.—“My race is doomed!—Beauclerk will bequeath no inheritors to the loyalty of Britain.”—

His anxieties were shortly increased by the troubles of a neighbouring state. Fulk, Count of Anjou, (surnamed, from his custom of bearing a branch of broom or *genest* upon his helm in guise of plume, “*Plante genest*,” a name afterwards Anglicised into Plantagenet,) was pursuing, in conformance with the spirit of the times, his fanatic adventures in the East, leaving his country to be harassed by cruelties and exactions; and Henry, who had volunteered his protection to young Geoffrey, the heir of Anjou, could not refuse his aid in reducing to submission the turbulent Angevine nobles, who took upon themselves the control of his inheritance.

Abandoning, therefore, his personal dissensions with his Norman subjects, the king placed himself at the head of a numerous army, and marched towards Angers;—leaving the young Empress and her train, with a sufficient escort of men-at-arms, intrenched in

the strong Castle of Arques, in Talon, one of the most important citadels of Normandy.

The impatience of the fair Maud, at this sudden change of prospects, was scarcely to be controlled. Already she had imbibed the strongest prejudices against Normandy and the Normans, by whom her rights were so insolently impugned; and to devote to the dreariness of a gloomy fortress, in a sequestered valley, those golden hours of youth which she had trusted to enjoy amid the gorgeous halls of Westminster or Winchester, and the trophied galleries of Windsor, was a cruel disappointment. Of all her female train, there was only one, the Lady Ada de Tancarville, whose society was supportable to the spoiled heiress of the English throne; and even against *her*, the king, her father, had breathed a word of warning at parting.

“Confide not too tenderly to any of Norman birth,” said the king, on taking his way from the stern embattlement of Arques. “These people love thee not, my dear Maud, and will be apt to spread snares for thy undoing.”

Nevertheless, when the young empress observed with what zeal her fair companion laboured, even in that secluded spot, to minister to her enjoyments, it would have been black ingratitude to persist in the mistrust suggested by the king. The Lady Ada despatched messengers to her father’s castle, at Tancarville, to procure, for the recreation of her lady, the choice falcons in which the old baron took delight. She managed to train for her entertainment a company formed of the acolytes of the church of St. Remy of Dieppe, by whom mysteries were performed in the grand hall of the donjon; and, while the empress, surrounded by her maidens and women, whiled out the summer day upon the battlements of the watch-tower, commanding the beautiful valley of Arques, with its noble forest, rich pastures, and winding stream, procured the favour of Sire Guy de Harcourt, the governor, to exercise his billmen and bowmen in mimic warfare in the vale below—a fitting sport and pastime for the leisure of a queen.—

For these considerate attentions, the lovely Maud was duly grateful; and the influence of Lady Ada soon exceeded that of any former favourite. The empress loved to sit alone with her noble attendant, beneath the canopy erected upon the platform on the donjon, to shelter her from the summer heats, engaged in deep discussion of the mysteries of religion, politics, love, or attire.

The jealous rivals of the Lady Ada adduced the two latter topics as exclusively occupying the attention of the noble ladies; the faithful partisans of Maud, the former. But it was in presence of her whole train, that the Count de Tancarville’s daughter acquainted the empress that a minstrel of singular proficiency had been, for some days, exercising his art in the guard-room, for the diversion of the soldiery.

“It were shame and scandal to have it whispered,” persisted the wily lady, “that there came a minstrel to the gates of Arques; and that there were none to show favour towards the *gaie science* but a bluff captain and his unlettered men-at-arms.”

On this hint, the ladies of the young empress surrounded her with entreaties, that the minstrel might be admitted to her royal presence that very afternoon; when Maud, after some show of reluctance, either real or feigned, acceded to their prayer. Her majesty’s almoner, Brother Anselmus de Gisors, was required to be in attendance, to afford countenance to this introduction of a stranger into the royal sanctuary; and it was noticed, that the learned priest and the Norman lady in waiting, exchanged significant glances when, on the entrance of the minstrel, the empress half started from her seat, and, after manifest and uncontrollable changes of countenance, let fall her veil over her face as she gave ear to the strains with which her young countryman was emboldened to amuse her royal leisure.

For, though the Norman ladies by whom, as a token of conciliation, King Henry had seen fit to surround the empress, noted only in the *jongleur* a youth too manly and stalwart for his graceful calling,—one who had far better become the lists of chivalry than the clerklly weeds in which he was habited,—the daughter of king Henry beheld in the intruder the well remembered knight who, in the tilting-yard at Windsor, had so gallantly worn her colours, —Sir Kenric of Waltheam, the flower of the Saxon chivalry!—

PART II.

FROM that eventful hour, all was changed in the Castle of Arques. Instead of the listlessness wherewith the princess had heretofore sat amid her maidens, watching with weary eyes the progress of their embroidery, or listening with uneasy ears to the tedious homilies of Father Galfridus, the chaplain, she now began to betray unwonted care in the choosing of her tires and the readiness of her palfrey for morning exercise. Her monotonous walk upon the battlements no longer sufficed her; the bracing air of the cliffs by Candecôte being necessary for the maintenance of her health, or the cool shade of the wood by St. Nicolas d’Alihermont for her refreshment.

No one found aught to urge against this sudden accession of activity. There was peace in the country. Brawlers were not likely to intrude upon her majesty’s pleasures; and those of the little court who had been overpowered by the contagion of royal ennui, were right glad to adopt, without too curious investigation, a happier frame of spirit. Cheerfulness shone upon the brow of

the young empress, health dawned in brighter colours upon her cheek; and the knights and dames of her train rejoiced at being authorized to resume their health and happiness.

Lady Ada de Tancarville had little difficulty in obtaining from her kinsman, the governor, that the companies of spearmen and bowmen, appointed for the especial escort of the empress in these equestrian expeditions, should consist of picked men, the vassals of the Count de Tancarville; whose soldiers were of high account in the king's army for discipline and training. Thus encompassed, Maud was at liberty to go and come as she listed; sometimes to take her pleasure in the noble pastime of hawking; sometimes to dream away refreshing hours on the sea-shore beneath the cliffs by Pourville; sometimes to penetrate towards the ancient Gaulic intrenchment or city of refuge, which bore the name of Cæsar's camp, purporting to have been an oppidum of the epoch of the Roman invasion.

It was summer,—gorgeous, glowing, glorious summer. The woods with their trembling foliage, the sea with its gentle tides, seemed to confess the genial influence of the season. The meads and vales were enamelled with a thousand wild flowers; the shelving downs above embalmed the air with their aromatic herbage; even the stern battlements of the fortress of Arques were rendered fragrant by the yellow blossoms of the wall-flower, bursting into bloom from every rift. The birds poured forth their joyous clamour from the boughs,—the grasshopper was merry in the green field,—the dragon-fly hovered in brilliant elasticity over the reeds of the Bethune and the Saone; and the roughest peasant-boy, labouring in the fields, felt that, in the midst of summer gladness, his heart must expand into song or burst!—

If such the general influence of the season, was it likely that a young and lovely princess, abandoned to the impulses of nature, should listen unmoved to the prayers and protestations of one who, with the connivance of persons engaged for her counsel and protection, was ever by her side?—When Sir Kenric of Waltheam was introduced by the cunning stratagem of the Count de Tancarville's daughter, into the Castle of Arques, the sole sentiment evinced by Maud was surprise. She had almost ceased to think of the hero of her transient love-dream; and, perhaps, would have never more recalled him to mind, but for the art with which the Lady Ada, on learning, in a moment of listless gossip, that the feelings of her royal lady had been for a moment disquieted, brought back to her presence the dangerous English subject, who was likely to distract the empress's wishes from a suitable alliance.

But leisure, listlessness, and the vacuity of mind generated by a right royal education, soon afforded space for the growth of a

master-passion; and the accomplished knight, who was scarcely less than the empress the dupe and victim of the Lady Ada, unconsciously served the purposes of a Norman faction.

The devotion of Sir Kenric towards King Henry's daughter, or rather towards the grand-niece of King Edgar, was a sentiment of mingled loyalty and love. From the moment of beholding her in her Dalmatic robe of satin, studded with golden stars, presiding over the lists at Windsor Castle, the deference he had affected as a stepping-stone to courtly favour became an overwhelming attachment. The counsellors of the king evinced their clear-sightedness in pointing him out to Henry as a youth likely to attempt some rash enterprise to attract the notice of the empress, and promote the interest of the English cause; and so rapid and active had been the precautions taken to intercept all further intercourse between the empress and her young admirer, that the kinsmen and friends of the Earl of Waltheam became alarmed for Sir Kenric's safety; and, ere the knight had time for resistance, he was conducted by his father's authority on board a vessel lying in the Thames, and about to sail for the Mediterranean. Within three days of the tournament at Windsor, while the emissaries of the court were vainly attempting to obtain a clue to his retreat, he had already, in a stout merchantman, passed the channel of St. George.

Sir Kenric meanwhile was irritated beyond all patience, by this undue exercise of paternal authority. On landing in Sicily, instead of pursuing his way to Palestine according to the letter of Earl Waltheam's instructions, he lost no time in retracing his steps towards the Northern Littoral. The partiality of Henry's daughter (pointed out to him by the earl, his father, as a source of peril and loathing), was to *him* a sacred appeal. If Matilda's heart really inclined towards him,—Matilda the empress, whose every word and look was indelibly engraved in his soul,—it was his duty to hasten back to her feet, and devote himself eternally to her will; even if exposed to the utmost enmity of the Norman court,—even in the fatal presence of the king. With this view, defying the surveillance of the trusty squires to whom he had been given in guidance by his father, Sir Kenric fled from Sicily, and sailed for the coast of France.

The pilgrim, after a brief sojourn at Avignon, where the Pope, driven from his Italian States, was then residing, pursued his way towards Toulouse, for the purpose of gaining the north, through Aquitaine and Anjou. In that city of poesy and romance, his strains in honour of the Empress Maud soon attracted such universal admiration, that the Lady Ada, when exercising her ingenuity for the discovery of the object of the empress's dormant affection, had little difficulty in detecting the enamoured Sir Kenric.

in the English troubadour—who had won the golden opinions of Languedoc and Aquitaine by his virelays and feats of arms.

To attract him into Normandy by a pretended message from the descendant of his Saxon princes, was a matter that needed only boldness for the attempt. Within a few weeks of the empress's confidential disclosure to Lady Ada, "that, of all men living, Sir Kenric Georeil had alone excited emotion in her heart," he was standing in presence of his future sovereign!—

Ere a more familiar meeting could be brought to pass, it was essential for the Lady Ada so far to undeceive him, as to admit that the summons was despatched by herself without the participation of her royal mistress. But she protested that she had acted only from zeal to restore health and happiness to her illustrious friend, by recalling to her presence the object of her dearest affections.

So artfully was the game of deceit carried on around the young couple, that it needed not long to insure the smiles and indulgence of the royal recluse of Arques, for the knight who had defied time and place, peril and persecution, for her sake. Encouraged by evil counsel, Sir Kenric scrupled not to declare to the daughter of kings his passionate attachment; while, encouraged by evil counsel, the daughter of kings did not hesitate to avow in return, that she was deeply sensible to his devotion.

Under such auspices, the growth of love is of rapid progress. The Lady Ada, aware that the cautious king had left especial instructions with the Sire d'Harcourt regarding Earl Waltheam's son, had warned him to present himself at the castle as a Provençal minstrel; under which quality, he obtained unmolested access to the empress. Convinced that her father would not for many months return to Normandy, she had no fear that the adventurous knight should be detected by the Normans composing her little court; and, blessing her fate that the age and infirmities of the Lady Godfreda d'Ypres had detained her in England, Matilda acceded to Lady Ada's recommendation, that the Provençal *jongleur* who found such small encouragement among the unlettered boors of Normandy, should be enlisted in her service so long as she remained immured in the iron fortress of Arques.

When, however, for the first time, the empress beheld Earl Waltheam's son habited in her household livery, like some poor hireling minstrel, she felt convinced that the dignity of his department must betray him to the household, or at least to the practised eye of d'Harcourt. She saw how gracefully "William the troubadour" submitted to the duties of his calling; how gaily he recited ballads for the amusement of the chambermaids; how sweetly warbled *complaintes* for the delight of the ladies in waiting; and above all, with what sober and scholar-like discretion he

argued with Brother Anselmus or Father Galfridus.—All these sacrifices were, she knew, made for her sake; and it was difficult to withhold a smile as the reward of so much love!

Already, the songs of the minstrel-knight had made her name renowned at the courts of Raymond of Toulouse, and Roger of Sicily,—the rumour of his devotion to the daughter of Henry of England having drawn the attention of the Tancarville party towards his retreat; and the vanity of her sex enlisted itself with the weakness of her heart, to further the pretensions of the enterprising and interesting stranger.

When *now* she lingered on the battlements in the stillness of the summer twilight, William the *jongleur*, as well as the Lady Ada and her favourite wolf-dog, were suffered to be in attendance; and it was noticed by the warders and sentinels posted on the adjacent turrets, that, so far from witching with minstrelsy the ear of his liege lady during these interviews, the discourse of the provençal with his noble companions was breathed in as low a voice as when Brother Anselmus was admitted to the honour of pouring ghostly counsel into the ear of his royal charge. It was only after the banquet or when seated amid her maidens in the hall, that the troubadour was required to make proof of his skill.

At all other times, the empress seemed to take greater delight in listening to his recital of the wonders of foreign lands; the sweetness of southern countries, with their gentle airs and sunny fruitage; and the pastimes of courts less rude and warrior-like than the kingly circles of Normandy and England. It may be inferred, at least, that such were the themes with which the stranger recreated the ears of the queen. For so closely was William stationed behind her chair of state, or kneeling on the rushes beside her, that it was impossible for the most curious ear to obtain a snatch of their discourse; and it was but from the varying expression of the lady's countenance,—now eager with curiosity, now softened by emotion, now harsh with displeasure and disdain,—that the spectators obtained any index to the subjects on which the eloquence of William was untiringly exercised. The latter sentiment, however, rarely disfigured the lovely countenance of Maud. The projects of the Normans for the empress's enthrallment in a derogatory marriage were thriving almost beyond their expectations!—

Every day, when the palfrey of the princess, with its footcloth and housings of crimson and gold, crossed the drawbridge on her way to the forest, amid the numerous train by which she was escorted, William, though never prominently placed, was ever to be found; ready, in case of emergency, to place his hand upon the rein, or guide the impatient steed of the empress through the fords

by St. Aubin, or up the steeps towards Janval. The minstrel, as by especial privilege, and to lighten the burthen of the way with ditties and romances, was accusomed to pace at the stirrup of the empress or the Lady Ada from the moment they were beyond espial from the castle; and when fairly launched into the country, the princess would bid her guard of bowmen retire to a distance, to insure her from approach; and while her ladies and pages disported themselves in the forest, would proceed onwards with her two favourite companions, to enjoy, secure from molestation, those higher flights of poetry and romance which are never imbibed so sweetly as under the noble canopy of Heaven, while the glorious influence of the works of nature outspread around attune the soul to lofty contemplation.

One of the favourite haunts of the empress was a fair and wooded acclivity situated between Arques and the sea-shore, secure from the frequenting of the neighbouring peasants. For lo! amid its shady recesses stood the *leproserie* or leper-house of Janval!—

At that period, there were many lepers in the land. The constant transit of pilgrims and warriors between Palestine and Christendom was apt to transport the fatal scourge of the Assyrian provinces to the fair field of Europe. Many a city of the south had been again and again desolated by the plague; and many a noble family of the north, afflicted by the spectacle of one of its young and promising members, “a leper as white as snow!” Divers lazar-houses or infirmaries were accordingly set apart for the cure of this hideous distemper; usually served by brothers of the severe religious orders, and avoided by the surrounding population as spots consecrated to misfortune, and marked out by the awful finger of divine wrath.

Among these, was the leper-house, consecrated at Janval to St. Mary Magdalen in the year of grace 1083, by Duke Robert of Normandy, when reigning in his castle of Arques over the province of Talon; and with such repugnance were its precincts regarded by his subjects, that, saving in the intercourse needful to obtain aliments and medicaments for the sick, the brothers ministering to the afflicted inmates of the leper-house presumed not so much as to accost a fellow-creature.

It was towards this fatal spot, nevertheless, that the young empress, to secure to herself unmolested the society of him who alone excited interest in her listless bosom, was fond of directing her wanderings. At the distance of one hundred yards round the *leproserie*, grew an ancient belt or grove of beech-trees; beyond which, the unhappy victims were never suffered to penetrate. They were allowed, indeed, to emerge from the walls only on two days of the week, during the hour succeeding the ringing of the

Angelus. At other times, the beech-grove and its environs were wholly deserted,—a lonely and unfrequented place, where the chaffinches and linnets perched fearless on the lowest boughs, in blessed security from the cruelty of the human race.

Such was the ill-omened trysting-place selected by the empress and her true knight, for the interchange of their vows of affection. In that fated grove, not a sound reached their ears,—not a step startled their solitude,—as they sat together on some mossy mound, enshrouded by the drooping branches of the glossy-stemmed beech-trees; gazing, through their leafy screen, upon the distant ocean, or on the tranquil valley below, with its grazing herds and glassy waters. There needed no prohibition to secure them from the intrusion of even the most privileged straggler of the royal train. Not a breathing soul at Arques, saving the twain who, at all costs, desired to emancipate themselves from observation, would have approached the accursed limits of the *leproserie* of Janval.

“We are safe here!”—was the earnest ejaculation of the empress, whenever they approached the silent confines of the lazaret, whose lofty walls of flint and deeply-embanked moat assumed, on days of strict *clôture*, the aspect of a prison.

“We are safe here!”—echoed the knight, gently leading her towards the closest shelter of the grove, and spreading his cloak upon the ground, that they might sit fast by each other's side, for the interchange of those vows of tenderness which, though now of daily occurrence, were unwearying to their infatuated hearts.

“We are safe here, my beloved, my queen! my idol!—And here, in presence of that Almighty Being in whose sight all men are equal, hear me renew my vows to love and honour thee, in trouble, in sickness, in old age, as in this golden hour of beauty and prosperity! Hear me swear to obey thee as my liege and empress,—to love thee as my bride and mistress!—Though, during thy royal father's lifetime, it were vain and unbecoming to harass him with prayers for sanction to a union so adverse to his views, the infirmities of the king forbid much prolongation of our suspense. There is no reason in recalling to mind, that, in his address spoken last winter to the barons of England, Henry avouched that his anxiety for the regulation of the succession arose from the certitude, that, before many months, he must be summoned to his dread account. When that day, beloved Matilda, shall arrive, the anointed queen of England will have nothing further to fear from the intrigues of factious nobles!—Once on the throne, *thou* wilt be free to avow the preference of thy gentle heart; and *I*, to devote my strength of arm to thy defence.—There shall be no thorn in thy path,—no bitter in thy cup.—The heaviest cloud that overshadoweth thy gentle head shall be no darker than yonder filmy vapour of silvery threads, floating betwixt thee and the clear azure of the summer skies.”

Such words and protestations, uttered by the mellow, manly voice of the seeming minstrel, and enforced by the impassioned glances of the dark eyes fixed upon her face, and the tender grasp of the hands enclasping her own, were as music in the ears of Matilda. She forgot the stern counsels of the king, and the severe lessons of divines and statesmen, as she listened to the vows of Earl Waltham's son. The kingdom of England, the duchy of Normandy, receded from her view. She saw only the fair young knight, to whom every hair of her head was dear as his life's blood; she heard only the rapturous vows which declared her peerless among women;—more than queen,—more than empress,—even the sovereign of his soul!—

Sometimes, carried away by consciousness of his deep affection, the lovely Maud would pass her ivory hand caressingly through the clusters of chestnut hair which mantled round the noble brow of her beloved. Sometimes, bewildered in dreams of future happiness, she painted the joys of that happy time when, supreme in her palace of Westminster or castle of Windsor, she should be at liberty to enthrone him by her side, renouncing her authority as queen, to obtain the holier distinctions of a dutious and loving wife.

“There may be those who will blame thine elevation, my Kenric,” whispered the princess, in these, her softer moods;—“people who know not thy valour, thy nobleness, thy brilliant accomplishments, thy true and trusty heart!—But, even to these murmuring subjects, over-jealous for the honour of their sovereign, we may reply, that, among the Saxon Tierns, none rank higher than Leofric, Earl Waltham, the descendant of our Mercian kings. Whereas, the Norse adventurers, who, after subduing Normandy, were allowed, by the fortune of war, to conquer England——”

“Even when advocating my cause, sweet heart, interrupted Sir Kenric, “disparage not thine own illustrious condition; nor, to efface the disproportion betwixt us, forget that thou art widow of a Cæsar of Germany,—daughter to a king of England!—It is my glory to be indebted to thy love alone, for raising me to equality with thyself. Nay, I would be chosen as the wandering minstrel, rather than as son to a Saxon Thane, or descended from a chief of the heptarchy.—Were I a worm at thy feet, Matilda, thy choice and attachment would honour me above the honour of princes!—Rather be the object of thy gentle love, than heir to Anjou and Aquitaine!—I swear to thee, dearest, I shall be content to have lived and died, so it be written on my tomb, ‘Here lies the man beloved by Maud of England!’”—

The more lowly the views of Sir Kenric, the more generous, of course, the projects of the empress.

“Nay, but thou shalt be *king!*”—was her reiterated protest.

“Never will I sit in King Edward’s chair at Westminster, or submit my brow to the consecrated oil, unless thou sharest my throne, while the proud barons tender us their homage of allegiance!—Gladly will the English throng to the feet of a prince of their tribe and lineage; and for my Norman subjects, let them dare but wag a finger against the partner of my selection, and away with them to their necessitous province!—Neither largesse nor benefaction for such as presume to withhold their submission from the lord of my bosom’s choice!”—

“It were, in sooth, a triumph,” cried the knight, “to humble the pride of these insolent Normans, by whom thy right and title have been impugned; and to aid in redressing the wrongs of the English, on whom, during the last three reigns, the conquerors have been permitted to trample!—I would fain behold the *people* of England,—the *people* by whose thews and sinews the land hath been cultured into fertility,—restored to the enjoyment of their ancient rights, and relieved from the heavy oppression of laws framed in a tongue unknown to them, and enforced by tyrants, who leave them plunged in the night of ignorance, that they may remain patient and unresisting.—I would behold my fellow-subjects FREE, Matilda!—that they may have cause to love and honour their queen! Thy mother’s and my father’s people must not be condemned, as was the threat of thy ill-fated brother, to live chained like oxen to the plough, to provide the bread of tyrants. Give them to enjoy an equal distribution of the law of the land,—an equal share of its profits; and behold, enfranchised thousands shall bless thee, and labour with their heart’s blood, that the name of Britain may remain honoured among the nations!”—

The young empress smiled at Sir Kenric’s enthusiasm. But she assented while she smiled; and William the minstrel cherished the dear delusion, that his influence over the mind of the queen would convey peace and prosperity to the island kingdom!—

Meanwhile, the days drew on. The corn ripened in the fields, and the fruit of the vine hung heavier on the wall. But, though autumn was approaching, the messengers dispatched from Angers by King Henry to the Castle of Arques conveyed no prospect of his return. The revolt of the Angevine barons was of a graver nature than he had anticipated; and bidding, in his letters, his daughter be of good cheer, for that all would eventually be well, his majesty confessed a fear that, till the feast of the Epiphany, or at soonest Christmas-tide, it would be unsafe for the empress and her train to meet him at Caen or Rouen.

With an exulting voice did Matilda deliver this intelligence to Sir Kenric.—“How fair thou art, dearest, when gladsome thoughts smile out of thy blue eyes upon my face!”—he exclaimed, folding her fair hands in his own, and drawing her closer towards him

beneath an overspreading beech, under which they were sheltering from the rays of the setting sun. "Be ever thus joyous, my Matilda, thus loving, thus pure, thus true:—all worldly thoughts gliding from thy mind like rain-drops from the rose-leaf whose brightness they may not sully!—Superior to the pitiful aspirings of thy sex, *thy* desires are not for the pomps of courts, the glittering of jewels, or clashing of cymbals. This calm retreat is thy happier empire; this beechen shade thy appropriate canopy. For these, shared with thy chosen love, dost thou joyfully abjure the tapestried chamber and the robe of estate."

"Is not my throne established on that most glorious of foundations, a devoted human heart?"—whispered the young empress, laying her hand upon the manly arm whose every pulse throbbed responsive to her touch. "I give thee up, God wot, my poor kingdom of England. But thou, my Kenric, dost surrender more, —even the governance of thy noble soul.—A man's mind constitutes a more glorious empire, than one of mere royal prerogative; and on *thine*, beloved, do I enthrone myself!—In thee, I rule and govern!—I am an empress, *thine* empress, whenever, as now, I behold tears gather in thy glistening eyes, while listening to my avowals of affection!"

"What wouldst thou deserve,—what punishment,—what pain,"—faltered the knight, after a pause of deep emotion, "wert thou hereafter tempted to betray the trust my adoration reposeth in thy love!"—

"Betray thee?"—reiterated Maud, with an incredulous smile. "For whom or what should I betray thee?"—

"Not from the wantonness of woman's fickle will!" cried Sir Kenric—"for to that thou art superior. But the intimidation or persuasion of others;—thy father's authority and reprobation,—might, at some moment or other, move thee to renounce an attachment against which, I admit, reason and prudence have much to urge."

"Never!"—cried the empress, with indignation. "I say to thee again and again, NEVER!"

"Be not too strong in denial!" persisted the young knight, kissing the hem of her embroidered robe. "Thou knowest not how potent the counsel of learned divines,—the importunities of loving friends!"

"Friends have I none, save only thee!" cried the princess. "Nay, hearken and I will pledge myself by an oath more fearful than ever yet was spoken by woman's tongue."

"I ask no oath, I wish for none!" cried the noble Saxon, "lest I bring guiltiness upon thy soul.—Thy word, sweet heart, sufficeth!"

"It sufficeth *not*!"—persisted Maud, "or thou wouldst not

bend upon me these searching and anxious looks. I swear to thee, therefore, as my plighted love, that, if ever I suffer either prayer or authority to prevail over my affection, so as to yield my heart or hand to another, the God of vengeance shall deal with me even as with the wretches in yonder spital. Let me become unclean and loathsome in the sight of men,—let me die the victim of sore and searching leprosy!”—

As she uttered these terrible words, Matilda raised to heaven the attestation of her clear blue eyes and ivory hands; and, for some moments, Sir Kenric abstained from reply.

“Does not my vow suffice?”—faltered Matilda at length, mortified by his ungrateful silence.

“I could have framed a stronger!”—was the mild answer of her lover.

“A *stronger*?”—cried Matilda, her cheeks flushed with vexation.

“There is a moral pang exceeding all we nerve ourselves to bear in the flesh!” resumed Sir Kenric. “Had I desired to bind myself in ir retrievable bonds, I should have entailed the penalty on those I love. *Then* were the compact immutable!”—

“I pray the Almighty then,” exclaimed Maud—determined to fulfil the whole measure of his exactions, and again pointing towards the walls of the lazaret, “that, should I fail in my vows of fidelity towards thee, the being most dear to me on earth may live and die the suffering inmate of yonder mansion of misery!”

Touched to the soul by the unreserved generosity of a vow expressly calculated to appease the jealousies of a heart in fear of rivalry, Sir Kenric snatched to his bosom the beautiful woman in whom at that moment he beheld far more than queen or empress; while the light of joy, gleaming in the eyes of Matilda, avouched that she was experiencing the delight consequent upon a generous action. Habituated to the pageants and trappings of royal life, she was conscious of their incompetency to promote one hour of human enjoyment. Under the influence of a pure and disinterested affection, her heart was becoming attuned to higher purposes.

Scarcely was she released from the dear embrace rewarding her self-sacrifice, when the Lady Ada, who had studiously absented herself, made her appearance, to point out to the lovers that the sun was already below the horizon. In the happiest frame of mind, accordingly, they descended, hand in hand, the shrubby hill of Janval; without even a parting glance at the gloomy retreat,—sole witness, save the accusing angels of God, of the solemn engagement entered into by Matilda of England!—

On the return of the royal train to the Castle of Arques, all was in confusion!—Even after a second summons of the esquire of the body in attendance upon the empress, the warder neglected to let

fall the drawbridge; so absorbed was he in examination of a body of armed men advancing from the farthest extremity of the valley towards the fortress. As they drew nearer, their purpose was seen to be amicable; their colours being those of England and Normandy intermingled. But while the fears of the watchman subsided, those of the empress were awakening. This cohort, perhaps, brought tidings of her father;—perhaps announced the arrival of the king!—

She had only time to attain her bower-chamber and assume her usual dignity of demeanour, when the horn was blown, and an audience demanded of her in the name of King Henry, by no less a personage than Turgis, Bishop of Avranches, charged with an especial mandate from her father; not merely a letter of paternal counsel, acquainting her with the progress of his arms, but a sternly-worded command to get in readiness to attend the lord Bishop to his presence, seeing that he had matters for her private ear which admitted of no delay. A second ordinance invested the prelate with full powers of authority in the Castle of Arques, as guardian of the person of the heiress-apparent of England, who was to be governed by his judgment, till she found herself in presence of her father.

“I crave your majesty’s courtesy to observe,” said the bishop, after delivering his credentials, “that so urgent is the business necessitating an interview between you and my gracious master, that I have already presumed to order your litter and an armed escort to be in attendance at daybreak; (we must needs halt for the night at the Abbey of Montivilliers;) till when, I am under the painful necessity of interdicting your majesty’s egress from this chamber.”

“A prisoner?”—cried Maud, with indignation. “What means, my lord, this sudden outbreak of authority on the part of the king?—Does his majesty forget that, albeit his daughter and ward, I am also an estated dowager, anointed of the Holy Roman Empire?—I pray you let there be no more of this, lest I be compelled to disparage in your sacred person the wisdom of my father.”

“In this same duchy of Normandy, madam, whereof your title as successor to the throne is still unadmitted, the sign-manual of Henry I. of England conveys paramount authority,” replied the haughty churchman. “I would fain avoid all contention or displeasure with so fair a lady; and, therefore, entreat her to be admonished in time, that to submit to a lesser evil, will be to avoid the penalty of a greater. Till day-break, to-morrow; meanwhile, I humbly withdraw from your majesty’s presence.”

Overwhelmed by this startling defiance, Matilda, after his departure, remained silent and motionless in her chair of state. No one came to her assistance. All communication with her ladies

was forbidden—guards being posted on the staircase leading to the royal apartment and at every issue thereof. She was under arrest, she was a captive!—Malicious tongues had borne to her father tidings of her recent proceedings; and the measure of Henry's vengeance was about to fall upon her head!

The night drew on. At her usual hour for retiring, instead of her train of ladies, there appeared in attendance only two aged nuns, sisters of St. Catherine of Arques, who were often in waiting at the Castle in cases of sickness or emergency; and from their brief replies to her agitated interrogations, it was clear that they were acting under authority.

“Retire to rest, gracious madam,—be advised, and retire to rest,” whispered the younger of the sisters, as she stooped to remove the embroidered pantoufles of the Empress.—“You have trials in store that may task the exercise of all your strength and fortitude.”

At this insinuation, which she doubted not regarded the partner of her fault, Matilda rushed to the door of her apartment, and, with loud outcries, demanded an interview with Sire Guy d'Harcourt, or the Bishop of Avranches. But the sole reply vouchsafed consisted in the crossing of spears and partisans at the entrance, to remind the princess that she was a prisoner.

After exhausting herself in vain exclamations, the royal captive betrayed the weakness of a mind easily elated in prosperity, easily depressed by adversity. One moment, she indulged in invectives and menaces; the next, in devout appeals to the interposition of the saints. There was no real dignity of mind in the haughty daughter of Queen Maud; no confidence in the steadiness of her own purposes, or in the strength of her father's affection. She was willing to stoop to any submission, to secure enlargement for herself and immunity for her lover. The mere crime of having attached herself to a Saxon of noble birth and royal descent, seemed to have so lowered her in her own esteem, as to justify the anticipation of cruel rigour on the part of King Henry.

Apprehensive of the extremities to which the young princess might be driven in her despair, the two venerable sisters watched all night beside her couch; and at day-dawn, the door of her apartment being thrown open, the prelate again appeared to lead forth his illustrious charge.

Resistance was in vain. Matilda paused only to bestow a largess on the poor nuns who stood weeping at her plight, and to entreat their prayers in her behalf; then, letting fall her veil, to conceal the tears she was unable to repress, she passed through a closely-serried file of armed men unto her litter. The portcullis rose,—the drawbridge fell;—and the heiress of the English throne was borne, under a numerous escort, from the hoary walls of the

fortress, whose towers frowned sternly over the captivity, or perhaps over the mangled remains, of the truest knight in Christendom,—Sir Kenric de Ceorcil!

PART III.

THRICE did the cortège, escorting Henry's daughter, pause for a night's rest, ere Matilda was ushered into the presence of her father.

Sleep visited not, however, her eyelids, nor was she prevailed upon to break bread for her refreshment. Terror had taken possession of her soul; not only for her friend and lover, but for herself. It was impossible to guess to what extremities Henry might be instigated, on discovering that the daughter in whom he prided himself, and whom he had delighted to raise to the imperial and royal estate, had flung herself into the arms of a minion, of a race abhorrent to his Norman pride, with the sanction of traitors who derided the trust reposed in them by their King!—

The nearer the unhappy princess approached towards Rouen, the greater her panic. She expected to confront, unsupported, the rage of her father. She expected to be repelled from his knees,—to be dashed upon the flinty pavement,—to be immured in solitary shame, and hurled—from her high ascendancy as heiress to the English throne.—Robert, Earl of Gloucester, the illegitimate but favourite son of King Henry, would doubtless be preferred in her place. When from afar off she beheld the royal standard of England floating on the towers of St. Mary, her heart, instead of warming to the Leopard, sank heavily in her bosom; and, more dead than alive, she was lifted from her litter at the gates of the palace. Scarcely conscious of what was passing, she saw not that the troops, drawn out to do her honour, saluted her, by declining the points of their lances as she passed; nor noticed that it was into the arms of her brother of Gloucester she was received, and borne into the presence of the king. But she *did* note with amazement, that to the very threshold of the great hall King Henry advanced to receive her; and that, so far from hailing her as a criminal or an offender, his majesty, who was clothed in robes of estate and surrounded by the chief nobles of his court, saluted her as “trusty and well-beloved daughter and Queen,” and bad her welcome to Rouen.

“Thou hast made good speed of thy progress, Maud,” continued the king, leading the empress by the hand towards the upper end of the hall, where a dais was erected,—“which well accounts for the fatigue wherewith thou art overwhelmed, and the disorder of thine array; and must equally account, lady fair, to thyself, for

the absence of thy bridgroom, who scarcely reckoned to meet thee here before to-morrow, for the execution of the marriage contract. But be of good cheer. At morning, Geoffrey of Anjou and his father will be here; at noon, the banquet and betrothing!"—

At this cruelly sudden intimation of the fate impending over her, (concerning which a harsh grasp from the mailed hand with which the king was guiding her, admonished his daughter that she should betray no surprise,) a deep groan escaped the bosom of the harassed woman, and she fell senseless on the pavement of the hall; and while the Earl of Gloucester, motioning away all interference, bore her in his arms towards the wing of the palace containing the women's apartments, his majesty proceeded to excuse to his Norman court the indisposition of the fair traveller, as arising from bodily weariness rather than the emotions of so critical a moment.

It afforded, meanwhile, some solace to the wounded heart of the young empress, that, on recovering her consciousness, she found herself in a secluded chamber alone with her brother Robert.

"Be comforted!" whispered the earl. "Albeit the king knows all and is sorely moved against thee, his desire to promote thy union with our young kinsman of Anjou will secure thee against all outward demonstrations of his displeasure. So apprehensive is he lest rumours of the blackslidings of Arques should reach the ear of Count Geoffrey and his father ere the contract be fulfilled, that thou must prepare for the immediate solemnization of nuptials purporting to unite with the Crown of England one of the fairest provinces of France."

"Those nuptials shall never be!" cried Matilda, starting from her couch, and flinging back her dishevelled hair. "Is the daughter of King Henry so much a slave to his caprices, as to be denied the privilege of the poorest flax-wench, who will have neither suitor nor husband save of her choice?"

"Calm thyself," replied the Earl of Gloucester, unawed by this outbreak of violence. "The poor flax-wench enjoys but that single privilege; the Queen of England a thousand. The loyalty and feudal service of the people, and a rich portion in all their havings, are for the queen. Let the queen requite them in her turn with fair example of Christian humility, womanly modesty, filial submission, and, above all, a discreet governance of the passions given to be our ordeal upon earth. Shall it be said that Maud of England, with all her fair breeding and enlightenment, had so little command over herself as lavish her favours on a subject,—a Saxon adventurer,—when the representative of one of the noblest houses in Europe sued for her hand?"—

"I will none of Geoffrey Plantagenet!"—cried the queen, with obduracy. "The youth is a likely youth, whom I regard as my

father's ward, and my own kinsman. But my heart and soul are pledged to Sir Kenric of Waltheam; and while he lives, none other shall be my husband."

"Let the king hear so much at thy lips, and that Saxon's days were short in the land!"—cried the earl. "Thy minion, my poor sister, lies in the lowest dungeon of the fortress of Arques; and shouldst thou evince so much as reluctance to-morrow in pledging thy vows to the young Earl of Anjou, a cruel death will be his doom. Harsh counsellors sway the ear of King Henry. The sovereigns of Christendom, never disposed to much tenderness of mercy, have learned in the east black lessons of cruelty and oppression. Torture, mutilation, sufferings without a name in our language, are now hourly inflicted both in France and England, on Saxon, and on Norman. Against this English knight the king is incensed beyond all patience; and I warn thee, sweet heart, as a loving brother and friend, that, if thou wouldst recover thy father's favour, and redeem from torment the partner of thy levity (styled high treason by the king), thou wilt submit to a marriage every way honourable; which, but for thy fond favour to an English boor, would have gratified at once thy pride and predilections."

Often and impressively were these sage counsels reiterated, ere the young empress could be brought to believe that her father's will was inexorable, and that her sole chance of preserving the life so dear to her, and obtaining pardon for her noble confederates, was unqualified submission. At length, the eloquence of the earl so wrought upon her mind, that she consented to accept his mediation, to tender in her name to Henry a dutiful submission, on condition of obtaining from his hand, previous to the signature of her marriage contract with Geoffrey Plantagenet, a warrant of indemnity for Sire Guy d'Harcourt, the Lady Ada de Tancarville, Father Anselmus of Gisors, and all others suspected of abetting her indiscretions; a safe conduct out of the British dominions for Sir Kenric of Waltheam, to secure his liberty and honourable entreatment.

Among the admiring crowds who witnessed on the morrow the splendid ceremony of the espousal of Maud, daughter to Henry King of England, with Geoffrey son of Fulk, Earl of Anjou, not one of those whose eyes were fixed upon the pale but lovely countenance of the bride, (whose brows were encircled with an imperial coronet of precious gems, and her robes of cloth of gold, richly hemmed and guarded round with minever), suspected that the accomplishment of the ceremony had been purchased with such bitterness of grief as during the preceding night racked the bosom of the despairing Matilda!—Exhorted by the Bishop of Avranches, in the name of God and his saints, to fulfil her destiny as a princess born of the blood royal, and appointed by the will of the Almighty to the high duty of self-sacrifice,—admonished by her brother of

Gloucester, that resistance to Henry's will would yield up her ill-fated lover to hasty and ignominious death,—Matilda's resolution had finally given way. In the presence of Fulk, Earl of Anjou, the great vassals of the English crown, and the leading Barons of Normandy, Eu, and Anjou, she gave her hand to the noble youth, with whom her marriage had been so hastily concerted; and lo! the trumpets announced to the assembled throng that Maud, the empress, was again wedded to a prince!

Amid the loudest of their tumults, however, a still small voice seemed breathing into the ear of the bride, that the guilt of perjury was upon her soul;—and though prelates consecrated her with their benedictions, and the king with a hollow embrace, Matilda staggered from the altar a broken-hearted woman,—withered in her best affections, and a mark for the indignation of an all-seeing and all-righteous God!—

Vain were the caresses of her youthful bridegroom,—vain the gratulating acclamations of the people.—From that day, the demeanour of the English princess became harsh and ungracious. From the Normans, she feared treachery,—from the Angevines, abhorrence,—from the English, contempt.—Though reconciled by her submissiveness, never again did the king take her cordially into his arms. Even her brother Robert, by whose instrumentation her marriage with Geoffrey Plantagenet had been brought about, secretly condemned the feebleness of soul which had first pledged her in a degrading engagement, then permitted her to break asunder the sacred tie.

During the first year of their union, the Earl of Anjou and his bride abided together in his princely palace on the Loire; and unwearied were his efforts to dispel the habitual melancholy of one whose gaiety of character had, in former years, constituted her chief attraction.

Recalling to mind how cheerful he had beheld her at Windsor Castle, Geoffrey laboured to create around her the pastimes and pleasures of merry England,—bow-matches tilts, jousts upon the Loire; hawking, hunting, and other sylvan sports.—But, alas! nothing availed to dispel the settled melancholy overclouding the countenance of the bride, nor to thaw the icy reserve with which she repelled the advances of her youthful bridegroom. The hope of perpetuating his line, the ostensible motive of King Henry for hurrying the nuptials of his daughter without having previously obtained the assents of the barons of England and Normandy, was scarcely likely to be gratified; since the countess, affecting to treat as a child a spouse so many years her junior, never suffered him to approach her presence, save when occasions of public festivity exposed them together to the notice of the king.

The Earl of Anjou, who, on occasion of so brilliant a marriage,

ceded to his son the government of the county, departed for the East, where, after uniting himself in second nuptials with the daughter of Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, he succeeded to his throne. There was none, therefore, save Henry, to take heed of the disunion prevailing between the youthful couple; and so little was the King of England inclined to confront the inquiries of his daughter touching the fulfilment of his contract concerning Sir Kenric de Ceorcil, that he rarely entered her apartments; and on her removal to her husband's capital, proceeded in his purpose of reducing to submission certain of his rebellious barons in Normandy.

Among her Angevine subjects, meanwhile, the unpopularity of Matilda assumed an alarming appearance. Overwhelmed with sadness, haunted by unceasing remembrance of her broken vows and the fearful penalty entailed upon those who might become dear to her, her care was to avoid all intimacy with the unfortunate youth compelled to become her husband; and her fixed resolve to avoid becoming the mother of a child predestined to loathsome disease. But this afflicting apprehension was locked within the depths of the soul; and the Angevine nobles, attributing her reserve to scorn of themselves and their young count, regarded her with rage and abhorrence.

“This woman, whom the English are proud to style empress,” cried they, “disdains the humble appellation of Countess of Anjou!—Her sullen grief is for the husband shrouded in his imperial sepulchre at Spire. Nothing short of an empire will content her! She despiseth our fair province. She hungereth after the homage of the haughty barons of England. Let her go! We will none of such misproud queans in Anjou.”

These dissatisfactions did but aggravate the breach between Geoffrey and his wife. Already the young earl, though but in his seventeenth year, evinced tokens of the harsh and obstinate despotism characterising his after life; and, thwarted in his ambition of becoming father of a race of English kings, and stung to the quick by the disdainful reserve of Matilda, Geoffrey opposed no interdiction to her proposal, on the year succeeding their marriage, to return to Henry's protection.

“I will go to my father!” faltered the young countess one day, when composing her spirit in solitude, after being exposed to severe mortification by the rude barons of Anjou. “At his feet, I will implore pity and forgiveness. This hateful marriage may yet be dissolved. When he learns by how perilous a vow my soul is enthralled, he cannot refuse to consign me to the arms of the husband of my choice.”

Nevertheless, when the afflicted Maud presented herself in presence of the king, who was then sojourning at Caen, and admitted

that she was but in name the wife of Geoffrey Plantagenet, whose roof she had deserted, and from whom she was about to demand a legal divorce, the long-suppressed rage of King Henry broke out.

“Back to thy husband, minion!”—cried the king. “Though my weak indulgence, and a desire to conceal thy shame, determined me to overlook the offences of the knaves and fools, thy abettors at Arques, know that the arch-traitor is still in my power!—The same dungeon at Arques, which for years chastised the perfidy of Osmont de Chaumont, the traitor of Brenneville, still holds in durance the slave, thy paramour;—and so surely as I find thee not, ere many weeks are over thy head, a penitent and submissive wife, the fellow dies on the gibbet.”

Horror-struck by intelligence for which she was unprepared by knowledge of that astuciousness on the part of the king which had formerly induced Blewit, his grand justiciary, to exclaim, “The king praises me—I am lost!” Matilda began to revile her own pusillanimity for not having already enforced the fulfilment of his royal promise, to set at liberty the injured Kenric. Little, however, as she was now inclined to rely upon the word of the king, she saw that her sole chance of saving the object of her affections was by establishing herself under the protection of the Bishop of Avranches, as the unmurmuring but broken-hearted wife of Geoffrey Plantagenet.

Year after year passed away, and the unfertile marriage of his daughter seemed to deal retribution upon the harsh dealing of Henry. Distracted between anxiety for the fate of one whom she still regarded with unhallowed affection, and the terror of giving birth to a diseased and afflicted being,—a shame to the royal houses of Europe,—Matilda attempted to propitiate Divine wrath by the liberality of her gifts to the church;—laying the foundation of endowments which still uphold, in Normandy, the memory of her name; and when, six years after her hated marriage, young Henry (afterwards crowned King of England under the title of Henry II.) was born to the still sorrowing woman, she trusted, as she gazed upon the fair and unblemished face of the infant, that the wrath of the Almighty was appeased, and the fearful vow breathed beside the leper-house of Janval, effaced from the eternal archives of Divine vengeance.

The birth of a second son, (Geoffrey, destined to succeed to the earldom of Anjou) in due time succeeded; and at length, three years after that of Henry, a third infant, William, Earl of Mortain, came to seal the hollow union of Plantagenet with the still lovely Maud.

But though the prelates of Anjou, and the bishops of Evreux and Avranches, had managed to instil into the mind of the royal penitent that her only chance of obtaining remission for past

offences was by becoming mother to a race of princes destined to confirm the pacification of Europe, and to keep up the war against the infidels, her heart remained impiously unweaned from its first affection. Contend as she might against the spells of memory, it was impossible to forget, amid the barbarous insults of her Angevine subjects and disregarded husband, the accomplished knight to whom she had been an object of adoration; and whose heart was as humane, and whose views as liberal and enlightened, as those of Geoffrey Plantagenet were narrow and despotic. In spite of herself, the revolted wife still adored the recollection of him she was never again to see; and little did she suspect that this lawless attachment secured her present exemption from the penalty of her awful vow.

“The object dearest to her on earth” was still the English knight, alone entitled to demand from heaven the accomplishment of the sentence! Matilda had, however, other punishments awaiting her.

Henry I. had not long survived the joy of holding a grandson in his arms. On his deathbed, in presence of Hugh Archbishop of Rouen, the Earls of Leicester, Warenne, and others, he confirmed to his daughter Maud, and her offspring, the succession of the throne, and to his son the Earl of Gloucester a rich portion of his treasure; without mentioning the Earl of Anjou, who had displeased him, by claiming possession of the duchy of Normandy as part of the dowry of Matilda. The dying and penitent king, however, showed himself, for the first time, sensible of the claims to which he was subjected as a man and a Christian, by recommending earnestly to his successors *the care of the poor*, the restoration of all forfeited estates, and the recall from exile, and deliverance from prison, of all offending subjects.

Scarcely was the body of the deceased monarch removed from the cathedral of St. Mary of Rouen, to the vaults of Reading Abbey, when the trials of his daughter commenced. Many of her Norman and English vassals refused to recognise the legitimacy of her children, born of a marriage to which their consent had never been obtained; and while Matilda was despatched by Geoffrey Plantagenet into Normandy, to secure her rights, Stephen Earl of Blois effected that memorable landing in England which was to add to the list of her Norman kings a grandson of the Conqueror.

It was in vain that Matilda, supported by her half-brothers, Robert Earl of Gloucester and Stephen of Caen, immediately followed; taking up her abode in Arundel Castle, under the protection of her father's widow, Alice of Louvain. Excluded from the throne of her ancestors, forbidden to approach the royal palace of Windsor so dear to her recollections, the queen gave way to despair. Though occasionally successful at the head of an army

of mercenaries, her sufferings were most severe. At one period, she was compelled to fly from Oxford, at midnight, in the depth of winter, with only three attendants, and to cross the Thames at Wallingford over the ice. At another, when besieged by Stephen in the Castle of Devizes, so long the prison of her uncle Robert, she escaped by submitting to be enclosed in a coffin, and carried out of the gates in a funeral procession, as for interment.

For a short period, indeed, her arms were successful; and, recognised by the Husting of London, the daughter of King Henry took up her royal residence in the Conqueror's Tower on the banks of the Thames, and prepared to enjoy the rights of her inheritance.

The evil genius of Matilda, however, prevailed. The first inquiry of the queen, on visiting the palace of Westminster to receive the homage of her barons, was for Earl Waltham; and, while the demand proved most offensive to her Norman adherents, her own heart was racked by the reply that "the earldom was extinct; Kenric, the last of the Georcils, having perished in foreign climes."

Struck to the soul by this intelligence, Matilda gazed with listless and unconscious brow upon the noble vassals presenting themselves to do homage, who quitted the palace indignant at her haughty indifference; while, having obeyed with equal recklessness and unconcern the suggestion of her brother, Stephen of Caen, that, at her first interview with the citizens of London, she should make claim to the levy of an exorbitant talliage, and renew the obnoxious tax known by the name of Danegelt,—her unpopularity was complete.

Revolt soon broke out. Stephen was recalled to the throne by the repentant people, and Matilda driven with contempt from the kingdom of her fathers. Harassed by the long continuance of civil war, the English were not likely to be tempted to further rebellion; and the despairing Countess of Anjou trembled at the thought of confronting her ambitious husband, thus cruelly thwarted in his expectations of establishing the future sovereignty of his son. She was aware that young Henry and his brother shared in the aspiring views of their father, as well as in his antipathy to herself; and severe was the trial to find herself a dethroned queen, a detested wife, a despised mother, and, above all, a self-accusing Christian.

But Matilda knew not as yet the full extent of her calamity. The sword of divine vengeance was still suspended over her head. Her sentence had still to be accomplished!—

Though Stephen held undisputed sway in England, many towns, cities, and castles of Normandy remained faithful to her cause, or were held in awe by the valour of her husband and son. The

county of Eu still held to its allegiance; and the castle of Arques and city of Rouen were garrisoned with Angevine troops. Severe as was the trial to her feelings, Matilda determined, therefore, to take up her abode in the city which had witnessed her ill-fated nuptials; and while Geoffrey and his elder sons carried on the war, she was permitted to recall to her charge her youngest boy, William Earl of Mortain, the inheritor of her own beauty and the scholarship of Henry Beauclerk.

It was impossible to behold a fairer youth than young Mortain, when, prepared to atone to his beloved mother for the indifference of her elder children, he knelt humbly at her feet in the very hall which had witnessed the signature of her marriage contract, raising to hers the soft mild eyes which were as those of some youthful saint. Though destined, like his brothers, to the career of arms, the high courage of William Plantagenet was redeemed from the harshness peculiar to his line, by accomplishments of mind and manners derived from the lessons of his renowned tutor, the Abbot Raoul of Cluny. Though an expert swordsman, the young earl was a profound scholar; and those who detested the ambitious egotism of Geoffrey and his elder sons, predicted that the glory of the sinking family would be renewed in William. Every day added new graces to his person, new acquirements to his mind; and now, for the first time, Matilda felt that there was joy in being a mother!—

The deportment of the young prince towards her whom he had known only in sorrow and adversity, was tenderness itself. His voice softened, and his looks declined, whenever he accosted his now gentle and humiliated mother; whom he revered as the consoler of the poor, the foundress of colleges and monasteries, the liberal benefactress of hospitals and lazarets. From the church of St. Nicaise at Rouen to the leper-house of Janval, not a charitable institution in the country but had cause to venerate her munificence!—He knew, too, that, in another year, he must bid her adieu, in order to receive the long-coveted honours of knighthood. The King of France had consented to become his sponsor in arms; and William burned to do honour to so illustrious a protector.

It was on the day succeeding the feast of Pentecost, on the year of Matilda's return to Normandy, that, having summoned the Earl of Mortain to her presence, for the delight of bestowing upon him a cast of hawks which she had caused to be fetched from Norway for his use, the Abbot presented himself before her with excuses, that the earl, her son, had been suddenly smitten with a sore disease.

“Your grace may be pleased to remember, that, while instructing me during Holy Week to put up, at the altar of St. Mary, an especial mass of intercession for your royal son, the object dearest

to you on earth, a company of palmers entered the church on their return to England from Palestine. And, but that I tremble to instigate a surmise so afflicting, I should suggest that infection was in their garments; and that my young and promising pupil—my William—my pride—my glory—*was stricken with leprosy!*”—

The frantic shriek of Matilda warned him to desist from this horrible insinuation. Flying, in spite of the ecclesiastic's entreaties, to the couch of her son, Matilda, regardless of contagion, regardless of danger, took him into her arms; pressed his disfigured form to her bosom—and to her lips the long tresses of his once lustrous hair, now dimmed and matted by the influence of foul disease!—

“My own—my child—my idol!” cried the frantic woman. “All that I loved,—all that was to reward me for the sorrows of my harassed youth,—must thou, even thou, become the victim of my crime!”

The counsels of the learned of all nations were speedily put in request by the prudence of the abbot; and tidings of his son's misfortune duly conveyed to the Earl of Anjou. But in vain. The most skilful leeches of Rouen, Paris, and Montpellier, had already pronounced the Earl of Mortain to be an incurable leper!—

“Let him retire to a cloister!”—was the harsh sentence of Geoffrey Plantagenet, on learning the family calamity. “My eyes shall not be offended by the aspect of his uncleanness.”

“Let him find a tranquil retreat in the *léproserie* of Janval,” added Matilda, in a subdued voice. “For thither will I follow my unhappy son; and, in the garb of a Sister of Mercy, minister to his sufferings.”

Even this poor consolation was, however, denied her. Before the completion of the buildings which Matilda commanded to be added to the lazaret for the reception of the illustrious youth about to become its inmate, the countess was commanded by Geoffrey Plantagenet to set sail for England, to prepare the way for the landing of her son Henry; to whom he had already resigned the Duchy of Normandy, and who was now invited over, by the factious subjects of his cousin Stephen, to assume possession of the crown of England. Ere the young and illustrious patient could be installed in his gloomy abode, in a condition in which he was scarcely reconciled to live by the dictates of profound piety, his distracted mother was again forced upon the field of battle, and compelled to forward the ambitious projects of a son by whom she was detested.

It was not till the accidental death of Stephen's son and heir (an event attributed by the superstitions of the times to his recent sacrilegious pillage of a domain consecrated to the blessed martyr,

St. Edmund) had opened the way to young Henry's succession to the throne, shortly afterwards confirmed by an act in council passed by the king, that Matilda was released from her arduous duties, and permitted to retire once more into Normandy, to abide with "the child in whom her soul delighted."

Towards the feast of St. John, in the year of grace 1153, the young Duke of Normandy and his bride, the Duchess Aliana, or Eleanor, of Aquitaine, having already sailed for Harfleur to regain their good city of Rouen, the Countess of Anjou landed at the port of Arques, then a fishing village, dependent on the fortress of that name, but soon to be magnified into the flourishing town of Dieppe. As the vessel in which she had embarked approached the shore of Normandy, the tearful eyes of the agitated mother fixed yearningly upon the wooded heights of Janval, visible far off at sea above the harbour. She longed to be once more by the side of her youngest born,—to gather into her soul the precious accents alone unattainable by the deteriorating progress of disease. She longed to hear herself addressed as "mother," by a voice less harsh than those of her sons, Henry and Geoffrey. She longed to console and to be consoled by the afflicted one, on whose head her perjury had called down so heavy a measure of punishment!

A quarter of a century had elapsed since Maud, a widow and an empress, had departed from the grim towers of the castle of Arques to perpetrate her fault. Yet even the disastrous vicissitudes of the harassing interim had not effaced from her recollection the features of the well-known landscape. She had seen it in her dreams—she had seen it in her waking reveries. While presiding over councils at Westminster, or engaged at Winchester in penitential prayers beside the grave of her mother, the moated wall of the *léproserie* at Janval, with its associations of anguish and remorse, had often seemed to hover before her eyes, and cast its shadow upon her soul. As she now approached the spot so encircled round with lofty trees that the stately chapel and refectory recently added to the foundation by the Earl of Mortain were concealed from view, Matilda checked more than once the pace of her mule, that she might compose the agitation of her heart ere she entered the presence of her son.

Her attendants, attributing these repeated pauses to the fatigues of her voyage, craved permission to seek for her use the litters of the Lady Avelina de Tracy, wife to the commandant of Arques, to enable her to ascend the hill;—so little did they enter into the struggles of a mother's heart, burning to strain in her arms the object of her dearest affections, yet dreading lest some irrepressible start of horror should betray to the sufferer the momentary repugnance excited by the loathsome nature of his disfigurements! The tender and pathetic letters of the young earl

had prepared her to find him fearfully changed by the progress of disease. She dreaded to have lost in the leper all trace of her beloved William. Perhaps even the melancholy lustre of his serene eyes was lost amid the encroachments of his affliction?—Perhaps even his voice was changed?—perhaps his very nature?—

“Shrink not from the poor leper, O my mother, when you again behold your son!” was the tenor of the last letter he had addressed to her. “Cut off from intercourse with my kind,—debarred the sweet affections of my age,—condemned to heavy seclusion, lest even the beggar on whom I presume to bestow alms should recoil from his benefactor,—alone,—*alone in the world*,—let me still find comfort in *thee*!—Though no longer fair and spotless as when nestling in thy bosom, and rewarding thee by my infant smiles for a mother’s sufferings, my heart is still unchanged.—The plague-spot hath not eaten into my soul!—These—these are pure as ever; still worthy to love thee,—still worthy to be beloved!—Others may judge them less favourably. But *thou*, beloved mother,—*thou*, of whose flesh I am the flesh.—*thou*, whose caresses linger in my recollection till my poor disfigured frame thrills with the impression,—*thou*, whose words of endearment are indelibly written in my soul, and recur refreshingly to mine ear in the night season when my torments are greater than I can bear,—*thou*, sweet mother, be merciful!—Let me not see that I am loathsome to thee.—Let pity be in thine eyes towards my sufferings, as in those of the tender women who watched beside the Calvary of Christ.—Let the leper of Janval forget himself one single blessed hour in the cherished son of Queen Matilda.—

“There is one among the holy brothers ministering to the inmates of this refuge of affliction, whose lessons have instructed me to overcome with patience a chastisement purifying the soul to blessedness. But Father Edric, though my hourly companion and ghostly comforter, hath attained so high a mark of sanctity as to loathe as sinful all demonstration of human affection. When ministering to my sufferings, I sometimes attempt to press my feverish lips to his hand, in token of gratitude. But he rebukes my vain effusion of sensibility; and it is only my mother’s heart I can hope to soften into an avowal that the GOD of peace hath endowed us with impulses of tenderness, that in our pilgrimage of sorrow we may love each other even as He hath loved *us*.

“Return, therefore, O mother! to thy long-suffering child; and let a happy moment shine upon the Leper-house of Janval.”—

Matilda shuddered as she called to mind the piteous terms of this heart-rending epistle. She was approaching the spot. Already, she was beneath the shade of the spreading beech-trees, whose growth had so prospered as to shut out all glimpse of the summer sky. The moated wall, doubled in extent, was before

her, screening the chapel dedicated by the Earl of Mortain to St. Mary Magdalen; beneath whose altar, she trusted that, at some future hour, her ashes would repose beside those of her son. And, lo! above the square gateway, according to the custom of the times, was carved a shield emblazoned with the arms of England, Anjou, and Normandy, announcing the spital to be a royal endowment.

Descending from her mule, the countess approached on foot the scene of her humiliation; blessing Heaven that the sun had sunk while she was slowly ascending the hill, and that twilight was upon the dreaded spot.

Vespers were celebrating in the chapel; the gates of which were widely flung open to admit the salutary sea-breezes, so vital to the enfeebled inmates of the place. Clad in the same linen ephod assigned to all the patients of the *léproserie*, and careful to seek a place undistinguished from those of his companions in misfortune, William of Mortain was not, at the first glance, discoverable to his mother. Having let fall her veil over her mourning habit, Matilda, half-concealed by the rich Saxon columns of the portal, knelt submissively on the pavement during the remainder of the service. She scarcely dared raise her eyes, as, one by one at the conclusion, the lepers went forth to enjoy their customary recreation in the grove; though their linen garments swept the raiment of the kneeling woman, whose humble attitude in that desecrated place seemed to point out as a mendicant the daughter of a line of kings.

At length, amid her tears, a gentle voice greeted her ear; bidding her, if she was in need, repair to the refectory for relief, and, in compassionate accents, inquiring the motive of her anguish. It was the voice of her son,—it was the voice of William!—Raising, with indescribable emotion, her eyes towards his face, she beheld, through the misty twilight, the emaciated but not loathsomely disfigured countenance of him whose expressive eyes were still as those of an angel!—But scarcely had an ejaculation of thanks to Heaven burst from the lips of the weeping mother, when her eyes fell upon the face of the Benedictine brother by whom he was accompanied, whose sallow brows were distinctly apparent beneath his cowl to the woman kneeling at their feet.

“Rise, rise, O blessed mother!” cried the Earl of Mortain, instantly recognizing the beloved voice, whose ejaculation, at that moment, reached his ear. “Thou art come at last then, like summer rain to the thirsty desert!—Oh, that I dare hold thee in one dear embrace!—Father Edric—my friend, my counsellor—turn not away thus reproachfully that I yearn for the endearments of my mother!—Even so tenderly as thou hast watched over my recent sufferings, did this woman attend upon my bappy infancy!

—Mother! I pray thee, know and thank this reverend comforter of my afflictions.”—

But Matilda was now overpowered to stupefaction by excess of emotion!—For, behold! she was under the roof of the *léproserie*; and in the twain by whom she was raised from the ground, and laid in the open air upon the greensward of the surrounding cemetery, she recognised in the gloomy recluse, who was devoting himself to the solace of her child, the injured lover of her youth; in the royal leper whose scalding tears fell unheeded upon her hand,—“*the object dearest to her on earth,*”—the victim of her perjury, the manifestation of the accomplishment of the wrath of Heaven!

The hand of GOD was upon the memorable three, assembled, at that moment of retribution, under the roof of the LEPER-HOUSE OF JANVAL!

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Centuries passed away. The scourge of other times and climates ceased to afflict the nations of Europe; and, at the epoch when the arms of Henry of Navarre conferred immortal renown on the Castle of Arques, the leper-house, devoted to general purposes, had assumed the name of the infirmary or *maladrerie* of Janval. Curtailed by the lapse of years of its princely dimensions, the tomb of William of Mortain, the founder of the chapel, was now exposed to the injuries of the elements; and the learned inscription, commemorating his pious life and early death at Janval, in the year of redemption 1168, was already partly obliterated.

The rich endowments bestowed upon the *léproserie* by his mother, the Empress Maud, Countess of Anjou, were shortly afterwards assigned in council to the service of the Hôtel Dieu at Dieppe, by which the revenues are still enjoyed; and the spital was dismantled and became deserted. Throughout the succeeding century, however, on the festival of St. Mary Magdalen, and at the feast of St. John, the clergy of the neighbouring church of St. Remy repaired to the decaying chapel for the celebration of mass; till, at the close of the eighteenth century, the ruinous condition of the building necessitated its desecration. The remains of the *maladrerie* were assigned to the farmers of the estate; when the gravestone of William Earl of Mortain was removed and placed among the royal sepulchres of the capital of Normandy.

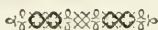
The embankments of the moat are now alone visible; surrounded by a grove of lofty beech trees, bequeathed to the soil by the original veterans of the place. The traditions of the spot are still, however, sacredly preserved; and many a ghostly legend is related by the peasants of unsightly forms seen wandering in the twilight over the precincts of the ancient cemetery. When the neighbouring sea is sufficiently calm to admit of the ringing of the

Angelus at St. Remy being heard on the heights, the villagers of the hamlets cross themselves with anxious devotion, if they find themselves within view of the grove. Often have I beheld them at eventide hurrying homewards, lest night should surprise them on the detested spot.

Among the dungeons of Arques is shown the gloomy retreat where, during twenty years, an English knight was incarcerated by Henry the First of England, and released only by the death of the king. The walls of that noxious prison reveal nothing of the prolonged tortures endured by Sir Kenric of Waltheam; but the records of many chronicles and charters attest the tender care of the Empress Maud, and the pious resignation of William Earl of Mortain, during his retreat in the LEPER-HOUSE OF JANVAL.

THE HOUSEHOLD HOSPITAL.

BY AN OLD BACHELOR.



IN the present Malthusization of the social system, when paupers are compelled to eat, like hunger, through stone walls, in order to take a peep at their wives, there is some comfort in the contemplation of an establishment where human nature in rags is still admitted to participate in the impulses and sensibilities of human nature in purple and fine linen.

Among the most painful pictures traced by the iron pencil of Crabbe, is his sketch of the Almshouse. Yet the portrait, now of thirty years' celebrity, wants a single gloomy shade to render it a still truthful representation. The grief of those whom God hath joined, put asunder by the hand of man, hath a sound almost as doleful as that of Rachel weeping for her children; and the forced widowhood of the poor, if a salutary, is truly an afflicting measure of modern jurisprudence.

It happened that, after perusing, the other day, in a newspaper, the details of a revolt in the workhouse of one of our great manufacturing towns, (embellished by the editor till it might have been mistaken for a description of the Rape of the Sabines), I set forth upon one of those daily saunterings which initiate me into much of Parisian life and manners, unknown to those who put their trust in chariots or in horsemen.

I was retarded, however, unexpectedly, on the threshold of my attic. The most independent of men is, in some trifling particular or other, dependent upon the ministry of his fellow-creatures; and even I, though as little sophisticated as most members of civilized society, have still a point or two to descend or ascend, before I can pronounce myself superior to social ceremony. My "pomp" is not altogether of the nature which Lear counsels to "take physic;" but it might not be worse for a saline draught.

This is a long preamble, to apologize to myself and the world for employing a shoeblick!—Servant have I none. I cannot say to this or that fellow in livery, "do this, and he doeth it;" but there is an honest drudge of all work appertaining to the house wherein I am one of the seven-and-twenty lodgers, to whom I sometimes say, "Clean my shoes," and he cleaneth them—i. e., when he hath nothing else to do.

Yet, let me not wrong my friend Jacques. Not being a man of wit and fashion about town, I need not sacrifice my friend for the sake of a jest; but boldly admit that, for the small gratuity of forty sols, or one shilling and eightpence, per week, Jacques performs as many little offices in my household, as the same sum, with a guinea added to it for board wages, would not purchase of an accomplished flunky. It is true the poor fellow makes his breakfast upon the scanty residue of mine; and succeeds to the poet's threadbare coats and darned hosen. But, as his customary suit is of blue *basane*, such as forms the costume in ordinary of the Auvergnat porters and water-carriers of Paris, his utmost gain from the *défroque* is the twopence-halfpenny he may be able to extort from them, from the *fripier* or old-clothesman, at the door.

I dare not reflect upon the number of times per diem which, for this consideration, Jacques feels himself in honour and duty bound to mount five steep floors to my attic!—'T is a good affectionate creature;—a florid hard-featured young fellow of five-and-twenty,—with iron muscles, a frame of adamant, and a heart—but the heart shall speak for itself.

Though the slave of a dozen other individuals, at least as capricious and exacting as myself, Jacques never crosses my threshold out of humour. Like a lark, he wakes me with a song; and I could sometimes find it in my heart to break his head, when, in the act of delivering to my hand some "small account," the very sight of which sets my teeth on edge, he salutes my eyes and ears with his usual merry face and merry tune. One would think that care never came near him. Did he but know the gripe of such troubles, his sympathizing nature would render his countenance as glumpy as an undertaker's, when presenting me with these unwelcome missives,

It is now three years since I became the tenant of my aerial habitation (which procures me the honour of being the first person to whom Phœbus makes his bow every morning when he rises upon Paris), and, during the whole of the period, the assiduities of Jacques have been on the increase.

The grand apartments of the three lower storeys of the house, probably furnish the drudge with greater gains; but in *them*, he is bullied by upper servants, and exposed to the contumely of those jacks in office or in livery, who have no better mode of showing their consequence than tyrannizing over their equals. In my garret, on the contrary, he meets with small gains, but gentle entreatment. He comes with a sympathizing heart to the abode of poverty; for he knows the secret, that in suffering persecution we learn mercy. He respects the poor author's threadbare coat, because it ensures consideration from the wearer towards his own

fustian jacket; and, if the leathern straps of his porter's *crochet* have galled his shoulders, tacitly understands that the lodger in an attic, who breakfasts on a twopenny roll and a cup of milk, may have burthens of his own to bear, scarcely less galling.

Be it not inferred that my friend Jacques presumes upon these philosophical speculations. His address is as respectful to myself as to the rich viscount who inhabits our ground-floor, or rather, as to his valet-de-chambre, who is a far greater man than the viscount. His "*Monsieur a-t-il quelque chose à commander?*"—is as deferentially phrased in the third person, as though "*Monsieur*" were one of those dainty Messieurs, to whom Boivin charges five guineas for their cambrie shirts, and Blin twice as much for their superfine coats. Sometimes when, of a winter's evening, he sees me coaxing up the embers of my scanty fire, and trying to throw as much light as possible from my solitary candle upon the sheet of paper I am scribbling, the poor fellow seems loath to leave me to my loneliness; makes excuses for lingering to turn down my bed, arrange my wardrobe, or place my *cafetière* of hot water on the hearth. Uneasy at seeing me so laborious, it is only by increase of kindness he knows how to increase my stock of comforts.

With all this diligence, however, I have had occasion to regret, for some weeks past, that Jacques is beginning to be somewhat remiss in his duties. The *cafetière*, though still placed on the hearth, has sometimes been placed there without water; and a hole in the bottom (though mended without any appeal to my purse, by some tinkering Auvergnat cousin or friend of Jacques) bore a fatal accusation against the absence of mind of my poor errand-man. Though far from blind to his faults, my countenance towards him on this trying occasion was more in sorrow than in anger; for it was clear to me, that the poor fellow was in love; and, as I had more than once caught him philandering at the pump in the courtyard, or with his head inserted into the one-pane window of the lodge, discoursing with the porter's pretty daughter, Ma'mselle Effine (an under nursery-maid in the neighbourhood, who visits her parents on Sundays and fête days), I saw no hope of amendment, because no hope of a happy termination to his love affairs. A *sous-bonne*, with wages of ten francs a-month, and a *commissionnaire* gaining about four times as much by hard and incessant labour, have clearly no hope of laying by a sufficient provision for the fruits of an early marriage.

I sometimes longed to discuss the subject, and favour the young fellow with my advice. But when on the point of pronouncing the name of Mademoiselle Effine, or more properly "*Joséphine*," (for Jacques alone is probably privileged to accost her by her pet name of familiarity), I found it impossible to proceed. I had not courage to hazard a lesson of prudence, which might, perhaps, put

to silence those joyous songs upon his lips, or depress the cheerfulness of countenance, which gleams once or twice a-day, like sunshine, into my gloomy attic. I felt that it was my duty to speak, but it was my pleasure to forbear.

I once saw a superannuated pointer led out to be shot. Old Don, a splendid fellow in his day, was rheumatic in his loins, as well as infirm from age; and his master had begun to feel it an eye-sore, when the faithful old beast trailed itself across the lawn to bask in the sunshine. A groom was bidden, therefore, to proceed to execution. But no sooner did poor Don behold the Manton and powder-flask brought forth, than the stanchness of old times revived in him. Uttering a cry of pleasure, he dragged himself towards the man, leaped up, and licked his hands, and displayed such vivid tokens of delight, that the poor fellow flung down the gun, and begged his master to take the trouble of shooting the dog himself. In like wise, the moment I pronounced to poor Jacques the name of the porter's daughter, such a brightness of joy beamed in his eye, such a flush of pleasure deepened his ruddy complexion, that it was impossible to say to him—"Friend Jacques! if thou art wise, eschew the damsel's company for evermore." I could as soon have shot old Don, as broken the heart of the *commissionnaire*.

Nevertheless, when my friend's sins of omission arrived at the point of leaving muddy at my door, till one o'clock of the afternoon, the boots deposited there at six the day preceding, I made up my mind to be angry,—to give not only advice, but a reprimand. The day was, luckily, fine, the night preceding had been sultry; and, thanks to the calcareous particles of which the Parisian soil is composed, that which was mud on Wednesday had on Thursday pulverised to dust. I was able to betake myself to my chamois shoes, with the resignation of a man whose stock of boots never places him under the grammatical necessity of deciding whether the noun *pair* does or does not take an *s* in the plural. There would be time enough in the evening to seek out Jacques, and remonstrate and admonish.

Meanwhile, I directed my wandering steps toward the Faubourg St. Germain—that many-coloured quarter of Paris, where, peeping through the archways of successive *portes cochères*, you may detect at one step an aristocratic palace,—at the next, the *atelier* of a bookbinder,—at the third, the Hotel of one of the Ministers, Home or War department,—fourthly, a convent,—fifthly, an hospital,—sixthly, perhaps the Hôtel de Cluny (nearly in the same condition as when the sister of Henry VIII. and widow of Louis XII. spent her honeymoon with the Duke of Brandon, within its walls), or, seventhly, the Palais des Thermes, the Lutetian residence of the Emperor Julian!—I love the old dingy Rue St. Jacques, with

its peaked roofs and historical reminiscences,—I love the dismantled Sorbonne, with its one instructive tomb,—the Scotch College, with its Jacobinical associations,—St. Germain-des-Près, where the marble effigy of a pious king still offers up the sacrifice of his crown and sceptre to the Almighty,—the gloomy Abbaye,—the gay and rose-embedded Luxembourg,—the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and its lively old women, the Carmelites, with their legends of lovely penitents of the Court of Louis XII;—but, above all, I love the Rue de Sèvres, the street where religion wears its fairest aspect, under the garb of Benevolence.

Traverse the Rue de Sèvres at what hour you may, you are sure to meet with one or more Sisters of Charity, in their coarse woollen gowns and clean white *guimpes*, gliding along with the noiseless step acquired by habitual ministry in the chambers of the sick; bent either upon some pious errand between one hospital and another, or carrying succour to the afflicted, or commissioned by their superiors to inquire into the authenticity of some tale of woe. If young (and many a face, both young and fair may be found under the shadow of the *guimpe*), the nun's countenance is usually cast down as she moves along; and, as she passes, her lips may be seen murmuring a prayer or paternoster. But, if middle-aged or more, she looks straight before her; her spirit being too much engrossed by the cares and duties of life to need forcible estrangement from the scene around.

Then comes the grave-looking priest, pale with vigils and fasting, about to convey to the pillow of the sick and needy those spiritual consolations of which health and opulence have yet to learn the value. Unlike his spruce smug Reverence of the English church, his form is spare, his eye fixed with inward meditation. "Nothing can touch him further" of the vanities of life. He hath but one thought, one hope, one care;—the folding of the flock whereof he must render an account to the Lord of all Christian shepherds!—

To this conventual quarter of the city, did I direct the steps which the misdoings of Jacques (if my gentle dullness may be excused the pun) had rendered bootless. When lo! just as I had passed the lofty gateway of the convent, I was startled by a familiar sound,—the voice of Jacques, expanding into the identical merry song with which it is his cruel practice to advise me of a morning that it is time to rise!—The caitiff, after neglecting my boots, was doubtless on his road to the Barrière du Maine; that favoured domain of Bacchus, where some hundred or so of wine-shops and public gardens attest the convenience of drinking your Burgundy or Bordeaux duty free, previous to its entrance within the boundary wall, sacred to the claims of the *octroi*, of which, at the period of its erection, it was wittily written—

Le mur murant Paris rend Paris mur-murant.

A further examination of the case proved to me that I was mistaken. Instead of plodding along the causeway arm in arm with some boon companion, as I expected, I descried poor Jacques seated side by side with the driver of a small cart, loaded with a few articles of furniture, the plenishing of a beggar's household;—namely, a bed, two chairs, and a chest of drawers.—The fellow was singing and laughing so heartily with his companion, that his errand was plainly one of choice. He was doing his own business. He was supervising the removal of his own moveables; nay, the hilarity of his deportment convinced me, no less than the dual number of the chairs, that it was to no bachelor home he was conveying his belongings. There was evidently matrimony in the wind!—My advice would come too late; the pretty Effine, the charming Ma'mselle Josephine, was about to become Madame Jacques.

If greetings in the market place are bad things, expostulations on the king's highway are worse. I determined, therefore, to follow Maitre Jacques and his bedstead towards some secluded spot, where the still, small voice of wisdom might be more distinctly audible; and, in pursuance of this determination, traversed in all their length the streets of Varennes and La Planche, (traversing that noisy thoroughfare the rue du Bac) till the cart and song of the poor Auvergnat stopped suddenly at a doorway, forming the angle of the Rue de la Chaise, which I refrain from calling *porte cochère*, since the only coach which ever passes through is the hearse conveying to its last abode the reliques of the dead.

I knew the place at once!—It was the asylum known by the name of Household Hospital, or *Hospice des Ménages*. After all, then, I was mistaken. Jacques and Josephine, in all the plenitude of youth, health, and vigour, could have no pretension to admission into an establishment, of which the male inmates must have attained seventy; and the female sixty years of age!—The errand man was only professionally engaged in removing the goods of some person about to enter the hospice.—

“So far from home, Jacques?”—cried I, accosting him as, with his cap cocked gallantly over one eye, he leaped down from the cart.

“*Dieu de Dieu!*” ejaculated he, in like surprise. “*Mon bon M'sieur*, who would ever have expected such goodness of you!”

“It is true the season is scarcely sufficiently advanced for summer shoes,” said I, looking down significantly on my dust-coloured chamois, and fancying that the Auvergnat was praising my forbearance in not reprimanding the neglects of his blacking-brush. “But never mind;—you will make up for it to-morrow.”—

“Don't let's talk of to-morrow, on the happiest day of my life!”—cried Jacques, with a reckless joyousness of tone, which sounded

cheering as a marriage bell. *Ah! not' bourgeois!*—why didn't you warn me of your intentions of doing me this signal honour!—I would have told you that three o'clock was the hour for admission.—They won't be here till three.—As soon as I have deposited the furniture demanded by the rules of the Hospice, (not very splendid you see, but it will be easy to change the deal for walnut-wood, or even mahogany, who knows?—if times go smooth with us,) I am to go back for the old folks. 'Tis a good distance, you know, to the Faubourg du Roule, even for you, who, without compliment, step out like a mountaineer. I sha'n't try more than a foot's pace over the rough pavement; for 'tis three years, you know, [sir, since the old lady was over her threshold. But why didn't you tell me you were coming?"—

Our mutual blunders were gradually cleared up. But, as it appeared that whatever might be the errand of Jacques, or whoever his employers, he was in a desperate hurry, I was careful not to be a hinderance to his movements; but waited patiently, while he and his companion, under sanction of the porter of the asylum, conveyed the furniture across the gardens, intersected by shady alleys of lofty trees, which occupy the vast area, once a lazaretto for sick children, next an hospital for insane persons and idiots, (under the well-known name of "*les Petites Maisons*,") and at present, a refuge for the aged poor.

While Jacques was carrying on his shoulders the wooden bedstead, I had leisure to remark that the small tenements surrounding the garden, from which arose the names of "*les petites maisons*," have given place to large, airy, uniform buildings, well adapted to contain the eight hundred beds which form the complement of the establishment. The porter, during my poor *commissionnaire's* absence, took upon himself the task of explaining the rules, regulations, and system of the hospital; which, by the way, is one of the numerous public institutions for which France is indebted to the — *République une et indivisible*.—

Not altogether eleemosynary in their condition, the inmates of the Household Hospital are admitted upon payment of a sum of 40*l.*, which secures them meat, drink, clothing, firing, pocket money to the amount of seven shillings a-month for the remainder of their days, and burial at the close. This payment, however, regards widows and widowers, and admits them only to the dormitories of the establishment. To obtain a double room and set up a household apart, a further trifling gratuity is required; or rather eighty of the best bed-rooms are thus appropriated, and the remaining eighty, bestowed gratuitously on couples wholly destitute of resources.

Nothing can be neater or cleaner than the chambers allotted to either class; opening from an airy corridor, several hundred feet

long, having, opposite to each door, its locker, for wood and charcoal. The service of the establishment is conducted by forty nuns, *Sœurs de Charité*; and the exquisite and delicate neatness of their kitchens, laundry, and gallery of linen-presses, do honour to their jurisdiction. Abundance of wholesome food,—such as rice stewed in broth, meat, vegetables, and baked fruit,—are at all hours in preparation, in a *cuisine* which has the airiness and elegance of a varnished Dutch toy.

“Would Monsieur like to see the dormitories?” demanded the porter, perceiving how much I was interested in the details of the establishment; and immediately, a door was opened into a ward containing more than one hundred clean white beds; beside which, many of the female inmates sat knitting in their chairs, in groups of two or three, beguiling the remnant of their numbered days with harmless reminiscent gossip, which so fully occupied their attention that they took no note of our entrance. A few of even the bedridden had knitting needles in their-hands, while some charitable neighbour sat by, reading or chatting for their entertainment; and as the light of a lofty window fell upon one of these venerable groups, throwing into strong relief their pale puckered visages, I longed for the pencil of Wilkie or Denner to commemorate the curious scene.

“What are you doing here, sir—what are you doing here?”—cried Jacques, putting in his rough head, as I stood engaged in conversation with a white-headed old soul, who told me, with much dignity, that she was an old woman at the time of the first Revolution; and who appeared to be an object of especial regard to the old nun who was gliding about the dormitory. “It is not here that I have settled them. This is only the women’s ward. You don’t suppose that I would part them in their old age?—Come with me to the other wing, the *galerie des ménages*; come, and I will soon show you their room,—the second best in the *Hospice*.—I have had my eye upon it these two years!—Old Mathieu, by whom it was occupied, was given over two winters ago; and I knew that, whenever he dropped, his widow, not liking to stay in’t alone, would move to the *dortoir des veuves*.—Come along with me!”

Directing a significant smile towards me, as if compassionating the excitement of my companion, the porter accompanied us towards the main body of the building; where, having ascended the first flight of stairs, he opened with a *passe-partout* the first door, and begged me to take a peep at one of their household chambers.

I know not whether an especial selection was made of the show-room of the *Hospice*; but the apartment I entered was a study for an artist. Beside the hearth sat a reverend elder, nearly ninety years of age, cosily niched into his easy chair; while the old wife

(who, being twenty years his junior, he seemed to regard as a frisky young thing) sat near him with a book in her hand, from which she was reading aloud when we entered. Snatching a glance at the book, which I concluded to be of a devotional tendency, I saw a volume of Voltaire's plays!

Nothing could be more comfortable than the instalment. The furniture, though plain, was bright and shining. Two uncouth-looking family pictures were appended to the wall; a branch of box, consecrated on Palm Sunday, was stuck into the tester of the bed; and, beside it, a small china *bénitier*, containing holy water. A cage with a pair of bulfinches, whose dingy plumage announced them to be old in proportion to the age of their master, stood on the top of a small *secrétaire*; and, on the table below, a China rose-tree in a case, from which the usual market-covering of white paper was not yet removed. Beside the second window, I perceived a neatly-dressed young girl, who blushed and curtsied as her eyes met mine. She was evidently a visiter,—a granddaughter, or grand-niece, by whom the rose-tree had been brought as a token of affection to the venerable couple.

Muttering apologies for an intrusion, which appeared however to be considered a compliment, I retired from the little sanctum; and was surprised to find, from the air and ejaculations of Jacques, that he was vexed and piqued by the inspection forced upon me by the porter.

“Of course, Monsieur will not expect our little *réduit* to look as cozy and comfortable the first day as a *ménage* that has been going on, without interruption, these ten years past!” cried he. “We shall have our quilt on the bed, and bird-cages, and rose-trees, in time,—like others. But at first, the main object was to secure the articles of furniture demanded by the rules of the hospital. *D'abord le stricte nécessaire;—le superflu viendra avec le temps.*”—

So saying, he pressed me forward through an open door of the gallery into a chamber newly whitewashed, swept, and garnished, wherein was already arranged the little mobilier I had seen him remove from the cart.—The place was neat and snug, though certainly displaying little of the *superflu* jealously adverted to by Jacques.

“I see to what Monsieur's eyes are directed!” cried the poor *commissionnaire*, glancing at an empty corner of the room. “The spot looks naked enough at present; but a couple of hours hence, matters will wear a very different aspect. That corner, sir, is kept for the two chests that contain their wearing-apparel, and the rest of their little property. I have settled that father's shall stand next the window, and mother's next the door, because its a trifle smaller and will take less room.”—

“Your father's—your mother's?”—cried I, in amazement. “Is

it then for your parents, *mon garçon*, that you are taking all this trouble?"—

"*Trouble?*"—reiterated Jacques, in a stinging accent.—"*Tu-dieu!* for five years past, the pleasure of fixing the old folks in peace and comfort for the rest of their lives, has been my dream by night, my care by day.—*Trouble*, sir?—ever since I chanced to be sent here on an errand by old Mathieu's grandson, I have kept saying to myself '*Jacques, mon gars!* yonder is the place for the old folks.—Manage to scrape together as much as will secure their old age an asylum in the *Hospice des Ménages*, and you may henceforward sleep in peace.'—With that end in view, I have toiled early and late. A thousand francs is a trifle, when one looks *back* on the earning of it; but, when one looks *forward*, the task seems hopeless. Twice, too, I have been cruelly thrown back. I was block-head enough to lend three hundred francs, two winters back, to a countryman—a brother Auvergnat,—who had drawn a bad number for the conscription; and though, by working hard, he might have paid me the money twice over, the fellow made off from Paris a few weeks afterwards, and has been heard of no more,—which was far from delicate of him, as the debt was a debt of honour, and regarded a brother Auvergnat.—Monsieur may, perhaps, recollect that he jeered me for being out of spirits the carnival before last, and gave me a five-franc piece *pour fêter le Mardi Gras?*—*That* was the very time I lost my money; and that piece was the first I put, for luck's sake, into my new *tire-lire*.⁽¹⁾ And luck it brought me, sir!—for the very next week, Monsieur le Vicomte threw me a double gold Napoleon, because he happened to drive his cabriolet over my foot, as I stood chopping wood in the court yard. 'T is true, I had a hard matter to hobble about for six weeks afterwards,—the frost having got into the wound. But what was that to the good fortune of gaining forty francs at a stroke?"—

"But, my good Jacques," cried I, much affected by the recollection of his hard labours and their scanty reward, "why not apprise me of the object you had in view?"—

"Because I knew Monsieur's good heart might lead him to do more than was altogether convenient to him. You paid me well, sir, for my services; and to have hinted a wish for further gains, would have been begging. And yet, about three months ago, sir, when I happened to meet Antoine, the great-grandson of old Mathieu, crying in the street, and heard from him that the *vieux bon homme* was not expected to get through the night,—and I went straight home, and broke my *tire-lire*, and found only two hundred and thirty francs to add to the six hundred and forty registered to my name in the books of the *Caisse d'Épargne*,—I own I had half a mind to implore of Monsieur the favour of a loan of the hundre-

(1) A savings' bank of earthenware used by the poor.

and thirty wanting to make up my thousand, in case of poor old Mathieu being called away. By God's will, however, the old chap was spared to toddle on a few months longer; and, luckily, in the busiest time of the year!—Bless your heart!—I have stayed up, night after night, this winter, calling coaches at the *bals masqués*, at the opera, or Musard's, till seven o'clock o' the morning; and seven o'clock in the morning is an ugly hour to look in the face when you've had no sight of a pillow, and the snow's too thick on the ground to admit of sleeping on one's *crochet* at the corner of the street, during the daytime. However, there's an end to all things!—All's over! all's safe!—Last night, my money was deposited, to the last halfpenny, with the *bureau de l'administration*; and there's yet left behind," quoth he, jingling his pockets, and glancing good-humouredly at the porter, "enough to afford a handsome *bonne main* to those who are about to have charge of the old folks."—

My answer consisted in a hearty shake of the errandman's horny hand.

"Monsieur must perceive," faltered he, as if apologizing for not having appealed to my assistance, "that it will afford twice the pleasure, both to the old people and myself, that this asylum is secured to them by my own industry, and not by the help of others. 'Tis a foolish thought, *mon bon Monsieur*, for the like of *us*; but, you see, poor as we are, and Christians, too, we're proud. This is not a common almshouse, sir. This *Hospice des Ménages* is a place where respectable folks are admitted for pay. I would n't have shoved poor father and mother into the charity-ward, any more than into St. Lazare;—nor I would n't have liked to see them beholden to any but their own son, so long as he had arms to work for them. But all fear's at an end. Twenty cabriolets may drive over me now, or twenty choleras attack me. I've a right to be sick or sorry when I please.—I've a right to sleep in my bed o' nights, and look the Vicomte's saucy chap of a groom in the face by day.—The old folks are safe!—Whatever may happen to *me*, *here's* their berth, with food, raiment, and pocket-money, so long as it pleases God to spare them!—*Cré Dieu!*—'tis a mightier relief than people dream of, to be relieved from all further anxiety concerning one's father and mother."

And Jacques wiped his forehead at the mere recollection of his past cares and present ease of mind.

"But all this time, I'm forgetting the cart," cried Jacques. And having hurriedly arranged with the porter to meet him in the chamber at three o'clock, he entreated me to return at the same hour, and be witness of the old people's inauguration.

I was almost puzzled to decide in what manner to dispose of the hour and a half's leisure thus left upon my hands. I am familiar

with the Faubourg St. Germain as a devotee with her beads. I know its churches, its convents, its colleges, its *Pays Latin*, its debateable land, or *Chambre des Débats*. But, lo!—as I was about to quit the triangular garden of the Hospice, I noticed a hearse or *corbillard* standing at the gate; and though there is nothing wonderful in such an appendage to an asylum containing eight hundred aged persons, I was glad that Jacques had already driven off. He might have construed it into a sinister omen.

The stone benches of the gardens were crowded with aged pensioners, who had tottered forth to bask in the sunshine; venerable and faded figures, all on the verge of the grave: and I was struck by the air of indifference with which they saw the deal coffin of their yesterday's comrade borne forth from the simple chapel, and placed in the hearse. The fall of one of the trees in the avenue, would have created twice as great a sensation among the inmates of *Les Ménages*.

“Whom are they burying?”—said I to an old man of intelligent countenance, who, propped on his crutch, stood gazing wistfully on the *croque-morts* escorting the corpse.

“*Est-ce que je sais?*”—was his crabbed reply. No doubt some one out of the infirmary. Since the influenza, they have been dying a dozen a-day in the infirmary. The *administration* had its private ends in getting the influenza introduced into the *hospice!*—Sixty beds vacant since March,—ay, ay!—the *administration* knows what it is about.”—

Provoked to have stumbled upon a malcontent, I noticed, as I reached the wicket, that the coffin was followed, as far as the hearse, by one of the *Sœurs de Charité*; and that, till out of sight, the good woman stood gazing mournfully on the procession.

“They are not allowed to follow the dead to the churchyard,” said the porter, whom I found standing at the wicket. “The service of the *hospice* would not allow of their absenting themselves so frequently; and, besides, it is not the custom in France for women to attend funerals. However, I can see plainly by *Sœur Pétronille's* countenance, that she is loth to take leave of the body. I don't know whom they are burying. But *Sœur Pétronille* is one of the infirmary nuns, and the most tender-hearted of them all. See, sir! she's crying her eyes out!—I warrant she'd give them something for leave to follow the hearse to the churchyard. But 't is against rules.”

“*Ma Sœur,*” said I, accosting the weeping woman, hat in hand, “if I could be of any service in showing the last respect to the object of your affliction——”

“It is my father!” murmured the nun, labouring to speak with composure; “and I am afraid that, as I have not wherewithal to pay for a *fosse à part*, and he is to be laid in the *fosse des pauvres*,

I shall not be able hereafter to recognise his grave ! But, if Monsieur would have the great kindness, the great charity, to place this paper in a cleft stick at the head of the grave, I shall be able to commission a *treillageur* to place a cross and *entourage*."

"Where is the interment to take place?"—cried I, the procession having already moved off; and, having eagerly accepted the small card, inscribed with the name of "François Xavier de Béthel," I hastened towards the Boulevard du Mont Parnasse, the eastern cemetery, being the one appropriated to the use of the hospitals of Paris. Not having calculated upon the leisurely pace of the corbillard, I found myself at the gates of the cimetière some time before its arrival.

"In what part of the churchyard are the poor of the hospices interred?"—I inquired of the official porter, who, possessing under his charge the tombs of the Duchesse de Gesvres (the last descendant of the Connétable Du Guesclin) and a few other defunct notabilities of the aristocratic Faubourg St. Germain,—evidently fancied himself a prodigiously great man. And the answer sufficed to remind me, for the fiftieth time, of the distinction between the words *hôpital* and *hospice*, which I am always forgetting—viz., that the former is devoted to the sick poor, the latter to the infirm and aged.

"The Hospital de la Charité has the privilege of burying its dead in the Cimetière du Mont Parnasse, which is its parish," replied the man, fancying me, perhaps, ignorant, as a foreigner, that the felons of Paris (Fieschi and Alibaud, the regicides, among the rest) are interred in the burying-ground of which he is so proud. "But the *hospices* have a spot of ground adjoining. The hospices, sir, do not bury in our cemetery."

Following the direction of his finger, I passed, accordingly, through a turnstile, and a narrow walk overgrown with nettles, till I reached a spot enclosed by a range of shabby wooden palings, much resembling the melon-ground or rubbish-yard attached to a gentleman's kitchen-garden. Lifting up the latch, the wicket opened, and I went in.

Most people who visit Paris perform a pilgrimage to the fashionable cemetery of Père La Chaise, a city of the dead, which comprises most of the illustrious of France defunct during the last thirty years. Great names are there,—fine monuments,—rare exotics;—all the pride, pomp, and circumstance of the vanities of this world. For my part the sentimental inscriptions and fiddle-faddle flower-gardens of the place, so thoroughly at variance with the simple grandeur of its object,—the depositing of the husk of the grain sown for immortality,—invariably excite my disgust.

But disgusts of a very different nature assailed me on entering the hospital burying-ground. I missed the herbage, the vege-

tation, the cool green trees! The earth was too earthy. The ever-disturbed soil (the space being too small for the purpose to which it is devoted) scarcely allows two years to the tenant of the grave to moulder away, ere the *fosse des pauvres* is re-opened; and to its mouldering deal planks and mouldering human bodies, wrapt in rags of sackcloth by way of shroud, new deal coffins and fresh human bodies are thrown in!—It is true, at the further extremity stand a multitude of black wooden crosses, to mark the graves of individuals luxurious enough to repose for the space of five years in a *fosse à part*; and within the wooden *entourages* of these, a few flowers are here and there coaxed up into sickly growth. But the soil, the atmosphere, are uncongenial! Flowers have no business on the graves of those whose living hours have been labour and sorrow. *Their* blossoms spring from an Eden of immortality, which eye hath not seen; and glorious indeed should their brightness be, to yield repayment for the thorns of earth!—

As these thoughts passed painfully through my mind, a man stumbled towards me, bearing on his back, like a pedlar's pack, a rough deal coffin, which was instantly lowered into the loose earth of an adjoining trench, a hundred feet long, which I conjectured to be the *fosse des pauvres* or common grave, from the disorderly manner in which the deal boxes were thrown there, side by side, —the two last being still uncovered with earth.

I inquired of a shabby-looking man in rusty black, wearing a cocked hat, who appeared to be in official attendance, whether the body were that of *François Xavier de Béthel*; but he knew nothing on the subject, and evidently cared as little.

“Was it the body of a pauper from the *Hospice des Ménages*?”—

“*Oui, oui, Monsieur!*—from the *Hospice*,” he replied. I accordingly bestowed a trifling gratuity on the grave-digger to induce him to deal decently with the dead; and saw the earth trodden in as firmly as could be done till the next pauper interment. All that remained was to fulfil my commission by placing the cleft stick and inscription.

“Monsieur perhaps intends to bestow a cross upon the deceased?”—demanded the sexton; and, ere I could reply, a card was placed in my hand, intimating that “At 9, Boulevard du Mont Parnasse, Perinelle, treillageur, keeps a flower-garden of *plantes funèbres*, undertakes monuments, crosses, *entourages*, *et tout ce qui concerne son état.*”—The cost of a cross and inscription, the sexton informed me, was but four francs; and even I am able to secure the satisfaction of a fellow-creature at so small a cost. I issued orders accordingly, that the name on the card should have a more durable inscription; and the pious wishes of *Sœur Pétronille* were fulfilled.

All this, however, took time. It was three o'clock within three minutes, when I returned through the Rue de Regard. On attaining the corner of the Rue de Sévres, the empty cart of my friend Jacques stood at the gateway of the Hospice.

"The old people are arrived, then?"—said I to the porter, with the familiarity of an old acquaintance.

"Arrived, and, I fear, in some trouble," he replied; "for my wife, who helped to escort them, was seen running from the house just now to the infirmary, to fetch one of the nuns and some ether."

The odour of that powerful restorative reached me the moment I entered the gallery containing the little household-chamber of the new *ménage*. The door was ajar, the opposite window open. I heard the ominous sound of human sobs within.

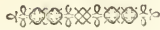
My heart sank in my bosom. The joy of the old people had been too much for them. One of poor Jacques' parents had, perhaps, fallen a victim to the agitation and hurry of removal. Peeping anxiously in, I prepared myself for the sad spectacle of expiring age.

"He is better now!"—were the first words that struck my ear as I entered the room. When lo!—wonder of wonders,—I descried poor Jacques, with his bronzed cheeks as white as ashes, sitting propped in a chair; while the poor nun Sœur Pétronille, and a venerable looking peasant couple, administered to his aid.

It was the strong man who had fainted!—Overcome by the exquisite delight of installing his parents in their long-wished abode, consciousness had been for some minutes suspended in the Herculean frame of *Jacques le Commissionnaire*!—

DIVES AND LAZARUS;

OR, IRELAND!



CASTLE CARROL is one of the noblest spots on the Shannon. The old tower stands forth on a rocky eminence; as if as champion of the wild rough country in its rear, against the smooth, smiling, civil-spoken plain confronting it on the opposite shore. With all its braggartry, however, the Carrol country has the worst of it, —being a barren ill-regulated district, while the meadow-lands which it overlooks are fine, fat, flourishing pastures, flowing with milk and honey.

Castle Carrol had not gazed upon this land of Canaan for so many centuries, without experiencing certain sensations of ungodly coveting; and accordingly when, at the commencement of the present century, the thriving estate of Vale Banatha devolved upon a female heir, Castle Carrol lost no time in becoming a suitor; and, after the usual forms of courtship, Miss Florence O'Banatha became Countess of O'Carrol.

The old hall rang with the gay doings of the wedding; and, soon after the close of the year, the church bells rang again in honour of the birth of an heir to hill and valley; but as, within no great distance of time, they tolled out dolefully for the burial of the heiress-countess, no second offspring came to divide the inheritance of the young peer.

It was much about the same time that one of Lord O'Carrol's cottars (who, bearing the same name, would in Scotland have announced himself to be of the castle-clan) married, and begat a son. The bride, in this instance, inherited nothing but a pair of strong arms and a strong frame of mind; and, consequently, no church bells announced to the surrounding country the birth of little Jem. The bantling struggled unheeded into life, his course through which was predestined to be a continuous struggle.

"See to him, the darlint!"—cried his father, holding the roaring babe up to the sunshine, rolled in one of his own ragged shirts. "Has n't he got the eye iv him winking up at the cruiskun already, as if he'd got a taste iv it?—Och! he'll be the broth of a boy!"—

And so he was!—From six years upwards, wherever mischief was to be done or danger confronted, Jem Carrol was foremost. Light-

limbed, light-hearted, light-headed, accustomed to hard fare at bed and board, no danger of Jem Carrol's eating or sleeping away his faculties!—He was sharp, as he was sharp-set. All his pleasures were boons of Nature's granting, i. e. exercise and free air:—

A savage wildness o'er him hung,
As of a dweller out of doors.

His face was tanned brown, his hair white; and when, with one hand holding up his tattered vestments, he skimmed the plain or climbed the cliffs, the little animal had more the untamed aspect of one of the *feræ naturæ*, than of a Christian soul encased in a human body.

Christian, however, is a term almost gratuitous, as applied to little Jem; for, though his parents had paid their fee to the priest for bestowing upon him the name of James, which they considered the upshot of the operation that was to keep his infant soul out of purgatory, neither father nor son gave a second thought to the subject. Jem, senior, was too hard-working and hard-drinking a creature, to take much account of things spiritual; and Jem junior's sins were at present stationary on the shoulders of his sponsors. He had been occasionally licked for "staling" apples or "thaving" the chicken's meat, when his allowance of murphies proved too small for his appetite and virtue. But his knowledge of the iniquity of "staling" was expected to be intuitive. His sire and dam were too busy to teach,—they had only time to cuff; and Castle Carrol being rigidly protestant, and no priest resident in the district, he was brought up a heathen in all but name.

Not so young Julius, heir to the noble house of Carrol. *His* cradle was overhung with silks,—*his* infancy beset with nurses.—At six years old, he had scarcely the free use of his limbs; and, while Jem Carrol was clambering up the cliffs for life and death, could scarcely climb without assistance into an arm-chair. If "thaving" and "staling" were not more interdicted to him than poor Jem, everything else was forbidden. It was "Julius, don't do that," from morning till night; till, reared with a notion of being always in the wrong, the boy grew up in a sort of vague want of self-reliance, which gave him the air of a fool; and taught him the mean acts of cunning and lying. At ten years old, the young lord, in his velvet jacket and trowsers of spotless white, was a very dirty little fellow.

At that precise period, however, he ceased to be visible at Castle Carrol. The red velvet and white jean were exchanged for a suit of sables, while the church-bells tolled more dolorously than before, in token that the noble earl was about to sleep his last sleep beside the noble countess; and, lo! the chubby-faced, flaxen-headed boy, in whose person were united the honours of Castle Carrol and the wealth of Vale Banatha, reigned in their

stead; and was forthwith carried off to England by his guardian, Sir Bernard Moonshine, to be made a man of.—

“Long life to the lad, and God’s luck evermor’ be wid him!”—exclaimed James Carrol, senior, as the carriage and four, containing the heir and executors, bowled out of sight. “A betther lard nor his lordship’s right honourable fader niver was seen at Castle Carrol,—bringing a big heiress intho the family, all as one as a bridge over the blessed river ’tween Vale Banatha and the Carrol country;—and may his son live to walk in his shoes!”

This adjuration was shortly changed into—“God send the young lard’s time was come for walking in his noble fader’s shoes!”—For, instead of the resident earl, the tenants had now a non-resident agent to look to for justice and protection. The executors had other matter in hand. The Irish estates were allowed to go as it pleased Providence;—and Providence seems rarely pleased with anything that occurs on Irish estates. The guardians took care of the young lord, and trusted the property to the agents; the agents took care of themselves, and trusted the property to chance. The castle was allowed to go to rack and ruin. The rain rained in, the sunshine alone was shut out. Floors and furniture mouldered away; the rats kept holiday in the old hall; and mildew overspread the surface of the place.

It was not till the agent, five years after the earl’s decease, sent in a demand of six thousand three hundred and seventy-two pounds, four shillings, and eightpence, for the article of repairs, that the executors appeared to recollect the fact that on the Irish estates stood a castle, in which castle the right hon. minor had seen the light. But it did not much signify. Lord O’Carrol, who was now in the fifth form at Eton, already announced that he never intended to reside in Ireland; and money being just then highly advantageous in calling in an English mortgage, the executors decided against further reparation, and let the old house shift for itself. Next spring, there was a promising crop of grass in the western wing, unroofed by the storms of the preceding winter; and even the bats, domiciliated in the blue damask drawing-room, seemed to feel that the place was growing too damp and dismal for them.—But what mattered all this to Lord O’Carrol?—He was now entered at Cambridge; had a suit of rooms at Mivart’s, and a bill at Adams’ the coach-maker, the manifold sheets of which might have served to re-paper the blue damask drawing-room.

Jem Carrol, meanwhile, had, like his noble contemporary, survived his sainted sire; but, by way of compensation for the loss, he had his mother and an infirm brother to maintain.—Himself and the pig were all they had to look to; yet such was the hilarity of his nature, that, so long as the “praties thruv,” and the agent who monopolized the preserves of game and fishery resided thirty

miles off along the river, Jem Carrol continued to keep a good face upon it. No one could say the lad was out at elbows, for small sleeve it was that Jem had to his jacket; and if his comely features were more begrimed than was advantageous to the beauty of his complexion, what wonder?—There was nothing about the place but the greenest of ditch-water,—so green that the family were “forced to quench their thirst (so they were) with buttermilk or sper’ts,” and dispense altogether with personal ablution.

Dirt is the parent of disease. The green ditch-water brought the fever: “and so, being laid up, kilt with typhus, at sade time,” the Carrols’ acre was left to the mercy of their neighbours; and their neighbours proved too poor and too busy to be merciful. The crop failed which was to supply both rent and food. The guardian’s agent’s sub-agent, who inhabited the tumbledown offices of the old castle, grew turbulent, and threatened; upon which poor Jem, with a sanguine trust in better times, sold off their few moveables, and brought on a relapse of the fever, by sleeping on the damp floor, saturated by the oozings of the memorable green ditch.

It was not probable that the pauper Papist family should obtain much favour in the sight of the Protestant minister of the parish; but, as the present incumbent, the Honourable and Reverend Marmaduke Carrol, uncle of the late lord, seldom visited the place except for a fortnight’s shooting, and during his residence fifty miles off at his deanery at Kilfesent, intrusted the cure of the souls and bodies committed to his charge to the hands of a curate having sixteen children of his own to monopolize his attention, and assist him to starve upon eighty-five pounds per annum,—the case of the cottars was hopeless. They might have been unconscious, indeed, that the parish boasted a dean for its rector, and the dean a pauper for his curate, but for the half-yearly visits of the tithe-proctor; and it almost reconciled Jem and the family to the one-piggedness of their farm, that no tithe-pig ever curled its tail over their threshold, on its way to the Decanatorial sty.

Judy Carrol, as we have already remarked, was a strong-minded able-bodied woman. But her physical force had now given way under the depression of disease; and it was almost too much for her courage to find the utmost efforts of her noble-hearted lad scarcely sufficient to provide a bite and sup for herself and poor Maurice.

“Sure, isn’t it a hard thing, now,” murmured she, as she sat shivering in a corner of the damp cabin, “to fale the want of a turf, when my lard’s stacks are rotting up yon, undher the viry eyes iv us, and the agent too lazy to so much as make his market on ’em?—And is n’t it a hard thing, now, to see poor Jim kilt out

iv the life iv him, slaving for me and Maurice, who's more helpless nor a baby this day, jist becace the agent wont lind a hand to mind the drain, what's been wanting repair these tin year,—and makes the cabin like a mill-pond, and brings the faver, and the faver, murdher and ruin?—Plase God, if 't was in the grave that Maurice and I was lying, little it is the loss iv us would be felt; and thin, Jem might hauld up his young hid again, and none the warse.”—

It was owing to the suggestions of this maternal monologue, that poor Maurice Carrol, the hunchback, took a sudden and desperate resolution to minister, for the future, to his own maintenance. It was not much he could do. He could not dig, and, though to beg he was by no means ashamed, there was not a soul in the country, now the mansions at Castle Carrol and Vale Banatha were shut up, to encourage beggars. A few handfuls of meal or a stale loaf were the utmost he was likely to procure from the wives of the neighbouring farmers. One only alternative presented itself. Maurice had been in his childhood too infirm to be banged into an abhorrence of “thaving and staling;” while the six miles intervening between Castle Carrol and the nearest station of his reverence, were too long a step for the lame child to be dragged so often as his spiritual education might be supposed to require.

His notions of *meum* and *tuum*, therefore, or rather of the degree of turpitude arising from the transfer of other people's property to one's self, were exceedingly vague. He knew, for instance, that, in a rushy bottom of the river, in a bend about a quarter of a mile from Banatha manor-house, was a favourite breeding ground of the plovers, abounding in the district. For eleven months of the year, the spot was deserted save by himself—the desolate boy having a liking to the desolateness of the place, and a predilection for the melancholy cry of the birds frequenting the neighbouring moors.

But the eggs formed a valuable object of speculation. The chief agent's wife was fond of having them for her ball-suppers in Merrion Square; and the sub-agent, accordingly, made it his duty to have the nests watched in laying time. It unluckily happened at this juncture that the keeper appointed for the purpose having made it annually apparent to his employers, that the produce of the place was on the decrease, was apprised that, unless during the present season it proved as abundant as of old, his occupation would be gone. Pat Flannagan had, accordingly, no alternative but rigour or dismissal.

“Well! jistice is jistice!”—cried he, when, gun in hand, he took up his solitary position on a misty April morning, just as daylight was breaking on the river. “How I'm to make them

bastes of burds giv a bigger complement, is more than my own gumption can guess, ony way ; and as to giving up my gun to the kaper, and laving my place about the castle——Well——Hiven help a poor boy ! I'll jist see the inding on't."—

He had assumed his accustomed post an hour or two earlier than usual ; and, having taken his seat on the stump of an old alder-bush, around which springing suckers already shooting into leaf afforded him some degree of shelter, he sat musing with his pipe in his mouth, and his eyes fixed upon the stream.

It was a pleasant sight to see the heavy overhanging mists, rendered gradually transparent by the rising sun, wreathing and circling away ; till not only the ripple of the current, but the outline of the opposite cliffs became discernable. At that untimely hour no craft was moving on the river ; no stragglers were discernible on the cliffs above or shores below ;—not so much as a truant urchin sauntering along the green strip of grassy soil at the base of the rocks, forming a depository for things washed down by the stream from the higher country. All was solitary,—all still,—all silent ;—save that the plovers were already on the wing, shrieking and circling over the rushes, or dotting the green grass as they stood pluming themselves for the day.

But, lo ! Pat Flanagan's eyes were soon directed from the mists, and his spirit from its meditations, by the sight of one of the leather-covered wicker punts belonging to the castle salmon fishery, pushing its way clumsily along the shallows of the opposite shore. The hour, the season, and the solitariness of the boat, forbad all notion that it could be occupied by one of those to whose calling it was apportioned ; nor could Pat, for the life of him discern through the misty morning air, by whose hand it was so feebly punted along. By the stature of the boatman, it might be supposed a child ;—by its reckless pilotage along that perilous shore a woman. At length, as the little barque slanted its course hazardously across the current, Pat, who sat watching from his post, exclaimed, in consternation,—“The Lard's mercy be good to me, this day,—if it ben't Widdy Carrol's lame Maurice !”—

At first, his sole anxiety was excited by the peril incurred by the urchin in crossing the stream. But he next began to wonder what could be the urchin's object in braving such a peril. There was nothing to tempt him towards that uninhabited moor, but the plovers' nests ; and in a moment it rushed into Pat's head, that the appearance of Maurice Carrol on the spot had some connexion with the disappearance of the eggs. Instead of hailing the boy, therefore, as he had half unclosed his mouth to do, he cowered cunningly among the alder bushes, and “bided his time.”

Ten minutes afterwards, when Maurice, after tethering his cockle-shell of a boat to a stump, and, half wading, half walking,

proceeded to fill to the brim, with dark-spotted plovers' eggs, the moss-lined basket with which he came provided, he was suddenly felled to the ground, and deprived of consciousness. It was not till he found himself lying in the heat of the noon-day sun under the cliffs of the opposite shore, his tattered clothes covered with the half-dried mire through which he had been dragged by Pat Flanagan, and his bones and head aching with the bruises bestowed on him with the butt of the keeper's gun, that he understood the detection and chastisement which had befallen him.

By Pat's sense of justice the marauder was steered over the river, and left half dead upon the beach; and perhaps by his sense of compassion, not a syllable was uttered on his part concerning the transaction.

"The boy's had bating enough to kape him from pickin' and stalin' for some time to come," was Flanagan's commentary on the business, when he resumed his place among the alder bushes; "it would be only shaming the child of honest folk, was I to make his reck'nin' for 'm wid the agent. But let me catch him at's thricks agin, the spalpeen, and I'll make an everlastin' warnin' on him."

That night, Maurice Carrol lay moaning on the clay floor of the cabin; and a sore thought it was to his mother and brother that the "fever" had again seized him, and that they were unable to pay for doctor, or doctor's stuff, to free him from the pain against which he seemed to be struggling. But the next night, he moaned no more: and the night following, unnatural lights burned in the cabin,—unnatural sounds of festivity issued from its open threshold,—from which the door had been unhinged to form a dead-deal to straighten the corpse of the murdered boy. The lads of Castle Carrol were waking poor hunchback Maurice!—

He had died without disclosing a word.—He was too proud to own that he had been beaten for a thief; though satisfied, according to the conscience of the poor, that poaching is no thieving in the sight of God, and that the wild creatures of nature's breeding are vouchsafed as much for the food of the hungry as for the recreation of the rich. But when the wasted deformed body of Maurice came to be prepared for the grave, his bruises and contusions became manifest; and it was clear that one of these blows, dealt by some vindictive man whose hand was stronger than his judgment, had caused an inward injury, and ended the wants and miseries of the widow's son.

The neighbours cried shame,—the agent was required to appeal to the nearest magistrate for redress.—But having ascertained that there existed no evidence to throw light upon the business, (the whole having been privately disclosed to his employer by poor Pat, the day of the affray, when the sub-agent sent off Flanagan with a basket of plover's eggs, along the river, to the agent in

chief, requesting that work might be found for him on another part of the estate), he informed the Carrol family that it was useless to entail the trouble and expense of legal investigation upon the parish; that it was clear the boy had fallen from the cliffs in some wanton expedition of bird's nesting, and been afraid to acquaint them with the accident.

The pauper is easily answered,—easily buried. The earth once heaped over the injuries of poor Maurice, there was nothing further to be said. Most people thought the starving family in luck, to be delivered from their burthen; and if the village did not yield implicit credit to the sub-agent's explanations, it considered the matter not worth inquiring into.

Not so, however, Jem. Young Carrol was now nineteen years of age, embittered in soul by adversity, and worn down in frame by premature labour. It was just as he was becoming conscious of the hardness of his mortal lot, as a perpetual hewer of other people's wood and drawer of other people's water,—the hewing and drawing of which, from July to eternity, would never yield him a decent maintenance,—that his brother's mysterious death super-added the consciousness of injury to that of wretchedness.

Hitherto when he found the world too strong for him, he had redoubled his trust in Providence; he now began to fancy the world too strong for Providence itself. His poor, harmless, afflicted brother, Maurice,—whose hand was never raised against living mortal,—had been murdered in cold blood,—and there was no redress!—Jem Carrol could not work for thinking of this by day;—could not rest for dreaming of it by night!—The cabin seemed haunted by the body of Maurice, extended upon the old door,—discoloured with bruises,—the countenance distorted with its death pang,—the long dark hair clotted with blood!—Wherever he turned, he beheld that ghastly spectacle.—His dying father had committed the helpless lame boy to his charge, to be unto him as a child of his own; and now, his father's voice seemed to sound anew in his ears, bidding him arise and avenge the death of his son!—In the midst of some household occupation or labour of husbandry, he would pause suddenly; and, with compressed lips and big beads of moisture standing out upon his brow, fold his arms across his breast, and give himself up to the agonizing consideration of his brother's martyrdom.

“Niver will I hare that swate voice agin!—Niver will them blessed eyes, so mild and good, look out from the cabin-door, to wilcome me home,” muttered the excited young man. “By GOD's will, my blood runs no longer in the veins of living man. Yet *not* by GOD's will (the blessed saints forgive me this day!), but by the will of the masterful and cru'el, to whose hands I seem evermore committed!”—

Then followed darker and more discontented thoughts; and an oath, registered in heaven, that, if ever he should discover the originator of his brother's death, a life should be taken to repay the life of Maurice. For Maurice was no brawler. His voice was soft, his arm feeble, his heart gentle as a woman's.—The injury *must* have been dealt unprovoked.—As Jem Carrol constantly repeated to himself, “The lad had been kilt and murdered in cold blood.”—

A year actually elapsed before a surmise of the truth occurred to the mind of the young man. It was not till the April following (when—having dropped down the stream towards the moorlands, on his own account, for the provision of eggs he had long been in the habit of securing annually for his mother—he found the place guarded by an armed keeper), that threats were uttered against himself, which brought to mind the fate of him of whose death the morrow was the anniversary!—

“Murdering villin!—’twas yerself then, as shure as a blessed sky’s above me, that made away with Maurice Carrol!”—cried Jem, with sudden conviction, recoiling from the advancing keeper.

“I’ll make small account, plase God, of making an ind iv yerself that says that same,” retorted the man, flourishing his musket more like a shillelah than a fire-arm; while Jem, excited beyond all self-control (as a thousand concurrent circumstances rushed into his mind, of a boat having been found drifting along the current on the day of his brother's death, and the garments of poor Maurice being stained with mire resembling that of the rushy moor), burst like a madman upon the keeper, wrested the weapon from his hands, and, whether accidentally in the scuffle or by deliberate aim, lodged the charge of the piece in the body of the offender.

It was now decreed for Jem Carrol to pursue the course previously taken by poor Flanagan. After lying concealed a day in the adjacent moor, he fled the country. The cry of blood was at his heels; and, with terror in his steps and famine in his face, he at length reached the sea-coast; and, having earned, by a few weeks’ labour at some neighbouring marl-pits, the price of a passage, quitted old Ireland for ever!

He was now a desperate man. He knew that his mother was penniless and helpless, with shame, sorrow, and want to abide with her in her desolate habitation. He gave himself up to his anguish,—he gave himself up to his infamy; for having accidentally learned, on his escape from the moors of Vale Banatha, that the murdered man was a stranger in the place, newly engaged as keeper by the sub-agent of the absentee Earl of O’Carrol, he found the weight of blood upon his soul, yet his vengeance still unsatiated.

The young earl, meanwhile, was enjoying his purple and fine linen, and luxuriating in the good things of this life. All he had done to obtain the houses and lands, the hangings and plate, the

horses and chariots, ministering to his daily enjoyment, was—to be born; and he appeared resolved to add very little exertion to the original effort. Though a representative peer, he had not yet taken his seat in parliament. Clubs, sprees, dice, and claret, engrossed his days and nights. He knew no more of his Irish estates and tenants, than the “per Messrs. Latouche and Co., so many thousands” half-yearly entered into his London banker’s book. He had fought a duel at Cambridge on being taxed with the brogue; and would have dismissed old Ireland wholly and entirely from his recollection, but for the excellent whisky and beautiful colts annually forwarded to his lordship’s hunting-seat in Leicestershire, as a token of respect from his agent in Merrion Square.

Yet O’Carrol was not a bad-hearted young man. He was weak rather than wicked; and, had his better qualities been cultivated by conscientious and loving parents, instead of a careless guardian, he might have turned out a useful member of society. As it was, he contented himself with being a man of *ton*, a member of the best clubs, an occasional visitor to the west-end police offices. Sir Bernard Moonshine had every reason to be satisfied with his ward.

It happened that, one summer, a few years after his attainment of his majority, Lord O’Carrol, on his way from town to Southampton, to embark in his yacht for a cruise with a set of his Crockford’s associates, arrived at Winchester just as the bells were ringing and trumpets braying, to announce the arrival of the judges and the opening of the assize. The dandy crew in the britzka and four immediately took their cigars from their mouths, to inquire what fun was going on. They were informed that the kalender was a heavy one; that there were eleven capital cases; that the court would be crowded with all the rank and fashion of the place; and that not a bed was to be had in the city. This was almost motive enough to determine them to stay. But Sir George Gormandize, who was of the party, having reminded the young earl that his *chef* had been four days at Southampton, preparing for their arrival, and another hero suggesting that their valets and dressing-boxes had preceded them in another carriage, so that they had not so much as a toothbrush at command, they gave up the project, damned the assizes, and started anew for the Dolphin.

That night was a stormy night.—The same winds that howled round the cells of Winchester gaol, lashed the Southampton river into a turmoil. The waves broke upon the banks; the old stone walls appeared to yield. The noble yachters, over their claret, cursed the weather; the criminals awaiting judgment recommended their souls to God!—Lord O’Carrol called for deviled biscuits and burnt champagne; Jem Carrol murmured, amid the watches of the night,—“I have taken thy vengeance into my hands,—take thou mercy, O Lord, into thine.”—

For Jem had now a double stain of homicide upon his hands. Jem was about to give up his life to the justice of his country, in return for the lives of his fellow-creatures. An outcast, an alien, —ignorant, untamed,—the better instincts of his nature unfortified by the dictates of laws divine or human,—seared in soul by the remembrance of an act, the criminality of which he limited to the substitution of persons which had sacrificed an innocent man for a guilty,—Jem, on his arrival in England, though relieved from want by employment in the west country, had been unable to settle himself to decent occupation. The wild habits of lawless Castle Carrol clung to him. He became a poacher, a smuggler, an habitual drunkard. Convicted on one occasion of infraction of the game laws, he expiated his offence by a year's imprisonment in Bristol gaol, and quitted it, a hardened and desperate offender.

There were moments, indeed, when better impulses recurred to him; moments when, in the prosperity following a busy harvest, his renewed purse suggested recollections of home—of his early misery, his necessitous family; and but that he knew from an encounter in prison with one of the Vale Banatha men, that his mother was no more, he would almost have braved the perils of the law, and returned for her sake to the fatherland which deals so penuriously with its children.

But old Judith was gone!—There was no longer a motive for regretting the tremendous barrier excluding him for evermore from his native village. He was a banished wretch—a proscribed wretch—with every man's hand against him, and his own hand embued in blood! Such was the state of Jem Carrol's, mind, when accident threw him into the way of a motley band, frequenting the New Forest; smugglers or poachers according to season and occasion, and including more than one of his ill-fated countrymen. During several months, they managed to evade the detection of justice: but, the dead body of a man, unknown, having been discovered in the recesses of the Forest, precautions and inquiries were redoubled, which ended with the capture of three of the notorious gang. In course of examination, it appeared that the deceased was not only one of their victims, but one of their confederates; and, to the amazement, no less of his companions than of the examining magistrate, Jem Carrol avowed himself the assassin. Though repeatedly admonished against committing himself, he persisted in the declaration; and, on his trial, again and again reiterated the confession of his crime.

“I pursave your lardship's good marsy in bidding me kape quite,” said the prisoner, addressing himself to the learned judge. —“But, if it's all the same to yer lardship, I'd be glad ye'd shew any laniency ye have to spare, to the boys wot was had up wid me, (though innocent of the thing as the babby unborn), on account of

ony little fault they may have committed in pint o' wagrancy or sich. But for me, my lard, (worse look to me!) I'm a-weary o' life.—Long afore I fell in at Portsdown Fair wid the murdherin' thafe, Pat Flanagan, and heerd him tell the tale o' the Castle Carrol hunchback as he 'd stove in tin year ago, and been obliged to flee the country for that same—(little dramin', the blackguard, who was sated beside him, but the brother o' Maurice Carrol, a-takin' note of the werds in his lips)—long afore I up and dilt the law o' justice upon him in the Forest, as he desarved, and more;—long afore *that*, my lard, I'd made up my mind that this life was ill worth living, for the likes o' *me*!—Sorrow the comfort I've had iv my born days!—Kicked through the world like a skittle ball;—cuffed here, starved there;—widout a friend to say, God save me;—widout a bed to lie on;—often widout a bit to put betwixt my lips.—Except, may be, afther a drap of dhrink, what comfort was there for me in life?—All the land I looked on was my Lard O'Carrol's, —all the little I could scrape by tilling it wint to my Lard O'Carrol! —Rint and tithes ate up all. The poor ould mother iv me was kilt wi' could and hunger,—my young brother murdhered outright, for birds-nesting;—and myself hunted out iv the counthry, for doing a bit o' jistice on my Lard O'Carrol's agent, jist as yer lardship's about to do this day on me.—So what for, I'd like to know, my lard, would I wish to live?—Yer lardship may up and hang me to the fore; for it's no more than I've often intinded to do to myself, and the throuble 'll be spared.—Only, before ye put on yer thunderin' assize-cap, as I've heerd tell of, jist be plased to take it from a poor lad like me, that thim as should ha' been in their place yondhir, in Vale Banatha, a-doing jistice for their papple, and seein' em rared in the knullidge iv right and wrong, and to fare God and honour the king, ha' more to answer for this day than *I*, being forced, as I was, to take the law into my hands. As shure as God's above all, my lard, they'll have to answer at *his* judgment-sate for *my* life, and thim lives as my hands have made away. And so, I pray God to forgive my Lard O'Carrol, for desarting his counthry, and sitting the likes of 'em uver us, from this day forth, for evermore!—Amin!"

"O'Carrol, my fine fellow, here's something that concerns *you*!" said Sir George Gormandize, as they were taking their case in the Southampton Inn, trying to while away a blustering afternoon, with newspapers and écarté.

"The king!"—interposed the noble lord against whom Lord O'Carrol was playing.

"The devil!"—rejoined his lordship, giving less attention to Sir George's apostrophe, than to his cards.

"Here's an Irish tenant of yours going to be hanged at Winchester to-morrow morning. We've no chance of getting on board

to-night. I never saw an execution,—supposing we drive over to Winchester after dinner?”—

“For what?”—demanded Lord O’Carrol, who had not been listening to a syllable; but who, having now lost a fourteenth game, threw the cards petulantly on the table.

“To witness an execution.”

“Faith, I’ve had enough of executions; two this season at my house in Chapel Street, and three last!” cried another of the party.

“Psha! I mean a *criminal* execution.—They’re going to hang a namesake of O’Carrol’s, for unjustifiable homicide.”

“The deuce they are!”—said his lordship. “I wish they’d let us have dinner. I ordered it at seven.—’T is ten minutes past—and the Dories will be overdone. *When* did you say the fellow was to be scragged?”—

Sir George replied by placing the *Hampshire Telegraph* in his lordship’s hands, while he proceeded up stairs to wash his own, previous to dinner. Extending himself listlessly on the sofa, the Irish peer began to yawn over the trial of Jem Carrol.

“The impudent rascal!”—cried he, when he reached the affecting apostrophe with which the poor fellow had concluded his defence. “A poacher, thief, murderer, convicted felon,—and lay the blame upon *me*?”—How could I help having such a blackguard born on my estate?—Heaven be praised! here’s dinner at last.”—

After the first course, and second round of Champagne, his lordship began to coincide in Sir George’s scheme of amusement for the morrow. The wind was still too high for the sea; they must content themselves with an execution on land. Apprehensive of not obtaining beds at Winchester, they agreed to start at five in the morning. The bells were tolling as they drove past the cathedral of William of Wykeham.—But they were too late.—The last huza of the crowd had died away;—the mob was dispersing.—

“At all events, we’ll have a look at the gallows,” cried Lord O’Carrol, vexed to have lost his morning’s entertainment.

“Not I!—I don’t want to spoil my breakfast,”—said Sir George Gormandize.—“Postboy! to the hotel.”—

It was only a passing glance, therefore, that Lord O’Carrol was enabled to take of the miserable body still vibrating in the air, for which a parish shell was waiting at the gallows foot.—As a Papist (born, if not bred), Jem had declined the spiritual comfort of the ordinary by government provided; and his disfigured remains were about to be consigned to the earth like those of the beasts that perish, to which the darkness of his mind had caused him to liken himself by deeds of cruelty and blood.—

But there will come a time for those two sons of a common soil to “meet at compt;” when the secrets of all hearts will be open, and an Almighty and All-seeing tribunal judge between Dives and Lazarus!

RIGOUR OF THE LAW IN 1657.

AN HISTORICAL FACT.



“YOUR views are doubtless noble, nor would I insinuate that your confidence is misplaced,” observed Major Dewey to his brother-in-law, George Strangways, as they were riding together towards Blandford, from the neighbouring farm of Mussen, the property of the latter gentleman. “’Tis now near upon eight years since your father died, and you came into possession of the estate of Mussen. Since then, it has been your pleasure to leave Mistress Mabellah in possession of the place; nor would I insinuate but that the farm, (considering her feeble sex and lonely condition), has been sagely administered.”

“The place prospers,” answered Major Strangways carelessly; “the plantations are rising—the land is improved.—Did you notice to-day, brother Dewey, the fine crop of wheat standing in West Croft, which in my father’s time produced little besides docks and thistles?—This change had scarcely been, had a short-sighted long-armed soldier like myself remained at the head of affairs. I have not patience for a farmer, Heaven help me!—If a saucy farm-knave outbraves me in his duty, ’t is a word and a blow, or rather a blow wordless.—Down goes he, flat as the threshing-floor; and then there are broken pates to be answered for at Mr. Justice’s, and fines, and, may be, worse; because, forsooth, my cavalier blood is too hot in my veins to bear the insolence of a hireling.”

“Pray Heaven the heat of your cavalier blood betray you not, sooner or later, into a sorer strait!”—responded the sober major, a member of the Rump Parliament, and, in political as in religious principles, wholly opposed to the brother-in-law to whom he was linked by ties of worldly interest. “Pray Heaven you may be convinced in time that mischief hunts out the violent man, and that the Lord only should be the repayer of vengeance!”

“And a slow paymaster, too!”—muttered Strangways, between his teeth, as he whisked off with his riding-wand a tendril of the dog-roses interlacing the green lane through which they were pacing, “or you and yours would scarcely have the upper hand this day of King Charles’s loyal subjects, to read a sermon to my patience!”—Then, turning towards the sedate Dewey, he re-

sumed: "But, as touching this affair of Mussen Farm, I protest to you that I see no cause to misdoubt the prudent government of my sister. Mabellah is of grave years, (my elder, God-a-mercy, by ten!) past the time of wiving, and, still more, (with reverence to her spinsterhood,) of all wild inclinations. I could scarce choose a more home-staying steward; and since her savings and sparings will of likelihood revert to myself, her only brother and heir, why harass the poor woman during her life-time by denying so poor a concession as the possession of the bond you wot of?"

"The Lord keep me from insinuating aught against the prudence or principles of my sister-in-law!" replied the major; nevertheless, flesh is frail, and——"

"Frail,—with grey hairs sprouting on the brow, and a beard sprouting on the chin?" cried the Major, laughing. "Frail!—Go to!—I can scarce rebuke your sauciness, seeing the absurdity of such insinuations. Bless your cautious soul!—Mabel is as chaste in thought and deed as word; for, behold! is she not a sister of your own congregation, pure in doctrine and demeanour, as Tabitha or Eunice of old!—I tell ye, too, good major, the bond is but a toy!—At *your* suggestion I caused it to be drawn out when I gave her up possession of Mussen; only for the better understanding of those to come after us, that the farm was not only mine, conceded in leasehold to my sister, but that the stock and plenishing and certain moneys left in trust for their keeping up, are mine also. Within these three months, poor Mabel, in her fidgets lest the hazards of my somewhat wayward life might throw the document into less worthy hands, has been eager to have it in her possession. And why not? Are we not one flesh?—Is not the same blood flowing in our veins?—Not as holy mother Church proclaims of man and wife—figuratively and typically,—but truly, warmly, absolutely—even as nature created us: and shall I fear to entrust her with a paltry parchment, involving a thousand pounds or so of worldly pelf?—No, no, brother Dewey!—There were no longer good faith to hope for in the world, if banished from the bosom of a loyal family like that of Strangways, of Mussen!"

"You said, methinks, friend George," pertinaciously resumed the major, "that 't was *within these three months* Mistress Mabellah had shown herself eager to obtain possession of the bond?—*That tallies!*"—

"What tallies,—and tallies with *what?*"—cried the blunt Strangways, suddenly pulling up his horse, and looking the parliamentarian in the face.

"Nay, nothing,—nothing but an idle thought that troubled me!" murmured Dewey, pushing on.

"Out with it, man, and 't will trouble you no more!" cried his brother-in-law.

“A thought once spoken is like a fountain loosed,” quoth the major.

“And a fountain pent engendereth troubled waters,” replied Strangways, cheerfully. Speak, therefore. What (of evil or good portent to Mussen Farm) hath chanced within the last three months?”—

“Heard ye not of the death of that thrifty and believing matron, Mistress Rebekah Fussell?” demanded Dewey

“Let her die and——”

“Nay,” interrupted the major, misdoubting how vile a word was to follow; “but consider that this mischance leaveth our friend Obadiah Fussell a widower.”

“It might leave him attorney-general to the Protector or the devil himself, for aught I cared to the contrary.”

“For, to the contrary of *such* appointments, your interests prevail not!”—responded Dewey. “But as a man of single estate, (excuse the jocularly!) Master Fussell may cast a covetous eye upon the estate of Mussen.”

“Put the affront of courtship upon a sister of mine?”—cried the major, with kindling eyes. “Obadiah Fussell,—the attorney of Blandford!—Fussell! the sneaking, pitiful, crop-eared——”

“I pray you, peace!”—cried Dewey, terrified by this outburst of choler, and looking cautiously at either hedge, lest, peradventure, the man they spake of might be lurking there in ambush. “Bethink you, good brother George, that words meaning offence to Fussell mean offence also unto me. Let it be no matter of *party*, let it be a matter of man and man; ay, and of woman too, since the weaker vessel must needs be concerned, in the person of our good sister Mabel! Yet, though I would by no means insinuate disparagement of the right meaning of Master Fussell, I must in all candour admit——”

“Speak out, and be d——d to you!” cried the impatient major. “In two words—the point!—What views has attorney Fussell upon Mabella Strangways?”

“Marriage,—and by marriage possession of her person and estates,” said Dewey stoutly.

The designing villain!” cried Strangways, involuntarily clenching his fist. “Woo a wife of Mabel’s years, (even in her youth so hard-favoured as never to have found a suitor, and now fouler-faced than the old woman of Endor!) in order to obtain possession of goods and chattels not her own; and to bestow them doubtless on the whelps of his former brood, to the despoilment of my sister’s legal heirs!—I’ll learn the truth on’t—ay! and *see* the end on’t!”—cried he, suddenly wheeling round, and turning back towards Mussen. And, with Dewey vainly spurring to keep up with him, or at least to attain sufficient proximity for remon-

strance, he galloped on at speed, and drew rein only beside the gateway of the farm.

Alas! the fat hackney of the Blandford attorney was there before him, carefully fastened to the palings; and having stridden his way towards the parlour, where Mistress Mabellah was accustomed to sit of an afternoon spinning with her maids, instead of the hum of the wheel habitual there at that hour, the drone of an hypocritical voice saluted the ear of George Strangwayes as he threw open the door.

“I am half answered already,” ejaculated he, reddening with rage, on perceiving the pury attorney wheezing forth his adoration into the ear of his withered sister. “Still I would fain have a plain word in satisfaction of a plain inquiry.”

Fussell, who had risen in confusion on the bluff soldier’s entrance, turned towards Mabellah, as if for explication of this appeal.

“You, sir!”—continued Strangwayes, addressing him, “you, with lawn weepers and crape hatband,—you,—attorney—presbyterian—Roundhead!—what shall I call ye!—Answer, what brings ye to Mussen?”—

The attorney, thus fiercely interrogated, showed no haste to comply; but Mabellah, apprehensive perhaps that her first suitor (and no doubt her last), might be browbeaten from his purpose if not promptly reinforced, answered, with a degree of coldness that might be termed by courtesy composure, “This gentleman, brother, is here by *my* invitation, and will be upheld by *my* sense of hospitality.

“Sense of tomfoolery!”—rejoined the irate George. “Dupe that ye are, and worse!—How, Mabel! at *your* years—grey, wrinkled, doting—are ye to be blinded by evil wishes into a belief that this fellow, this quill-driving, skin-engrossing, *two, ten*-faced hypocrite,—has other thoughts in his courtship than to fleece the old ewe of her wool?”—

“Sir! you lack courtesy!”—interrupted Fussell, constraining himself so readily that not a tinge of choler brightened his sallow unimpassioned visage; “courtesy to me and to this lady,—my plighted wife.”

“Plighted *wife!*”—shouted Strangwayes, in a tone that suspended the step of poor Dewey upon the threshold. “When she who, for twenty miserable years, bore with the pinchings of your miserly household and the gripings of your hard-fisted tyranny, has lain but three months in her grave!—Out on ye both, for outragers of all private principle and public decency!”—and, turning his back upon his sister and her demure Celadon, he flung himself breathless into a seat.

“Were it not prudent, sister, for your *friend* to depart?..”

whispered Dewey, drawing nigh unto Mabella, who stood smoothing down her lawn apron, as scarcely knowing whether to wax penitent or angry. "Not that I would insinuate violence; but, of a verity, our friend George is chafed beyond the bounds of discretion, and——"

"Ay! let him sneak away, like a beaten dog as he is!" cried Strangways, having overheard this expostulation.

"Sir, you are pleased to be personal," observed Fussell, knitting his brows.

"No!—I am *not* pleased, and *that*, dull as you are, you may discern!" retorted George. "And, moreover, if this my displeasure moveth the like feeling in yourself, there is a ready remedy, Broadswords have been drawn ere now on less provocation."

"They may be drawn in a greater, ere I outrage the law or put my life into the hands of a harm-seeking rebel," replied Fussell, in a soft placable tone, strangely at variance with the offence his words seemed to convey.

"I expected no better of thee!" retorted Strangways, with an impatient kick of the boot on the back of an unhappy cur which just then came fawning upon him, the property of the attorney.

"Hate me, hate my dog!" — thought Dewey; and, sidling towards Fussell, whom he apostrophized as his very good friend, he invited him to accompany him back to Blandford, leaving the sister and brother to come to a better understanding.

"The lord will peradventure bring him to a sense of his evil-mindedness!" whispered Fussell to his future wife, as she accompanied him to the door with excuses and adieus. "For, behold, Tabellah Strangways, this day must judge between us!—If you are for holding faith with me, be firm; for, as you now decide, so also shall you abide.—Henceforward are we to be as man and wife, or as strangers."

Thus admonished, Mistress Mabel came back to her place to to make a clear breast to her brother George of her intentions; and admit her positive determination and engagement to become in due season Mistress Obadiah Fussell, of Cross Street, Blandford.

"Of Cross Street, Blandford," replied Major Strangways, mastering his indignation, "but of Mussen Farm no longer. From the first day I can remember, the ill-conditioned dog you would foist upon me for brother, has been the special aversion of my soul.—Not one of my schoolboy pranks, but he came maundering to my father to relate; and, when I grew to man's estate and would fain have won the hand of poor Mildred Hooker to be my wife, he poisoned the ear of the family against me, our banns were forbidden, and Mildred was wedded against her will and choice to a ruffian, who—But, no matter!—all this and more has been

his doing; and I tell you, sister Mabel, *here* in the presence and fear of my Maker, that, once his wife, you set foot in Mussen Farm no more."

"That, Heaven be blessed! lies not at your discretion," replied the irritated spinster. "Here dwell I, by lawful right, as tenant on lease; and, here, maid, wife, or widow, will I abide, under shelter and succour of the law."

"That shall be seen," cried Strangwayes.

"And, furthermore," pursued Mabella, incautiously, "it is the opinion of those more versed than I am in such matters, that our good father's will, constituting me sole executrix of his estate, purported towards yourself——"

"So, so, so, so!"—cried Major Strangwayes, lacking patience to hear her to an end. "An attorney, but three months a widower, becomes suitor to my sister, and already threats of litigation between those who have hitherto lived together as friends, in the noblest acceptation of the word!—What sin have I committed, to find myself engaged in conflict with this cloven foot—this limb of the black art!"

"You talk as foolishly as wickedly," replied Mistress Mabel, without moving a muscle of her prim visage.

"I talk as frankly as resolutely,"—cried George, rising and confronting her. "Marry Obadiah Fussell, and, were you thrice my sister, you should forth from my gates but once, and that on your wedding-day!"—

"*Your* gates?—so you could show me where they stand"—retorted Mabella, bridling contemptuously.

"Tempt me not to fulfil your request sooner than becoming," replied Strangwayes, growing as pale with emotion as he had heretofore been red with anger. "I would fain not have it said of me that I dealt harshly with my father's—and, what is more, my mother's daughter."

"My father (honour to his memory), took care to secure me from the attacks of your ungovernable temper, by constituting me his executrix!" replied Mabella. "All that he failed in securing, I have myself wisely made sure, by causing leases to be signed between us, such as endow me with the farm of Mussen for twenty and one years ensuing, and as many more, should it be my desire to renew my tenancy. For the rest, stock and furniture are wholly my own, and——"

"*How!*" interrupted the now infuriated man, "do my ears deceive me, or am I to convict my father's daughter of fraud and felony?—The stock, said ye, and furniture of Mussen?—Give up to me, woman, while I have patience to demand it, the bond by which——"

"To spare all further irritation on that point," interrupted

Mabellah, "the bond, the will, ay, and whatsoever acts of law pertain to the property of the family, are now in the safe keeping of Master Fussell, soon to be my lawful lord and husband."

"Mabellah!" said George Strangways, "but one word more on this hateful subject!—Against yourself, I dispute not.—There are but two modes of disputation; those of the strong arm and those of the strong argument—and for the first, you are a woman, and too much a weakling, for the second,—a woman, and too much a fool: and in neither point a match for *me*.—But, I speak for the warning of him who has put fraud into what was once an honest bosom; I speak for the warning of this pilfering, pettifogging attorney, whom—mark me,—so surely as ye persist to wed, so surely will he be done to death by the hand of your brother!"

So saying, he rose and quitted the farm. He returned to Blandford; and next day, the substance of all he had uttered to Mabellah did he commit to writing; and intrust to the hands of his brother-in-law, Major Dewey, to be submitted in the form of cartel to Lawyer Fussell.

But the attorney would as little hear of fighting as of retreating from his projects. He protested that Mistress Mabellah was the wife of his choice; being of prudent years to undertake the charge of his motherless and mistressless family, and moreover too advanced to render it likely these burthens should be increased. In vain did Major Dewey represent to him, and appeal to the proposed bride for confirmation of the assertion, that it was only in terror of the sequestration, to which the exertions of George in the royal cause had rendered him amenable, that the estates of the family had been placed under her jurisdiction; and that to profit by this vexatious necessity, was an act of positive dishonesty.

But Mistress Mabellah's heart was set upon marriage; and, knowing that her attraction in the eyes of the puritan attorney lay in the lands and tenements of Mussen, she adhered to them,—she persisted in asserting her rights;—and subsequently in transferring them by marriage to Fussell. All that remained at last for the honest cavalier was to commence a suit in equity against Obadiah Fussell and his wife.

So it was, however, that Westminster Hall could be by no means of eloquence or logic dispossessed of the idea that the whig lawyer was in the right, the cavalier in the wrong. He was nonsuited by juries of Dorsetshire and juries of Middlesex; he was set aside by justices and judges; he was set upon by sheriffs and tipstaves; his claims on the stock and furniture of Mussen Farm were pronounced null and void by the law, which refused to recognize private agreements in families made for the express purpose of evading the penal statutes of the country.

By all this, Major Strangways was at once impoverished and

infuriated. Throughout the ranks of the cavaliers, there was not a braver or more free-spirited man. To have contributed to the well-being of any member of his family, he would have made wondrous sacrifices : but to be despoiled of his own by the intrigues of a canting attorney, was more than he could bear.

Moreover, the gallant major had ulterior views on the disposal of Mussen Farm and its appurtenances, such as rendered it painful as well as mortifying to find so considerable a share of his paternal inheritance subtracted by cunning from his hands. Mussen Farm he had purposed to bestow upon one dearer to him than life ; and the prolongation of lease claimed by Mrs. Fussell perplexed him scarcely less than the usurpation of his goods and chattels attached to the property. A man of herculean strength, and hitherto untouched by ailment, George Strangwayes now fell sick. A burning fever, attended with delirium, reduced him to the brink of the grave ; and, on recovering his strength sufficiently for the business of life, he found that, during his sore sickness, his enemies had found means to poison against him the minds of his kinsfolk and acquaintance ; that he was represented as a strong-handed man, going about to devour the substance of a sister, whom it was his duty to foster and protect ; as a ruffian bidding defiance to the laws and legislature. He saw that all men avoided him as a brawler and peace-breaker. In Blandford, his native place, persons of honourable degree, connexions of his family, or hand-in-hand companions of his youth, were seen to cross the street rather than extend their hands to him in amicable greeting. He felt himself shunned—detested—he became morose, mistrustful, and at enmity with all his kind. George Strangwayes grew, in short, a-weary of the world !

His sister Dewey was no more ; and her husband, the demure major, who had been the first to insinuate into his mind displeasure against Fussell, taking fright at the family feuds he had assisted to stir up, gradually declined all intercourse with George.

“Not that he insinuated unfair usage on the part of the major towards the attorney : but Fussell and himself were brethren in the spirit as well as the flesh ;” and Dewey began to fear rebuke from the elders of his congregation. It was known that, having one day encountered Fussell in Westminster Hall, where a suit at law between them was then pending, Strangwayes defied him mortally, in the presence of men, saying, “That Calais sands was the fit place for men of birth and breeding to decide their quarrels,—not the musty precincts of the Common Pleas.”

One last letter of counsel was addressed, accordingly, by Major Dewey to the impetuous brother-in-law, whose cause he had made up his mind to abandon ; representing that these incessant litigations had already eaten into his substance, and would eventually

leave him no substance to eat; that his means and credit were declining, and that soon, nothing would remain but to mortgage the estate of Mussen Farm, the object of this obstinate contest. But Strangways was unpersuadable!

“Even unto life and death,” he replied, “will I pursue this pitiful vagabond; and, when all else is gone, pawn even the sword so long devoted to my country, and become a hewer of wood or drawer of water, rather than suffer the property of my fathers to be wrested from me without a struggle. At least, men shall have no cause to assert I lacked mettle or resolution; but, when I am gone for ever, they may write over my grave, ‘Here lies one who resisted oppression, and lived and died an honourable cavalier!’”

Two years elapsed after the marriage of Mabellah Strangways, and ten since the death of her father; nor seemed there the remotest prospect of a period to the discords of the family. The sons of Fussell, by his first marriage, were at college; and Mabellah, at the head of his well-ordered household, took delight only in thrift and housewifery; laying up store of the things of this world, without conceit of the straits to which a long-pending suit in Chancery had reduced her brother. Of George Strangways she heard little, save by the means of her brother-in-law, Dewey, when he returned to the county of Dorset from his duties at Westminster; the major averring that George spent the greater portion of his time at some farm in Kent, where he declined visits, and was said to pass his days in the sobrieties of study.

“Verily, I should say adieu and God speed thee, with some misgiving of mind,” observed Mabellah to her husband, on taking leave of him previous to his departure from Blandford to London, at the commencement of Hilary Term, 1656, “were I not assured that my brother George dwelleth no longer in the metropolis. I would not there should be further encounters or strife of words between ye.—For though I am assured by our beloved brother-in-law, Dewey, (on whom is the esteem of men and the favour of his highness the protector,) that the fiery humour of my brother is much abated, yet it bringeth discredit both on thine and mine that there should be menace and defiance between one born of my flesh and one of my flesh by election. Therefore, good husband, do I rejoice with an exceeding great joy that the unruly major should have settled himself where ye shall never more encounter.”

“I have small fear of the braggartry of so graceless a man,” replied the Roundhead attorney, buttoning up his riding-doublet, and commending to the care of his clerk (by whom he was to be escorted to the London courts) his cloak-bag, containing documents connected with the suits of law of the country clients in whose behoof he was undertaking the expedition.

“Look to the parchments, John Collins,” quoth he. “Enough

for myself to have an eye and hand to the charge of money with which I am fain to encumber myself." And, having settled his pistols in his holsters, he mounted the hackney upon which, on the fourth day after departure from Blandford, it was his purpose to reach the metropolis. But he was molested by no grievance or mischance by the way. Although, each day at even-fall, Master Collins came clattering up to the heels of his master's galloway, in terror lest the bushes by the wayside should conceal some squire of the moonlight, or cutpurse gentleman of the road, nought occurred to put their courage to the proof, save a damp bed, when halting for the night at Basingstoke.

Arrived in town, the two limbs of the law settled themselves at no vast distance from the great body to which they were collaterally attached; putting up hard by the Temple and the Inns of Court, at a lodging called the George and Half Moon, three doors from the Palsgrave's Head Tavern, Temple Bar Without. Mr. Fussell, a man of sober and discreet habits, was already well known to the people of the house. Early to bed and early to rise, he was accustomed to go forth with his clerk and blue bag, at eight of the clock, to breakfast at the adjoining tavern, and to return at nightfall, his business concluded, to pass the remainder of the evening in revising that of the day past, and arranging that of the day to come, at a scrutoire placed beside the window, overlooking the Strand; without other visitors than a scrivener or two, and one Diggens, a law-stationer of Chancery Lane.

It was on the sixth evening after the establishment of the Blandford attorney at his lodgings, that he returned, as usual, at an early hour, fatigued by press of business, and announcing his intent to refresh himself with a cup of Dorchester ale, ere he retired to rest, that he might be on foot betimes on the morrow; and John Collins, who had been plotting with the apprentices of the law-stationer to escape from the George the moment his master should be fast, in order to enjoy his first carouse with the gay youngers of the capital, sat watching with an anxious eye the proceedings of his master, who had taken up his usual position at the scrutoire, to affix docketts on certain files of papers, ere he laid them aside. When, lo! to his infinite consternation, he beheld the over-wearied attorney fall forward, overcome with sleep, upon his desk, as was no unusual case with him after a day of severe exertion.

"And so farewell my night's pleasuring!" bethought the clerk. "There he lies—fast as St. Clement's Church; and I am penned here till midnight, like a silly sheep in fold!"

It was in vain that Collins strove to invade poor Fussell's slumbers by letting fall divers ponderous law-folios, borrowed by the attorney of his friend Diggens for present reference. The sleeping lawyer budged not.

At length, despairing of obtaining his liberty, when he heard the neighbouring church of St. Dunstan's chime out ten of the clock, John Collins, on pretence of a question to be urged touching the disposal of the morrow's business, jogged the elbow of his master, and, receiving no answer, jogged and jogged again. A sudden apprehension of mischief caused him, at length, to raise the head of his master from the desk; when a stream of blood gushed from his mouth and nostrils!

Starting back with horror at the sight, the clerk discomposed the attitude of the unhappy man, so that he fell prostrate from the chair upon the floor; when Collins, nothing doubting that his master was labouring under a fit of apoplexy, flew to the door, and, with loud outcries, summoned the whole house to his assistance. The lifeless attorney was laid upon a couch, when, lo! fatal proof became apparent that he had fallen a victim to assassination. The orifice of a gunshot wound was visible on his forehead,—another in his cheek; and the nearest surgeon, hastily called in, declared that, having been shot through the head, his life had been at least two hours extinct.

Officers of justice were now summoned,—a search prosecuted; and, in addition to the bullets which had entered the body of the murdered man, a slug was found lodged in the window-sill, from the direction of which, it was plain that aim had been taken by some person standing on the opposite pavement of the street, whence the head of Fussell, as he sat at his desk, was visible through the half-drawn curtain. The passage, indeed, by which the bullets had entered the window was so narrow, that but an inch more or less must have defeated the purpose of the assassin.

The first object of the constables of the night was to institute a minute search in the Strand and its adjacent streets and passages.

But the time was past; the man of blood had effectually escaped, and all was silence and peace in the highways of the city. The afflicted clerk, who, from his position relatively to the deceased, stood exposed to strong suspicion, was secured for the night; and, on his examination the following morning before the magistrates, having admitted that he had declared to one Smith (a barber, lodging in the same house, whose services had been required by his unfortunate master), that Fussell had brought with him a considerable charge of money to deposit in the hands of Master Snow, an eminent goldsmith and money-broker established at Temple Bar, the said Smith was arrested, and proof obtained that, throughout the night and preceding day, he had been absent from his lodgings.

On further examination, however, an *alibi* was established by the terrified barber; and all remained in perplexity and horror, waiting the arrival of Fussell's eldest son, who had been sent for express from Oxford.

The first exclamation that escaped the lips of this youth on being introduced into the chamber where lay the dead body of his parent was—"This is the act and deed of my uncle Strangways!"—upon which the magistrates, eager to accomplish the ends of justice (having made themselves masters of the nature of the disputes prevailing between the deceased and his brother-in-law, and the threats often held forth by the latter), promoted so diligent a search, as caused George Strangways to be laid hold of, on the following morning, while in his bed and lodging, over-against Ivy Bridge, in the Strand, near to the spot where now stands Bull Inn Court.

Yet strong as was the suspicion against him, so undaunted was the bearing of the major, under examination before Mr. Justice Blake, who conducted the proceedings, that public opinion decided strongly in his favour; and a general murmur rose in the crowded justice-room, when Strangways was required by the magistrates to repair to the chamber containing the corpse, and submit to the ordeal, then popular, of touching the wounds of the deceased in presence of the coroner and jury. But the gashes bled not—the dead man stirred not;—and the spectators, with full faith in the mysteries of sympathy, avowed their conviction in favour of the prisoner.

Still, till the delivery of a verdict, Justice Blake decided that he should be remanded to prison; and the proceedings of the inquest were once more diligently resumed, though with little chance of success. In a city so populous, what hope that a delinquent should be detected, whose crime it was supposed must originate in mistake, the only known enemy of the deceased being already virtually acquitted of the charge?—The foreman of the jury, indeed, suggested as a last expedient, that all the owners of gunsmiths' shops in London and the suburbs, should be examined touching the fire-arms they had recently disposed of. But this seemed a difficult task; and a juryman, named Holloway, a gunsmith, in the Strand, even stated to the coroner, that his profession was so numerous as to render it impossible.

"I, myself," said he, "*lent* a carbine on the day of the murder, and so, doubtless did many of the trade; yet it would puzzle me at this moment to name the borrower." Forthwith, however, Holloway was made by the coroner to refresh his recollections, and, after some delay, succeeded in calling to mind a gentleman named Thompson, of Long Acre, formerly major in the army of the king, and now married to a daughter of Sir James Aston.

A search was instituted for Major Thompson, who, having already disappeared, his lady was arrested in his stead;—their calling and Roman Catholic connection finding little favour in the eyes of a Roundhead magistrate. But, on the news of his wife's arrest,

the cavalier surrendered himself; and admitted that he had indeed borrowed a carbine of Master Holloway on the day in question, for a friend, who purposed to use it in deer-shooting, on a visit he was about to pay at the park of a noble earl of the county of Kent. The name of his friend he for some time refused to give up, but, on being pressed with the threat of fresh rigours against his lady, who was still in confinement, Thompson admitted that it was none other than George Strangways, the brother-in-law of Obadiah Fussell, to whom he delivered the carbine, loaded with a brace of bullets and a slug, between seven and eight at night, in the churchyard of St. Clement's, and received it back again at his own lodging, between ten and eleven, from the major, who stated that, having postponed his visit, he had no further occasion for the piece. Such evidence was considered sufficient to justify the full committal of Major Strangways to Newgate, to take his trial for the murder.

It was on the 24th of February, 1657, that this desperate man was finally arraigned at the Sessions House, in the Old Bailey, before Lord Chief Justice Glyn. But, having heard his indictment recited, and being required to plead (according to the usual form) "Guilty" or "Not Guilty" of the charge, neither menace nor persuasion would induce the hardy soldier of King Charles to hold up his hand in the courts of the Commonwealth.

It was in vain the learned Glyn and the rest of the Bench urged that, should he continue in contempt of court, his crime involved no less a sentence than the horrible punishment of pressing to death. Not even the terrors of such a fate could determine Strangways to submit to any ordinary course of law. Having wasted hours in argument, the venerable judge descended to entreaty—to tears; imploring the accused not to offer, himself as so fearful an example.

"Let the rigour of the law of England take its course!" replied Major Strangways, in a firm voice. We have seen a pretended tribunal pour forth the innocent blood of its best and noblest—even of the martyr Charles Stuart—(a saint in heaven). Spare not, therefore, mine, who own myself a sinner, whether guilty or not of the one misdemeanor laid to my charge."

"Yet, bethink thee, rash man, while Heaven still allows an outlet of escape from the agonies of death about to be adjudged thee," said the venerable Glyn, "bethink thee that though direct proof against thee there is none——"

"I will bethink me only of submission to the sentence ye shall pronounce," interrupted the bold major. "Leave me to make my peace with God;—with man, alas! it can never more be made."

Whereupon, slowly rising and dashing away the tears of mercy

that stood on his furrowed cheeks, the Lord Chief Justice rose, amid the breathless stillness of the court; and, putting on the cap tendered him by his macer, pronounced sentence on the prisoner:—

“George Strangwayes, of Mussen, in the county of Dorset,” said he, “sometime major in the armies of Charles Stuart, convicted of contempt of the most worshipful Court of Session of the county of Middlesex, holden at the Old Bailey, it is the decree of a jury of your countrymen that ye be sent back to the place from whence ye came, and thence to the press-yard of the prison of Newgate; where, being laid bare upon your back, with your arms and legs stretched forth by cords, one to one side, the other to the other, as much iron and stone shall be laid upon your body as you can bear. The first day ye shall have three morsels of barley bread, and the next day drink thrice of the water from the channel nearest to your prison door; and this shall be your punishment till you die!”

All present heard and shuddered; the prisoner alone maintaining a steadfast countenance. To Newgate he returned, without a word spoken; and that night, several eminent divines waited upon him,—some by will of the Protector, some in private charity to prepare his soul for death and counsel him to tender submission to government.

To the clergy thus assembled, he replied with becoming reverence as regarded the hopes of his salvation, professing humble faith in Christ, and an earnest hope to be brought through his merits to the mercy and glory of God; but denying the authority of Cromwell, and keeping his loyalty to the last. To one however of the members (Dr. Warmester) he addressed himself for private spiritual comfort; and, the rest having departed exceeding sorrowful at his contumacy, the good doctor obtained leave of the sheriffs to attend him in his cell, at the same hour that his brother-in-law Dewey was to take a last leave of the condemned.

“Doctor,” said the dauntless Strangwayes, when they three were alone together within the four stone walls of the cell—“take,—write,—and bear witness of me!”—

“A confession!”—was the involuntary ejaculation of Dr. Warmester. “Then Heaven has in its mercy touched a callous heart!”—

“No confession!”—replied Strangwayes, in a firm voice; “unless, indeed, that I appeal not against the justice of my judge. Neither pincers of iron, nor other implement of human cruelty, could wring from me such confession as would bring upon my head the ignominy of the gibbet, and cause my estate to be forfeited to the law. There are those of my kin, to whom the lauds of Mussen must descend when I am dead and gone” (Major Dewey

here drew forth a kerchief of ample dimensions); "I should not rest in my grave, doctor, did I imagine that the estates of my forefathers were to fall into the hands of traitors and regicides!"

"I beseech you, good brother, take heed of your words, that you offend not with your tongue," mildly interposed Dewey; "not that I would insinuate distrust of the worthy divine here present;—but—"

"So much the better," interrupted the brave cavalier with a smile; "since it is him, and no other, I humbly pray to accept the office of my executorship, and the bequest of my whole property and estate"—the major turned pale and trembled—"to have and to hold in trust for such purposes as I shall confide to his discretion;"—the major breathed again—"requesting you, brother Dewey, as one of my nearest kinsmen, to subscribe as witness this my last will and testament."

To refuse, and refuse in ignorance of the nature of a bequest which might purport good to him and his, was out of the question. With a trembling hand, Dewey affixed his signature to the document thus hastily prepared; the turnkeys adding their names, for further testimony.

"I am every moment awaiting the arrival of her to whom this trust is dedicated," observed Strangways, when all was done and the paper conveyed to the charge of the governor of the prison; and scarcely had Dewey time to recover his surprise, when the door of the cell opened, and a turnkey re-appeared bearing a lovely child, a girl of some six years old, who, on beholding Strangways, called on him in a piteous voice by the name of "Father;" and, springing into his arms, hid her sweet face in his bosom, so that nought was visible but the long rings of her radiant hair veiling her little shoulders.

"Rachel!"—faltered the prisoner, his strong voice waxing weak as he addressed the child.

"Father!—dear, dear father!"—murmured the little creature in reply. "What art thou doing, father, in this dark sad place?—It is so long since thou wert down at Beechwood; and I have wearied for thee so grievously!—Winter is almost gone; there are white snowdrops springing up, and the briars budding in the garden-hedge.—Come back with me, father. to Beechwood, come away from these great gloomy walls and this loud noisy city.—The blackbird is sitting again in the orchard; and I have been so good, so very good!—Nurse Blanchard promised to tell you how quiet and how good I have been; never once going near the bird upon her nest, because thou lovest so well the song of the blackbird of a summer afternoon.—Father, father!—thou art weeping?"

No one had courage to interrupt the little prattler; no one had

courage to exhort the unhappy Strangways, as he clasped the tender babe more closely to his breast, and imprinted kiss after kiss, kisses mingled with tears, upon her cheeks and brows.

“Rachel!” said he at last, when he could gather courage to address her, “Thy father is going on a long journey—a long, painful journey;—and it will be months, years, many many years, ere we two meet again. Henceforward, Rachel, thy good nurse will be all in all to thee; saving above both her and thee, the authority of this worthy gentleman, thy spiritual pastor;—and above even *him*, the Lord Most High, who will be a stay to thy orphan condition!—When I am gone, Rachel, see thou be submissive unto their will!—Shouldst thou grow to a woman’s estate, make thy fortunes among such as are faithful to the cause of thine exiled and lawful sovereign. Fear God, my child,—honour the king!—Be true in word and deed; and unto others, mild and merciful, as thou shalt thyself expect mercy!”

“But I will go with thee, father,” sobbed Rachel, when the voice of her protector ceased speaking. “Take me with thee, dear good father,—take me with thee!—I will be orderly, diligent, obedient; so thou wilt only sit beside me at night, as thou wert wont when I lay down to sleep, and suffer me to kneel by thy side at morning, when I offer up my prayer. Dear, dear father, I will not be denied;—I will—I *will* go with thee!”

“Rachel, it must not be!”—said the agonized father, not daring to move, lest the babe should take cognizance of the irons with which he was loaded. “Thou must even bid me farewell, and away. And be it as a token of love betwixt us, little Rachel, that thou leavest me without murmur, so as to spare a pang to the father that so dearly loves thee!”

The young child listened. Her bosom heaved, as she laboured with a sore effort to restrain her falling tears. She looked up wistfully in her father’s face, and the sobs were repressed upon her quivering lips, as she pressed it to his cheek, his brow, his chin, in the outpouring of her innocent tenderness. She uttered not a single syllable, she dared not trust herself to speak; but, with unheard-of self-command, stretched out her fair arms silently towards the turnkey who had brought her to the cell, and who now stood beside the grated door, with tears coursing down his rugged face.

Another moment, and all was dark; the door had turned on its sullen hinge, and closed again upon the man and his burden; and, lo! it seemed as if a sun-beam had been suddenly withdrawn from the place.

For a time, not a word was spoken.

“That child, brother Dewey, is the child of Mildred Hooker!”—said Strangways, at length breaking silence. “*And it is mine!*”

Mildred has been six years dead (she died in giving birth to my babe), and Rachel will soon be an orphan. Marvel not, therefore, that I find courage to confront a death of pain and terror, to secure to the offspring of one so tenderly beloved the means of maintenance. It was by the cunning of Obadiah Fussell, that Mildred was wrested from me as my bride, and bestowed on a man who within two years of her marriage made off to Virginia, leaving her to want and shame. In my arms did she take refuge!—We had tidings, but doubtful, of the death of her husband; and there was need that the marriage which we formed at the altar (ay! by legal form at the altar), should be kept close, till a sure certificate of his interment came to hand. Death stepped in between. It was my faithful Mildred's interment I had to certify. From that day, the cottage at Beechwood became my home, the babe my solace. Oh! that lawless dealing had not served to thrust me thence for ever, and deprive my poor infant of the tender watchfulness of a father!"

"And, as touching the violent end of poor Fussell!"—observed the divine, perceiving the heart of the prisoner to be softened, and hoping the moment might be favourable to obtain a confession.

"As touching that unhappy man, who would have robbed me of the last morsel destined to preserve the life of my child, I pray ye let no more be said!" replied Strangways, in a tone of resolution. "The God of vengeance knows for what I have to answer. All that remains to me of time must be devoted to preparations for eternity."

And it was so!—All that night the worthy divine remained with Strangways, breathing words of comfort and promises of peace. Early in the morning came Dewey again, with many cavaliers, who had served in happier times with the brave soldier. Of each, George Strangways took an affectionate but manly leave; refusing to give ear to their entreaties that he would release himself from coming torture by confession.

"My house and lands shall never fall to the lot of the regicides!" was his still reiterated reply. "A holy and happy purpose awaits the destination of Mussen Farm."

Already the javelin-men were assembled; and the sheriffs came forth with pale faces to preside over this frightful execution. The bell of Christchurch tower tolled heavily; the ordinary began reciting the service of burial of the dead; when George Strangways, clad in a close-fitting garb of white, covered with a long mourning cloak, was led forth into the press-yard. The very executioners looked aghast, as scarcely knowing what course to pursue.

"Doctor! support me with your prayers," said the cavalier in a solemn voice, addressing Dr. Warmester, who stood there with his hands devoutly folded on his breast. "For you, friends!" he

added, addressing such of his party as were there to do him friendship to the last, "when the weights are put on, I pray you leap upon my body, that my sufferings be abridged."

And, dreadful as was the duty, they had courage to comply. The ponderous masses of iron and stone were upheaved on the press placed upon the outstretched body of the victim, until heavy groans burst forth, bearing involuntary token of his anguish. At that signal, three stout cavaliers flung themselves with headlong pressure on the body; and, after one more doleful cry, all was still: the spirit had departed from its tortured dwelling-place of clay!

Some hours afterwards, the weights were taken off, and the wooden press on which they were deposited, removed. It was seen that, by the humanity of the executioners, an angle of the press had been purposely placed over the heart of the victim, to put a speedier end to his torments; for, by the injunction of the protector, the sharp billet, usually placed under the backs of malefactors condemned to the horrible fate of pressing to death, to hasten the execution, had been withheld from George Strangways, the malignant.

By the interference of Dr. Warmester, the mangled body was placed in a decent coffin, and interred at the north-western corner of the cemetery in Moorfields. *There* may a plain headstone still be seen, bearing the initials G. S., A. D., 1657; and nigh unto it a small mossy ridge. For the child Rachel having soon pined away unto death, the divine who ministered to the last moments of her father caused her to be laid at the feet of him who, for her sake, had braved the utmost rigour of the law; and whereas, by the death of the innocent, the estate of Mussen fell to his absolute disposal, Warmester bestowed it in perpetual endowment upon the school of Christ's Hospital, in the city of London.

It was averred that, previously to the execution of the unfortunate Strangways, many persons waited upon Cromwell (among others Major Dewey, the parliamentarian, and Mabellah, the widow of Fussell), to implore commutation of his sentence.

But the protector remained inexorable; replying to them in the words used by the barons of England at Merton in 1258, in rejection of the factious petitions of the clergy:

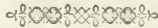
Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari!

THE PATRIOT MARTYR

OF

OLD ENGLAND.

A CHRONICLE.



OVER certain epochs of history, romance has delighted to fling a glittering veil, fatal to the interests of truth. The sparkling of spears, the neighing of war-horses, the bannered lists, the heroic chants of wandering troubadours, are made to shine and glow in the foreground, perplexing the observant eye and distracting its attention from the gloomier recesses of the picture: from cities razed, nations despoiled, and, above all, from the sufferings of the people,—the squalid, scourged, dispirited people, ground into dust by the iron hand of oppression.

Such was the reign of Richard “Cœur de Lion!” the most splendid name bequeathed to the annals of chivalry! Yet, what a tale of rapine and tyranny is included in the life of this unnatural son and unpatriotic sovereign, from the period when, approaching the dead body of his father, in the solemn aisles of Fontevrault, blood gushed from the nostrils of the deceased Henry, in token that his murderer stood beside him;—to that, when, attempting to wrest from the hands of a vassal his lawful treasure, he fell by an obscure hand, the victim of a pitiful cupidity!—True to his darling vice, the Prince,—whose first measure on his accession was to sell off the fiefs, towers, villages, and movables of the crown, in order to “put money in his purse,”—at length gave up the ghost in besieging the Château de Chalus, for the sake of a few miserable sacks of silver crowns!—Nay, ten years before, while Europe rang with the chivalrous feats of the crusading King of England, the royal plunderer had a narrow escape from lapidation in the island of Sicily; where, having “carried off” a falcon, in the environs of Messina, from the house of a peasant, to whom he refused payment for his bird, the multitude pursued, with sticks and stones, the thievish prince who so summarily levied contributions upon the loyal subjects of King Tancred!

Nevertheless, Cœur de Lion, a levier of taxes, a craver of bene-

volence, a grinder of the people's bones to make his bread, is fated to live in story as the Black Knight, the jolly boon companion of Robin of Sherwood, the brother poet of Bertrand de Born, the generous antagonist of Saladin, the hapless prisoner of Linz, the "*Richard, O mon roi!*" of Blondel the minstrel!—What if he tortured and despoiled the Rothschilds of his reign;—what if he hanged on a gibbet the brave defender of Nottingham Castle,—what if he engaged the Dauphin of Auvergne to rebel against his liege lord, King Philip, and then fled from France, leaving his unhappy ally to fight at uneven odds, and fall into the hands of his enemy?—Be it remembered that he excelled both Auvergne and his gallant cousin, the County Guy, in the composition of a *Sir-vente*; and that not a troubadour of Provence could tinkle a lute more woefully than Richard of England!—

Those were strange times, when—instead of petty squabbles of Excise and Post-Office between the mighty kingdoms of England and France, adjusted by an exchange of printed circulars between Thames Street and the Rue St. Denis,—armed flotillas were perpetually labouring across the channel. Aquitaine and Brittany, Anjou and Poitou, were as much our own as the Canadas; yet but for the occasional representation of one of Shakspeare's historical plays, we should almost forget these marchings and counter-marchings upon Gallic ground; nor imagine it possible that "the men of Angers opened wide their gates" to admit, in the person of their lawful prince, an anointed sovereign of Great Britain.—

Among the royal skirmishers of the olden time, who kept their English subjects in rags, and their cities collections of mud hovels and pestiferous hospitals, in order that they might add a château or two in France to the revenues of their civil list,—none more tyrannical and unpatriotic than Henry II. and his son. The roving and warlike propensities of Richard, more especially, opened the way for countless abuses at home. While the King of England became a marauder, archbishops and chancellors became kings of England; and the iron despotism of the Normans ploughed, as with a burning share, the hearts of the people. The Greeks of our time, trembling under the cruel hands of their Turkish conquerors, were not more deserving pity than the Saxon race, martyred and insulted by the Norman tyrants, to whom they were subjugated by force of arms, and by whom they were kept in subjection through the partialities of the throne. Witness the details of the following chronicle:—

* * * * *

It was in the summer of the year 1196, that Philip Augustus, having taken up his ground at a short distance from the town of Niort in Saintonge, awaited, with anxiety, an expected movement on the part of Richard of England; whose army, consisting of

Norman, English, Angevine, and Touraine troops, lay encamped, within the distance of half-a-mile, divided only by the current of a rapid river. Every hour, the British forces were in expectation of instructions to advance; and Bertrand de Born, the confidential friend of the king, was supposed to have somewhat overpassed the bounds of loyal respect in reviling the pitiful suspense in which they were held by ecclesiastical interference. For, day after day, processions of archbishops and bishops, with crozier and banner, and the chanted hymns of a train of abbots and gownsmen of all orders, progressed from camp to camp, betwixt the belligerent powers, bearing as many proposals, tergiversations, and protocols, as might do honour to the chicanery of any modern cabinet.—

One blessed evening in June, as King Richard lay in his tent, awaiting the reply of his brother potentate to a missive he had that morning despatched to the French head-quarters, definitively refusing to do homage to the King of France as his liege vassal for the provinces of Guienne, Normandy, and Poitou, (recreating himself, between occasional draughts from a flask of choice Gascon wine, by stringing rhymes and tagging roundelays with his trusty Bertram,) an esquire of the presence appeared at the opening of the tent, which was drawn aside to disclose the delicious glories of the summer sky, announcing,

“An envoy!”—

“How is this?”—said the king, starting up. “I heard no trumpets. What means King Philip, to despatch towards the King of England a herald so unceremonious?”—

“The messenger, an’t please your grace, comes not from the French quarters,” replied Sir Bryan Blount, bowing profoundly.—
“’T is a deputy from the Commons of England.”—

“Ha! from England?—Why saidst not so before?”—cried the impatient monarch. “To the presence with him!—’T is doubtless an emissary from our trusty Grand Justiciary the Archbishop, touching the recent levy. The knave hath made a timely journey. Our men lack pay and accoutrements; and ’t was but yesterday there reached me an express from our curmudgeon cousin, the Duke of Austria, complaining that the last instalment of our royal ransom is still in arrear.”

And, preparing himself to receive the salutation of one of those sleek and smooth-spoken sons of the church whom Hubert Walter of Canterbury was apt to render the interpreter of his measures to a royal master, whose clerkly scholarship lagged sadly behind the efforts of his poetical inspirations, Richard threw himself on the cushions wherewith his tent was garnished in guise of throne, assuming an air of royal authority and statesmanlike penetration. He expected to see the bending form of a monk glide, with humble obeisance, to the sublime feet of royalty.

But, lo! the envoy of the Commons of England stood erect in presence of the king!—There was more majesty in his gait than in that of the anointed monarch. A long beard, depending nearly to the leathern belt gathering in his grey tunic, announced a Saxon,—that is, an English subject of the Norman King;—while the staff in his hand proclaimed him to be an ignoble wayfarer.

“What news from our good Lord Archbishop?”—demanded Richard, examining the messenger with surprise, but still mistaking his errand.

“From the so-called Grand Justiciary of England, tidings bring I none!”—replied the stranger. “I stand in the presence of King Richard, as the delegate of many voices,—the witness of many grievances,—the interpreter of his oppressed people of London, who sue for justice and redress.”

“By the Holy Sepulchre, here’s news indeed!”—cried Richard. “The people treat with their prince, as sovereign with sovereign?”—

“The sovereignty of the people is to the sovereignty of the throne, as the faith of the true vassal to that of its upright lord,” replied the stranger undismayed. “And it is even because your grace’s faithful English subjects look to your majesty as a sure redresser of their injuries, that they have deputed me to bear to your feet the manifesto of their wrongs.”

“And who art thou, knave, that darest to thrust thy person and opinions into the presence of thy king?” cried Richard. Knowest thou not that, as my rebellious subject, I may forthwith offer thee, in example to my soldiers, hanging to the nearest tree?”

“I am William Longbeard, (1) burgess of the city of London,” replied the stranger—not deigning to notice the threat; “a man of honest descent and honourable purpose.”

“And what braggartry hath stirred thee to quit thy peaceful guild, and thwart thy lawful monarch in foreign lands with the murmurs of his ungrateful people?”—demanded the king.

“Because the cry of the oppressed is great in the land,” replied the august stranger, leaning firmly upon his staff.—“Because your grace’s name is polluted by the misgovernment it is made to sanction. Your people, O king! do lack and suffer hunger. As I sat by my peaceful hearth, the groans of the many reached unto me, bidding me arise, and gird up my loins, and seek out their sovereign prince, that he might relieve them from the cruelty of the men he hath put in authority over them.”

“Ha! Presume to dispute my choice,—to arraign the wisdom of my ministers?”—cried the king, his cheek suffused with a choleric glow. Have I traitors, then, in my husting (2) of London?”—

(1) *Recalcitrante Willelmo cognomento cum barbâ.*—Math. Paris, 127.

(2) From the Saxon *hus*, house, and *ting*, council.

“Your grace hath an official traitor in your exchequer, an official traitor in your mayory, and vile abettors in the aldermen, his council,” replied William, calmly; “who, strong in their wealth and the absence of the king, bear down upon your grace’s hapless English subjects; wresting from them their substance, under the name of levies and imposts, and exacting from the poorest citizen a tax equal in amount to that paid severally by themselves, whose coffers are overflowing, and whose princely merchantmen ride upon distant seas. Against these abuses of trust, do I lift up my right hand before your royal face; trusting that the vicegerent of God will deal justly with a people committed to his protection by Him to whom the mightiest kings are accountable for the welfare of their subjects.”

“This boldness passeth forgiveness!”—cried Richard, striking his mailed arm upon the table beside him, till the Milan steel rang again. And as William, at that moment, advanced a pace towards the king, Bertrand de Born again started forward, to interpose between his majesty and one who might, after all, be a disguised emissary of Philip Augustus.

“Go to—go to!—let him approach!” cried Richard, motioning aside his minion. “This is no assassin. I have dealt with such ere now. In the East, I had frequent encounters with the people of the old man of the mountain; and trust me, friend Bertrand, their faces were otherwise moulded than the features of this stalwart varlet.”

For the first time, William bowed low and reverently, in gratitude for the fair interpretation of his sovereign.

“My people, sirrah, are then in open rebellion?”—resumed Richard, sternly addressing him.

“Your grace holds in small account the zeal of the Grand Justiciary, since you can imagine that Hubert Walter would leave such momentous tidings to be communicated by the devoted friend of the people?” was the stout reply of Longbeard.

“No evasions, fellow!—I ask thee in plain terms, are the citizens of London in revolt?”—

“That they would fain avoid so extreme a measure,” replied the envoy, “is proved by my pilgrimage to this place. As yet, they have been dealt with by subordinates. As yet, the anointed sovereign of England hath not withheld his ear from their petitions. Wherefore should they dispute the authority of him whom they still hold to be their friend?—Your grace’s coronation oath pledged you to administer justice to your English as to your Norman subjects; and, if truth be in the breath of kings, wherefore should we suspect our Richard of the Lion Heart, of meditating an infraction of a covenant made at the altar of the Most High?”

“And what seek these factious rebels of their prince?”—demanded Richard, somewhat mollified.

“An equalization of the law. Let the same taxes affect Norman and Saxon. Let imposts be levied according to the means of the subject, not according to the caprice of minions and ministers. Let not the rich burgess be exempted from a tax which leaveth the hearth of the poor man without fuel, and his children without bread. Secure the liberties of the people; restrain the tyranny of those in authority. Do this, sire, and the nation shall bless you. A grateful people’s prayers will more nobly embalm your memory than the extermination of the heathen, the extension of foreign conquests, or the vain renown of chivalry!”—

The king remained doggedly silent. It was not often that so stern a voice had sounded in his ears; and the impression was as powerful as distasteful.

“You are the King of England, continued William, profiting by his silence—“the king of a country submitted by the sword of your ancestors, and governed by the sceptre of your power; a country, the hearts of whose children yearn with loyalty, and who would fain love as a father the good shepherd who foldeth their flock. Oh, let not such love and loyalty be embittered by mistrust!—Be to us true as we would fain be to your gracious self—A portion of our substance is the portion of the king; and to Cæsar render we gladly the things that are Cæsar’s. Enjoy, therefore, the greatness ordained for you—the ermine, the purple, the gauds, the splendours of royalty; for in the sight of these things do we rejoice, as emblems of your power, and tributes of the affection of your people. But be not such empty tokens your *sole* regard! Such toys as I see yonder,” continued William, pointing to the king’s harp, which lay upon a trophy of arms in the corner of the tent, “are for sport and recreation; and God forbid that the careful hours of royalty be denied their solace!—But a prince hath sterner duties in his hand; moments of deep thought for the welfare of those for whose happiness he must account to God,—even that jealous God in whose eyes kings upon their thrones are altogether vanity, and who of old reproveth them by the mouths of his prophets, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and scattered their ashes upon the waters.”—

“Enough, enough of this!”—cried Richard, starting up, as the sound of a distant trumpet announced the arrival at the outposts of his camp of the herald he was expecting from Philip Augustus. “This is no moment for trafficking with disaffected burgesses, or listening to revilings against my men in authority. Thy purpose, varlet, is, I doubt not, good; albeit thy words are unseemly. Leave me. Return to those that sent thee, and say their complaints have reached the ears of their prince, and shall be regarded in fitting season. I pledge my royal word that my first measure, on returning to English ground, shall be to visit the city of London,

and, in open husting, redress the grievances to which I find it submitted. Meanwhile, as thy gown were poor defence against the sharp spears of King Philip's lances of Burgundy or the bolts of his Flemish bowmen, make light thy heels towards the coast, and haste over seas to bear back my answer to my discontented commons."—

Great was the joy at Paul's Cross when, on the eve of the feast of St. Michael, William Longbeard, attired in his pilgrim's dress, presented himself to the view of the people as bearer of the gracious message of their sovereign; and proportionately great the indignation of the mayor and aldermen on learning how slightly they had been backed by their prince in the exactions suggested by his royal need.

In his palace of Lambeth, meanwhile, the Grand Justiciary of England sat smiling at the credulity of all parties. Hubert Walter had more intimate experience in the integrity of the royal word. *He* had weighed to a hair the levity of King Richard; and knew, to the value of an easterling, by what mode and measure of the bribery his attention was to be diverted from the groans of a suffering people. It was but to administer liberally to his pastimes—(for, to a king, war is a thing of sport,) and the archbishop was as sure of obtaining double warrant of oppression against the Saxon population, as that Richard would return from France the victim of an inglorious truce.

But, though despising alike the king, his own dupe, and the good citizen, the dupe of the king, the Grand Justiciary was not the less indignant that an humble burgess should have presumed to bear to the ear of his royal master complaints against his administration; and, in order to secure himself against a repetition of the offence, a decree was issued, forbidding, under penalty of imprisonment, the departure of any citizen from the walls, without a passport from the husting of the city; and certain merchants having presumed to infringe the ordinance, and proceed with their wares to the fair of Stamford, (1) were seized and cast into prison as traitors and malefactors.

The usual consequences ensued. Oppression begets revolt; and the open despotism of the few, the secret association of the many. Fifty thousand persons were soon united by a common bond against the aggressions of government; and William Longbeard became the heart and soul of the association.

Already he had renounced all personal ties,—his own people and his father's house,—to instal himself champion of his suffering brethren of England. Renouncing every lighter social pleasure, and every profitable pursuit, he devoted his days and nights to the study of jurisprudence; till no Norman clerk was more

(1) Roger de Hoved, p. 763.

learned in the law, or more eloquent in its exposition, than the Saxon citizen. William was no blustering demagogue, but the judicious advocate of the oppressed. The courts of justice were unable to resist those masterly pleadings by which the cause of the poor and needy was protected from the chicanery of office; and the courts of Westminster admitted that the ermined officials of the Grand Justiciary had their lessons to learn from the erudition of the self-taught jurist. William knew precisely how far he might proceed in defence of the liberties of the people, without endangering his own; and in those all powerful harangues (a mere fragment of which has reached our times) (1) he who was sur-named by the Saxons the advocate of the poor, touched scathless upon the most fiery topics, while addressing the populace of London in the fields by Ludgate, or in the churchyard of St. Botolph's Priory.

Driven, however, to desperation by the prolonged absence of the king, and the unspeakable harshness of the measures perpetrated in his name, the Secret Association began to meditate active measures; and concealed arms were soon lodged to an unexpected extent in the dwellings of its members. Axes and hatchets, levers and iron bars, were amassed, as a last resource against the ferocity of the Norman officials; while William, in his zeal to animate the patriotism of his fellow-citizens, launched into the style of mystic oratory which had been so successful in raising the youth of Christendom into the frenzy of the crusades. Converting to his purpose the language of the prophets—"Ho! every man that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" exclaimed the orator, addressing the attentive multitude; "for behold my fountain is the fountain of liberty, pure and undefiled. And lo! I will filter drop from drop, and separate man from man;—the meek man from the proud,—the peaceful from him who is stained with blood-guiltiness,—the elect from the condemned,—the light from the darkness—till liberty is triumphant in the land."—

But while the unguarded populace listened to his vague adjurations, the High Norman Court of Parliament, including the functionaries of the crown, archbishops, bishops, and the barons of the shires adjoining the metropolis, assembled at Westminster; and cited, before their august tribunal, the orator of the people.

Escorted by an immense multitude, who hailed him with acclamations on his way as their saviour and king, William obeyed the summons; till the pusillanimous barons, shaken in their very seats by the shouts of the people, proposed to adjourn the session till a future day;—previous to which, assemblies were convoked by the magistrates of the Grand Justiciary in divers parishes of London, wherein the weakness of the public mind was assailed

(1) Guil, Nenbrigensis, p. 631.

by manifestoes of the power and prerogative of the crown, and the determination of King Richard to deal summarily with all seditious citizens, adherents of William Longbeard.

To this "the many-headed monster thing" listened with all its ears, and trembled in most of its members.—"The King"—"the Crown"—"the Throne"—were, at that period, omnipotent words, to which the great charter of our liberties had as yet opposed no salutary balance; and when, profiting by their panic, the Grand Justiciary had the art to extract from the ringleaders of the association a child from every family, as hostages for their submission to the king's government, William saw that the cause to which he had devoted himself was lost.—The innocent hostages having been placed in security in the various forts surrounding London, for a time the public excitement abated. William felt that it were invidious to revive the struggle.

Such, however, was still the influence of the popular orator over the minds of those who, from timidity alone, receded from his banner, that the Grand Justiciary, who had not scrupled to separate infants from their parents, lacked courage to arrest William Longbeard.

Instruments of villainy, however, are always at the disposal of authority; and accredited spies were soon enlisted to follow every movement of the patriot, and report to the archbishop his words and gestures. A Norman named Geoffrey, accompanied by a chosen band of mercenaries, contrived one morning to dog his footsteps as he proceeded into the country beyond Aldgate, to enjoy the free air with a company of friends; and laid violent hands upon him, with a view to arrest. But William, drawing from his belt the knife with which, according to the custom of the times, every citizen went armed, laid the traitor dead at his feet; and though the soldiers who hurried forward to abet their leader were secured, by coats of chain-mail, from the stroke of the pignard, William and his companions laid about them so stoutly as to escape unhurt to the sanctuary of Bow church within the walls, designated, in the Norman annals, as that of St. Mary of the Arch.—Here, having barred the doors, and barricaded themselves against attack, the armed men, their pursuers, were baffled for a time; while the Grand Justiciary, alarmed by intelligence of the outrage, and not altogether reliant on the garrison of the tower of London, despatched messengers to the forts and strong castles along the river, to summon in forces for attack.

Who now shall describe the fermentation of London city!—The mayor and aldermen assembled in solemn husting at their hall of guild. The bell of Paul's church tolled heavily, to summon the people to prayer. The shops were shut, and the apprentices were chidden within doors. The river-side became thronged with

idlers, watching the arrival of the troops; for every one felt convinced that a decisive popular movement in favour of William must take place. Every one exclaimed that the besieged were entitled to the best support of their fellow-citizens; and, while every one waited to ascertain his neighbour's intentions, the royal archers encircled the church, and reinforcements of troops took possession of the adjacent causeways.

Meanwhile, William Longbeard's experience of human nature had prepared his patience for the worst.

"Hope not help from your fellow-citizens!" was his exhortation to his comrades in misfortune. "The caitiffs at Westminster have the advantage of us. How is it to be expected that a single foot will budge in our behalf, or a single arm be uplifted, while the knives of the Justiciary's gaolers are at the throats of their innocent children?—Would I,—would you,—would any of us,—give the signal for the slaughter of the babes of our bosoms, to secure the safety of strangers?—It is not the cause of liberty that is at stake in our fate; for liberty is immortal, reviving, from century to century, like the fabled phoenix from her ashes. 'Tis but the lives of nine human beings, their fellow-labourers in the vineyard, which might be preserved by the sacrifice of their helpless children. For my part, I crave not their assistance."

Small, therefore, was their disappointment, on discovering that the inert and panic-struck multitude stirred not in their defence. Ascending to the belfry of the sacred edifice, the devoted men took up their post of observation. And, lo! they beheld the people afar off, retiring to their homes;—they beheld the river alive with reinforcements;—they beheld the church itself, surrounded troop-deep with armed men;—and it was to these that, summoned by sound of trumpet in the king's name to surrender, they breathed fresh terms of defiance.

A pile of wood and resinous substance, seized from the yard of a neighbouring builder, was immediately formed, by command of the archbishop, at the foot of the tower; and, in a moment, the smoke and flame ascended; and, overpowered by suffocation, (1) the besieged fled from the belfry, and, clinging to the pinnacles of the battlements, demanded quarter of their assailants. Already, the smouldering doors had given way; and the son of the caitiff Geoffrey (the enemy and victim of William Longbeard) was the first to ascend the tower, and plunge his retributive poignard into the body of the patriot.

"This for my father!"—cried the infuriated youth.

"*This for my country!*" replied the noble-hearted Saxon, as he received the blow, and prayed that it might prove mortal.

But although thus desperately wounded, the half-fainting William

(1) Math. Paris, p. 127.

was seized and manacled; and, tied to a horse's tail, dragged ignominiously through the streets, a spectacle to the intimidated citizens. His nine companions, tied with cords, were pricked forward by the spearmen as his escort, and it was in this humiliating guise they arrived at the gates of the White Tower of London, where the Grand Justiciary was holding his tribunal. Conveyed into the presence of the archbishop, sentence of death was instantly pronounced upon William and his associates. No trial was then available against the antipathies of a vindictive minister. No jury of his countrymen came betwixt a victim and the enmity of his judge. It was

Off with his head!—So much for Buckingham!

when a monarch marked his man; it was, "To the gibbet with the insolent varlet!" when the people's friend and advocate confronted the lawless dispenser of the laws.—

"I go forth patiently to death!" were the last words of William, turning towards the multitude assembled round the gates of the hall. "For my own life have I scorned to plead. The king, who should be at his post to guard the liberties of his people, is vapouring in foreign climes. In the equity of Parliament, (that wordy liar!) no wise man ever yet put trust; and even *you*, in whom I rashly confided, did desert me in my hour of need!—I fall, therefore, a prey to the oppressors.—My country hath had my life: it shall have my death.—I have given up all to my fellow-citizens,—state, station, breath: I have nothing more to give them but my forgiveness! And I say unto you, in presence of this proud prelate and of his creatures, that the cry of the land hath gone forth to God;—that its wrongs are registered in the Book of Vengeance;—that, as he who smites with the sword shall perish by the sword, the lord your king shall die a violent and untimely death!—But the land ye love shall endure; and, watered with the blood of many martyrs, the tree of liberty take root, and flourish for evermore.—And, lo! as your children's children sit under shelter of its branches, let them name my name with joy, saying, 'Glory to him who died a martyr for the cause of many!—Peace to the ashes of the last Saxon who perished for his country!'"

A burst of trumpets interrupted, by command of the grand marshal, the prisoner's harangue. Attached anew to the same horse which had dragged him to the spot, William was transferred to Tower Hill, where, at that period, a permanent gibbet was erected. Within an hour, William and his nine Saxon companions had given up the ghost!

As in every other case of popular injustice, a reaction soon became apparent. The citizens, who had been intimidated into the meanness of deserting the cause of their benefactor, no sooner learned that he had been submitted to an ignominious death,

than they cried aloud against his Norman murderers, and sorrowed for him saying, "Alas, my brother!"

That night, the gibbet on which he had suffered was torn down; and, being divided among the fanatic multitude, every fragment was disputed as it were a sacred relique. The following day, every creature within the walls of the city visited the spot; and, on the ensuing days, crowds of country people poured in, to look upon the death-place of William Longbeard. At first, the men in authority disdained to notice the posthumous influence of their enemy; till at length, they beheld, with amazement, pilgrims from every county in England repair to the spot, until it became excavated and worn away by footsteps innumerable.

The popular enthusiasm thus excited, the spot soon acquired preternatural sanctity. The patriot-martyr graduated into a saint; and miracles were accomplished in his name. Throughout the country, many priests of English origin preached in honour of William the Saxon, just as, one hundred and twenty years before, their predecessors had chaunted the praise of Walthrof, the last chief of the Anglo-Saxons.

The sick were now brought on litters to the spot; and, cured by the force of fashion and imagination, attributed their convalescence to the interposition of the departed patriot. Children were taught to lift up their little hands in prayer for his protection; and the place finally became the rallying-point of the disaffected and seditious.

At length, finding the memory of the dead William almost as fatal to his government as his living opposition, the Grand Justiciary, Hubert, stationed a company of spearmen on the spot, to disperse, with the point of the lance, the devotees of the English saint.

Still, however, they persevered. Driven from their stand by day, they reassembled after nightfall, (1) and scattered flowers upon the place of execution. Every day, the palace at Lambeth was harassed with tidings of new honours rendered by the people to their departed friend. Wherever the archbishop turned, he was haunted by the name of William Longbeard, William the Englishman, William the champion of liberty! The discontented barons twitted him with it in council. The murmuring citizens sheltered themselves from further exactions by citing the prophetic words of the martyr; and formal ceremonies were at length performed over his place of martyrdom, consecrating it as the altar of liberty.

The Grand Justiciary was now compelled to coercive measures. Having caused the environs to be invested with troops, one night, when a vast multitude were solemnizing the anniversary of the

(1) *Gexa Cantuar.* p. 1591.

death of the martyr, hundreds of offenders were taken captive and dragged off to prison. The women engaged in the affair were publicly scourged, the men imprisoned in different fortresses of the city; while the place of execution, having been dug up and desecrated, was converted into a military station.

No miracle ensued!—The man who had devoted his energies to the cause of liberty lay quiet in his grave, leaving it to the living to pursue his efforts; and thus discredited as a saint, the popular fervour in his favour gradually subsided, and the Grand Justiciary of England pursued his oppressions unmolested.

It was not till, at the close of the struggles of the succeeding reign, that grand compromise occurred between King John and his nobles which gave rise to the signing of Magna Charta, the people, finding their interests overlooked in a treaty so mistakenly described in history as the great charter of English liberty, began to murmur in their assemblies that, were William Longbeard still surviving, the people would be as well secured against the encroachments of the privileged classes, as the privileged classes had contrived to secure themselves against the encroachments of the king.

They called upon the memory of their dead—they reviled the ingratitude which had suffered their friend to be sacrificed before their eyes. They swore that the English nation did not deserve from Providence the blessing of a champion; and more than one, emulating the prophetic genius of the departed, denounced as doom to England that henceforward, amid her struggles for liberty, no friend should arise to further her endeavours, comparable with William the Saxon.

MARRIED AND SINGLE.

BY AN OLD BACHELOR.



ONE of the most respectable features in French society is the colonization of families. The Parisian hotels are constructed upon a prodigious scale; and when belonging to a family of consideration, the various suites of apartments are inhabited by its various branches, instead of being apportioned to lodgers. A family mansion, in a first-rate situation, is usually devoted, on the ground floor, to shops or offices. The first floor, or *appartement d'honneur*, is inhabited by the heads of the family; the second, by the married sons and daughters; the third, by bachelor sons; and the fourth and *mansarde* by domestics. In some instances, the several households unite at a common dinner-table; in others, they live separately: the stables, offices, and cellars being common to the family.

All this is patriarchal enough. The inexperience and pranks of the young are controlled by the vicinity of the elders; and the children of all, brought up in happy sentiments of family union. Often the warm snug *entresol* is inhabited by a venerable grandmother,—the presiding influence of the house.

My humble attic overlooks the court-yard of one of these nests of Parisian domesticity. A magnificent hotel, erected during the regency by a celebrated *fermier-général*, has been for the last thirty years inhabited by a wealthy banker;—one of the class created by Napoleon, as completely as the Rue de Rivoli, or the Column of the Place Vendôme.—The *rez-de-chaussée* is devoted to the *bureau* or banking-house of Monsieur Lingot. The first floor lodges, towards the street, the banker and his lady (a contemporary of the Empress Josephine, who seems to fancy herself the contemporary of the Empress Josephine's grand-daughters); and, towards the court-yard, Monsieur Paul, his eldest son,—a sober-looking gentleman, worthy to succeed to the banking-house, and having a young family of sons under the training of a sober-looking pedagogue in the *entresol*, in order to succeed him in their turn; with a pretty wife, Madame Paul Lingot,—sober, steadfast, and demure.

For eight years past, have I had my eye upon the family,—a favoured tribe among the worshippers of the golden calf,—whose

proceedings I find rather tantalizing than entertaining. The comfortable equipages and handsome horses of these people are the cause of bringing the rattling stable-pails and merry songs of grooms and helpers into the court-yard, on many a spring morning, when, after a sleepless night, I would fain find rest; and, on hungry wintry days, the *fumet* of their soups and ragoûts ascends to my very window, from the vast kitchen whose *batterie* of copper stewpans glitters within my view, some thirty feet below.

Above, on the first floor, I discern, through the four lofty windows of the dining-room, every day at one o'clock, the family assembling for the meal which the French call breakfast, and the English, luncheon. I can perceive the snow-white quality of the damask—the richness of the china, outspread upon the buffet fronting the windows;—nay, I can even see the *maitre-d'hôtel* carving upon the sideboard the fat capons and Strasburg pies, and handing them round a table steaming with cutlets mounted on silver *réchauds*, and crowded with the china cups of *café au lait* of the united family of Lingot.

Breakfast being cleared away, in an hour or two commence preparations for dinner. Freshly-trimmed lamps are brought to the buffet;—*bougies* are placed in the sconces of the chandelier overhanging the table;—clean linen is distributed by the *lingère* of the house;—the covers are placed in array;—the cruet-stands and salt-cellars replenished;—the busy lackeys have set the room in fair and cheerful array for the family-party which is to re-assemble at six o'clock. Soon afterwards, the noble staircase becomes brightly illuminated with gas. The carriage of Madame Lingot precedes, by half an hour, into the court-yard, the carriage of her daughter-in-law. The young ladies of the house and their brothers have already dismounted at the door, after their daily ride in the Bois de Boulogne. From entresol to attic, the vast hotel becomes brightened by sounds and symptoms of habitation; and, but that the crimson curtains of the dining-room are shortly afterwards closely drawn, I should be able to behold the family seated at their overflowing meal, mutually recounting the adventures and pleasures of the day.

Hitherto, I have described nothing that proves the vicinity of the banker's family an acquisition to my airy habitation. The pair of rooks which has built, for the last three years, in an opposite chimney, are more my companions and more amusing in their fussy domesticity. The smartness of Madame Lingot's waiting-maid is an abomination in my sober eyes; and the quantity of handboxes which, every winter in Carnival time, traverse the court-yard to the second staircase, or *escalier de service*, a reproach to my conscience. Sometimes a *carton*, jauntingly borne

along by a milliner's girl, proclaims the arrival of a hat and feathers to shine at one of the court balls of the Tuileries. Sometimes, a wooden case strapped to the shoulders of a lusty porter, announces a ball-dress for Madame Paul, from the far-famed factory of Madame Oudot-Manoury. On New-Year's Eve, arrive legions of rocking-horses, waggons, dolls, and play-shops, from the costly *atelier* of Giroux, with a pretty trinket-case or two, in mosaic leather, from Fossin's, containing glittering *étrennes*, from the old gentleman to his wife, daughters, and daughter-in-law.

It is not cheering to go supperless to bed after witnessing all this prodigality of luxury; or to reflect, on a solitary pillow, upon the improbability that my literary realizations will ever enable me to add a help-mate to the domestic comforts of my miserable attic.

But the consolation and delight of my observations, on the morrow, used formerly to rest upon a certain third floor overlooking the court-yard, hitherto undescribed, but affording me as much amusement as I ever derived from witnessing a fashionable farce by Scribe. A gay little suite of apartments, *au troisième*, in the Hôtel Lingot, was at that time inhabited by the banker's second son, Alphonse,—a fine young fellow of twenty-five, a gay-spirited dasher, by whom all the sympathies of my nature were kept on the *qui vive*.

The arrival of his fencing-master, on fine spring mornings, gave the signal for throwing open my windows, that I might enjoy a full view of his vigorous and graceful attitudes; and when, five minutes after the hour for closing the banking-house, (to the desk of which he was chained by his father like a galley slave to the oar,) I used to see him vault upon his half-bred Arabian, to gallop off to the Bois de Boulogne, it was an indication to me that *my* morning labours were at an end; and that I might betake myself to the *cabinet de lecture* to which I subscribe, for the perusal of the daily papers, previous to repairing to my *soupe* and *bouilli*, at a certain favourite *table d'hôte à quinze sous*, without bread.—There was something inspiring to my feelings in the hilarity of Alphonse; a freshness in his person, a frankness in his manners, a cordiality in his smile, even when addressing the grooms and helpers by whom some hack on sale was trotted round the court-yard for his approbation.—He looked so handsome when mounted on field-days for his duties as *Capitaine de la Garde Nationale à Cheval*, that I wondered his father should choose to make a banker of him; and did *not* wonder to find how little it was his choice to be a banker.

I could always detect within six hours, by the sudden change in Alphonse's demeanour, the moment of old Lingot's periodical commercial visits to Brussels and Frankfort. No more waiting for the

regular hour of shutting up shop.—Off to Tortoni's, before it was open;—off to the Bois before it was closed;—and never home again till half-an-hour after the ringing of the dinner-bell!—If snow were on the ground, I prepared myself for the jingling of sledge-bells, and the glancing of Alphonse's handsome *traineau*,—a gilded salamander, across the court-yard; having his pretty sister-in-law seated between the wings, with Alphonse holding lightly over her head the morocco reins of his wildly prancing horse. It was a comfort to me, by the way, to hear the jingling recur, and ascertain that the little party was safe home again.

Towards evening, throughout the carnival, I was on the watch to see his valet-de-chambre (a far finer gentleman than the master) steal up the *escalier de service*, with a masquerade-dress hanging on his arm, a Pierrot's pointed beaver in his hand, or a brigand's cap, or some other intimation that Alphonse was to spend the night at Musard's, Valentino's, or some of the second-rate *bals masqués*, where Parisian dandies, though not ashamed of seeing, are ashamed of being seen. On Saturday nights, however, apportioned to the *bals masqués de l'Opéra*, (where folly and licentiousness are paraded at a higher cost, and it is, consequently, no disgrace to show one's face), I used to observe my young neighbour making an elaborate toilet at eleven o'clock, as if preparing for one of Madame Appony's or Monsieur Rothschild's fêtes; and, one mysterious Sunday morning of the Carnival, when I had sneaked out of the *portè cochère* to early service, between seven and eight o'clock, I saw Alphonse step, at the corner of the street, from a handsome carriage, in which sat a lady in an elegant black domino, closely masked; and heard her mingle, in her adieus to her handsome cavalier, an injunction not to follow the carriage.—It was evident that he had passed the night at the *bal de l'Opéra* with some fair unknown.—I had half a mind to follow the carriage, and detect her. The lady's prohibition did not extend to me. But, on second thoughts, I amended my motion, and proceeded decently to church.

It was amazing the number of triangular notes and billets on coloured paper, that flew up the *escalier de service* towards the door of Alphonse's antechamber. The letters of the rest of the family were left, according to Parisian custom, at the porter's lodge; but these private and confidential missions were to be expressly delivered, by the pages, *jockeys*, or *commissionnaires* by whom they were brought, to the hands of either Alphonse or his valet. An answer was to be waited for; and often were the shutters of the young man's bedroom thrown open an hour before the usual time, to enable him to decipher the delicate handwriting, *à pattes de mouche*, which upbraided him with a promise broken, or exacted promises for the future.

I could always ascertain, even without examining the livery of the page, or ragged jacket of the *commissionnaire*, whether the epistle in hand were a first effusion,—the opening of a new negotiation. On such occasions, Alphonse would throw himself out of bed, fling on his dressing-gown of Persian silk, and, seated close beside the window, devour every syllable of the exciting billet. Once, (it was in the merry month of May), I detected him pressing to his lips a dainty little despatch, of which the bearer was a *chasseur* in a flaming livery. Yet, only six weeks afterwards, when the same *chasseur* made his fortieth visit to the house, instead of so much as rising to do honour to the correspondence, I saw the letter delivered to him in bed; and almost fancied I could detect a yawn while he was perusing it, through the half-drawn muslin curtain, veiling the open window.

The gayest scenes enacted in Alphonse's bachelor-hall were on Sunday mornings from nine to twelve, between April and June. From the periodical regularity of their visits, I conceive that the noisy fellows who on these occasions crowded his rooms were young men of commercial or official pursuits, enjoying, like himself, their weekly holiday—*dies non* for the slaves of Mammon.

Such hearty laughs as used to greet my ears, when his windows were thrown open by the earliest of his guests!—All were as much at home there as Alphonse.—Some leaned out of the window, with Turkish pipes in their mouths; others were busy with Alphonse's foils; others with his sparring-gloves; while some were examining his newspapers, or his new detonator, or a pair of Lepage's patent pigeons. I could hear the click of the locks as they tried them, and see the flash in the pan. I once heard high words pass between Alphonse and one of the wildest and handsomest of his comrades, who, having seized a letter from the secretaire, was only prevented reading it aloud by having it wrested from his hand; and half feared the affray might lead to a more serious use of these alarming implements. But friends good-humouredly interfered. Hands were shaken before they parted. Next day, I met them driving out together in the tilbury of young Lingot; and, in the course of a few weeks, having watched the same dandy accompany home Alphonse with hurried steps, observed the secretaire again opened, the secret drawer spring out, and a *rouleau* of Louis torn open, and poured by Alphonse into the hands of his agitated friend. From his vehemence of grateful hand-shaking at parting, it was plain the money was not given in payment of a debt; and I loved my young neighbour from the glee with which, on the departure of his friend, he carolled forth the cavatina of the *Postillon de Longjumeau* in a voice that Duprez might have envied.

My observations, however, were not always equally favourable

to Alphonse. There was a young peasant girl, in a clear-starched lace cap, with pink ribands, and a close-fitting chintz boddice, who appeared to me to descend at very extraordinary hours the *escalier de service*; and I could never perceive that she ascended higher than the floor of his apartment. She was evidently one of the pretty *paysannes* from the *côte* of Suresne, where Monsieur de Lingot has a villa. But from the caution with which the damsel was escorted in and out of the house by Felix the valet, I could see that she had no legitimate pretext for her visits. I wish poor Perrette had not made her entrance so late, or her exit so early. There was something crooked in the business.

One day, I traced her distinctly into Alphonse's sitting-room, with her apron to her eyes; and in the course of the same day, the old banker, whom I never before beheld in his son's apartments, was closeted with him for more than an hour. I never saw the starched cap on the third-floor storey after that morning. Alphonse was sadly out of spirits for nearly a month afterwards; but there was no yawning,—no lounging with a meerschaum,—as during the reign of the lady of the green and silver chasseur. On the contrary, he sat hour after hour, reading soberly near the window, where stood a flower-pot of sweet basil,—too humble a thing to have been more than a village offering.

Soon afterwards, the neat court-yard of the banker was littered with straw; waggons and carts were packing, and post-horses arriving with prodigious cracking of whips, to carry off two coachfuls of the Lingot family to their country-house near Laon. I grew sad when I saw the young ladies' saddle-horses led away in their stable-cloths, and Madame Paul's gay britszka attached to the rear of one of the waggons. I knew by experience what a vacuity it would cause in my life to look out upon a silent court-yard, green with weeds, and rows of shuttered windows, instead of upon the gay doings of the wealthy family.

They departed. Not a creature was left in the hotel but the compting-house slaves, and the porter and his wife; from whom I could have found it in my heart to ask for the gift of the pot of basil, which stood drooping on Alphonse's window ledge. In spite of occasional showers, the plant withered in the summer drought: grew first yellow—then brown.—At length, the gnats disdained to swarm round it any longer.—It was dead!—

Early in September (a month previous to the usual return of the family to Paris), I perceived an unusual stir in the hotel. The window-shutters of a hitherto uninhabited apartment on the second floor were thrown open; the smell of paint soon became perceptible; then came paper-hangers, then upholsterers. Delicate curtains of figured muslin were fluted into the windows, and I discovered no more of what was passing within. The family took

possession of the hotel for the winter. The dinner-bell rang, and the gas flamed as usual on the stairs. The *maitre-d'hôtel* cut up his capons, and the young ladies resumed their rides in the Bois.

In winter, I was always accustomed to see less of Alphonse; so that I was not surprised to hear no gay laughs, and no snatches of opera tunes from his window. Before Christmas, however, I saw him cross the court-yard one morning in a toilet of unusual elegance. Staub or Blin had evidently done his best; and the hand of Boivin was discernible in the folds of his cravat. The court-yard soon became filled with carriages; and that evening, every window of the hotel was streaming with lights. It was clear that Madame de Lingot had commenced her *soirées* several weeks earlier than usual.

I now noticed that Alphonse's shutters were rarely opened. He was perhaps gone to Compiègne or Fontainebleau for a *partie de chasse*; or his father might have despatched him to Germany, on some commercial speculation. He was a loss to me. I almost ceased to interest myself in the affairs of the house. At length, having drawn one afternoon towards the window to extricate a hair from my pen, I plainly saw my young friend hand a pleasant-looking girl into a handsome chariot in the *porte cochère*; and, when it had driven off, return slowly into the house. Nevertheless, the shutters of the third floor were as strictly closed as usual.—Where could he be lodged? The truth glanced into my mind.—Alphonse was married! The pretty girl and chariot were his property; and the apartment with the fluted muslin curtains, the retreat of their honey-moon!—

It was now with a very heavy heart that I gazed upon the closed *persiennes* of the third floor; for I knew that there would be no more joyous Sunday morning meetings,—no more fencing bouts,—no more sparring,—no more *Postillon de Longjumeau*!—When spring dawned, the windows were daily thrown open by the *frotteurs* of the house; but the rooms within had a look as though their owner were dead. No muslin curtains to the windows,—no sheets on the single bed,—no stirring about of the crimson dressing-gown,—no examining of flints, or crossbows, or Lepage's pistols.—By some strange oversight, the pot of dead basil, instead of being wholly removed, was pushed out of sight upon the leads, where it was visible only to myself, from my opposite window.

No one ever seemed to enter the rooms but the *frotteurs* and the spruce valet who had replaced Felix; and who came occasionally to dust the arms, suspended in racks to the wall, and certain wild bears' heads which hung in the fencing-room, as trophies of Alphonse's hunting feats. These seemed to be

attacked by moth; for, in the month of March, five grinning monsters were hung out of the windows to take the air, displaying their fangs to me for several weeks, in place of the joyous countenances of Alphonse and his companions.

Thus passed away a twelvemonth. My favourite was lost to me. More frequent dinner parties were given in the state-rooms below; and my rest was oftener disturbed by calling up the carriages for Madame de Lingot's ball. But, throughout that winter I saw no masquerade dresses carried up the back stairs,—no billet-doux,—no gay sledges dashing over the snow. And when May brought into their flush of bloom the two venerable Judæa trees, which twist their trunks in the court-yard, instead of accompanying his young sisters in their ride to the Bois, I more than once observed him saunter into the chariot of his young wife, whose step was now growing as heavy as the countenance of her husband.

At the end of the year, when the family returned as usual from their country seat, I began to detect the form of Alphonse wandering occasionally like a spectre through his old apartments. My favourite had lost his gallant air and smiling countenance; but I knew him in a moment. He went there apparently to peruse and answer certain private letters, and was careful to bolt the doors on his arrival; for I never saw any person follow him to his retreat, though, more than once while he was ensconced there, a white hand drew slightly aside the fluted muslin curtains of the second floor, and a female head inclined, as if gazing down into the court-yard towards the stables, to ascertain whether the truant were betaking himself to his tilbury or saddle-horse for an excursion; or whether his pretext were true of repairing to the banking-house to please his father by a diligent day's work.

I almost feared his marriage might be a less happy one than I could desire. The bride was, of course, wealthy; because the extent of Alphonse's fortune must, according to French custom, decide the amount of her own. But had she been in all else equally worthy of him, how was I to account for the many a half hour I now beheld him pacing up and down those cold cheerless rooms, as if any escape from his own were acceptable to his feelings?—

At length, I was witness to an incident which, with all my partiality, I could not altogether approve. One morning last summer, soon after daybreak, I beheld Alphonse fidgeting up and down his old chamber, and looking every now and then at his watch, as if expecting some person by appointment.—Was it a dun?—No! the overflowing prosperity of the Lingots forbade all idea of such an alarm. Affluence poured its treasures upon their heads;

and everything in the house seemed to move on invisible golden castors. It certainly was not pecuniary difficulty which caused the untimely restlessness of the second son on the second floor.

The mystery was soon explained. There scudded along the court-yard a woman, holding a young child in her arms; who, from her air and the direction she was taking, I conceived to be the wife of one of the coachmen or grooms. But, no!—she entered the side-door, and ascended the *escalier de service*!—I saw her pause at the back-door of Alphonse's rooms, unpin and repin her shawl, shake the summer dust from her feet, and occupy several minutes in adjusting the simple dress of her little boy.

Yet all this preparation was not coquetry. I am convinced the young woman was only taking time to recover herself, and that she scarcely knew what she was doing. On lifting up her head from leaning over the child, her eyes were red and her cheeks colourless; and it was then I recognised the face once so blooming under the starched cap with pink ribbons, and now so careworn under the bonnet'demonstrating that the peasant girl was metamorphosed into a Parisian bourgeoisie!—

She knocked, and was instantly admitted.—It was wonderful with what emotion Alphonse de Lingot strained that little fellow in his arms, kissed his fair cheeks, examined his little limbs,—and even took the rude shoe from his little foot, as if curious respecting the conformation of the child.—I never saw a finer boy.—And Alphonse seemed to think so too, for he was never weary of admiring him and covering him with kisses.

The mother stood weeping humbly at a distance, as though overpowered by his tenderness towards her offspring.—But I saw no more.—I fancy I was weeping too!—

THE SISTERS;

OR, NATURE AND ART.



ON the coast of Lancashire, within distant view of the ruins of Furness Abbey, lies a small territory, an island or peninsula according to the ebb or flow of the tides that lave its flat and unfruitful shores. At noon, perhaps, the traveller beholds it an islet, moored, as it were, under the protection of the main land; isolated and cheerless, containing in the midst of the forty acres of arid land which centuries of cultivation have barely redeemed from barrenness a single dwelling; a small farm, the rosemary bushes of whose garden-enclosures form the nearest approach to a tree discernible in the place.

But a few hours later, the dreariness of Hailisle (or Helisle, as it is pronounced by the fishermen of the coast) is in some degree relieved by the re-appearance of the hard smooth sands, a quarter of a mile in extent, connecting it with the Lancashire coast. It now assumes the aspect of a rude nook of earth, ribbed from the neighbouring farms by the firm compact terrace which affords a delightful and exhilarating walk to the inmates of that solitary abode.

Viewed from the house, however, the scene assumed a totally different appearance. Persons accustomed to the rich garniture of inland landscape, with its contrasting features of hill, dale, or mountain,—river, lake, or torrent,—verdant pasture or golden plain,—are apt to tax a marine prospect with monotony. But ask the abiders by the great deep whether they ever experience the sense of satiety arising from sameness of object? It is not alone the vast transition from the smooth surface of the summer sea to the boiling seething fury of the mighty ocean labouring with the terrors of the storm, which vary their unspeakable extent of prospect. A thousand intermediary changes are hourly, momentarily, perceptible. Not a cloud sailing across the sunny sky,—and ocean-skies teem with those humid exhalations,—but casts a correspondent shadow on the surface of the waters, darkening their blue to purple, or changing their glossy green to the tinges of the dying dolphin. The “sea-changes” of a marine view are in fact so

infinitely multiplied by the effects of wind and weather, tide and time, that from the first gleam of morning to the last of evening twilight, too wonderful a succession of beauties presents itself to the observant eye, for the commemoration of pen or pencil.

But independently of its fine prospects of the open sea, the farm of Helisle commanded a coast-view of unusual interest. Though immediately adjoining the spot the shore presented only a gravelly bank, at the distance of half a mile along its windings commences the beautiful mountainous ridge shelving to the sands of Furness from the lofty heights diversifying the district of the lakes. From these, with their changeful mists or clear prominence against the sky, Helisle borrows another source of endless variety; and while the dainty tourist might pronounce this region of gulls and curlews, remote from city, town, or even village, the most desolate fragment of a sufficiently desolate country, the dwellers on the spot found, in its exciting breezes and varying tides, as attractive a play of features as ever brightened the serene countenance of solitude.

Yet the inmates of the secluded house were people who had seen the stir and tumult of the world; had sat and even presided at good men's feasts; having retired to the precarious shelter of that comfortless abode neither from disgust at the giddiness of the crowd, nor a milder frame of self-denying philosophy. They came there all but penniless;—they still abided there, miserably poor.—But though Master Warnford's wife was saluted by her humble neighbours of the coast as "Mistress" or "Dame," she had claim to the right honourable title of "the Lady Anne," being daughter to one of the proudest peers of England; by whom, on her rash marriage at sixteen with the younger son of one of Cromwell's up-start generals, she had been cast off and renounced for evermore.

The Earl of Luttrell, by whose undue domestic severity the ear of his daughter was first inclined towards the first love-suit tendered to her charms, resented with harshness the rash step his harshness had brought about; and though, for five years after their marriage, the Warnfords entertained no doubt of his eventual pardon, they were at length forced reluctantly to admit that all hope was lost of Lord Luttrell's secession from his oath to behold his daughter's face no more.—They now felt that they should have dealt more sparingly with the small patrimony derived by Warnford from his deceased parents; which was all but dissipated in the belief that, after a certain period of estrangement, the earl would recall his daughter to his favour, and restore her to her rights upon his inheritance.

But this expectation was extinguished. A stanch adherent of the House of Stuart, to whose haughty and obdurate despotism the frailties of his own nature bore considerable affinity, the earl had in his time been exposed to insult and injury at the hands of the

Roundheads; and his narrow spirit took delight in revenging on the son and grandchildren of General Warnford the long-smarting wounds of his self-love; regardless that in the veins of the latter was flowing the blood of progenitors whom he worshipped with all the paltry adulation of family pride. Rejecting every overture of reconciliation from his daughter, he left her letters of entreaty unanswered, and at length returned them unopened; till Warnford, who, at thirty years of age, had progressed from the romantic youth into a disappointed, gloomy, helpless, hopeless man, insisted that she should humiliate herself and him no more by the renewal of these unavailing solicitations.

From the period of their imprudent marriage, the young people had inhabited a small house in the little capital of the county-palatinate, of which Warnford's mother was a native; and there, in attempting to secure to the lovely Lady Anne, whom he had allured while a student of Oxford from her father's stately mansion in the neighbourhood of the university, some portion of the comforts of her luxurious home, his substance had dwindled away. At thirty, he was the father of two children, a girl and boy; with barely the means of maintenance for his single self.

"We shall starve,—we and these helpless ones must starve!"—was Warnford's desponding ejaculation, on the night when Lord Luttrell's silent rejection of his daughter's last petition satisfied them that all expectation of succour from his mercy was at an end. "Our debts in this place nearly equal the small remnant of my means. I have no friends, no kinsmen, no interest to push me forward in the world. Though the slightest word from Lord Luttrell's lips would, without diminishing by a doit the property he prizes so dearly, secure me from the king's government the occasion to work out my independence, and bestow an education on our children, we must sink still lower in the scale of misery;—must work—must want—and perhaps work and want in vain.—Perhaps, with our best efforts, these babes may sink under their privations; and you, my patient, suffering wife, prove unable to confront the hardships we have no longer hope to overcome.—Would—would that I had died, ere I persuaded you to desert your prosperous and bright career, for the cheerless home of an obscure and poverty-stricken man!"

"Have you courage to say this?"—faltered his wife, who sat rocking with one foot the cradle of their elder child, and holding in her arms the noble infant she had just hushed off to sleep upon her bosom, "when you know that my sole solace in my troubles is the belief that life would have been worthless in your eyes, unshared by the wife and children who are weighing you down to poverty?"—

"And so it would!" cried Warnford, with rapid utterance. "You have been,—you *are*—you ever will be—the crown and

glory of my days. The sight of these children and their tender caresses would be as a foretaste of heaven, but for the anxieties for their future welfare darkening my soul. But to know that, grievous as are the straits to which my rashness has reduced you, they must become a thousandfold more cruel, distracts my reason. You, so tenderly reared,—so cared for that your foot fell upon velvet, and not a breath was suffered to blow on your fragile youth,—*you* to labour,—*you* to need the common necessities of life!—O why was I tempted to do this thing, and how shall I abide the sight of your wretchedness?”—

“Cheer up, Warnford!”—cried the kind-hearted being, whose nature was a nature of love,—sparing one hand from her little charge to extend it to the ready caress of her husband.—“If this be all, cheer up!—You know me only as the thriftless giddy girl, the dainty tender woman.—Henceforward you shall see me the stirring matron,—the careful housewife. Love would be a pitiful thing did it suggest no higher proof of its strength than honeyed words and idle fondling, such as I have, perhaps, wearied you withal. But it has a power and courage of its own!—Trust me, it has a power and courage of its own!—a power to act, a courage to bear, which constitute a yet more intimate portion of its happiness. Had we been prosperous,—world-seekers, pleasure-hunters, wasters of the gawds and luxuries of life,—sweet protestations and tender embraces had been the utmost proof in my power that never have I repented the act suggested by the wantonness of girlish preference. My reason now confirms my choice. The blessing of God decrees that the vows so lightsomely sworn can now be renewed in all the solemnity of womanly truth; and to that first sweet promise to love and honour, in sickness and in health, to take for richer for poorer, for better for worse,—I superadd a pledge that, *knowing* the *poorer*, and having experience of the *worse*, I would still bear all, and more also, for your sake.”

Warnford made no reply. He was labouring, with a strong man's effort, to restrain the tears that would have fain burst forth from the inmost recesses of his heart. He was too proud to weep in her presence,—too agonized to speak.—

“You think, perhaps,” added Lady Anne, in a lower voice, “that this fortitude will not abide; that poverty is a gnawing thing which devours the strongest courage.—*Try me!*—I have the consciousness of a stronger mind,—a yet more enduring patience.—I defy the cares or wants of life to do more than bow down my body to death, they shall neither tire my submission nor exhaust my tenderness for you and those whom you have given me!”

He was about to answer, when, pressing his hand fervently with the soft slender fingers in which it was still enveloped, she added, “One word more!—I have a condition to affix to my devoted—

ness.—I must have you cheer up your spirits for my sake!—I must have you up and bestir yourself!—I must have you persevere to a good end!—I will labour cheerfully, but you must be my help-mate and companion. I will oppose a cheerful face to sorrow; but yours must no longer wear a frown. We are not utterly deserted of Heaven. We have youth and health; and for how many of the creatures of God do these form a sufficient provision!—Such fair and promising children are not vouchsafed to us in vain.—They are given us as pledges of better days;—they are given us as an encouragement to bear and to forbear;—they are given as an incitement to our efforts, and a comfort to our cares. For *them*, dearest, and for *me*, look to the brighter side of things. If I do not forget my father, I have at least forgotten my father's house; nay, I have forgotten all, save love and duty,—love that makes duty light, and duty that sobers and consecrates the sportiveness of love.—Low as we are in life, I am happy. Be happy too, and nothing will be left me to desire.”

And thus cheered and comforted, there was hope by the desolate fireside of the necessitous man.

But this was not all. Words of solace were not the only offering of the good and tender wife. She had words of counsel, too, for his ear; which, after much debate, tended to a happy issue.

Lady Anne persuaded him to quit Lancaster,—to renounce the intercourse of those of their own degree;—people who loved them no jot the better for attempts to maintain a position in life ruinous to their narrow fortunes. After much seeking, they found notice at an attorney's office of a vacancy at the miserable farm of Helisle; and nearly the remainder of Warnford's heritage was expended in the necessary outlay for lease, stock, and plenshing.—Having settled themselves thus, at the extremity of civilization, they resigned all pretence to gentleness of condition, and the pomps of life; worked hard, fared hard; and after two years' buffeting between necessity and the lingering influence of their early breeding, found their refinement of nature and sentiment worn down to the exigences of their condition. Algernon Warnford held the plough which was to procure bread for his children; while Mistress Warnford tended the two lean milch-kine, which afforded their chief subsistence.

The unfruitful soil was such as to tax the utmost efforts of the inexperienced husbandman. The peasant's boy and girl hired to assist the labours of the distressed family gave only trouble by their ignorance. But, in the sequel, perseverance prevailed. Though he who, as a gentleman, had been a bad scholar, proved as a farmer an indifferent agriculturist, the effort of being up early and late, toiling through summer's sun and winter's frost, overcame, as providence hath promised, the stubborn curse of nature;

and at the close of five years of heavy labour, the Warnfords were not only able to maintain their elder children, and a younger,—an ocean pearl, born in the briny solitude of Helisle—but had amassed great store of wealth,—a press full of linen, spun under their roof,—several articles of household furniture, the product of their united ingenuity;—and, above all, a stout coble-boat, which, with the aid of an able builder from Whitehaven who passed a couple of summer months domiciled with them at the farm, Warnford had launched with great ceremony from the stocks, and christened and painted with the auspicious name of “The Anne of Helisle.”—It may be doubted whether the Earl of Luttrell, who was now officiating in his frivolous old age as Lord Chamberlain to his most gracious majesty, had in the interim achieved any effort half so gratifying!

Nor was the ornamental department neglected. Warnford had retouched and whitewashed, within and without, the plaster walls of the little dwelling; had contrived a rude carpet of sheepskins for the portion of the hall or kitchen specially habited by his wife, and had even planted the spot of ground beneath her window with hedges of fragrant rosemary, which, as its name denoteth, rejoices in the dew of the sea. For the sea-spray reached it there. On winter nights, the humbleness of the one-storeyed mansion was its sole security against the tremendous storm-bursts of the Irish channel; and often, when signals of distress boomed from the offing, Mistress Warnford would start from her pillow, and with a prayer of intercession for the souls in peril, bless the roof that gave such comfortable shelter to the helpless ones whom her soul loved.

In fine weather, she and her children,—more especially her son Walter,—accompanied Warnford when his day's labours were done, in an evening sail, coasting those beautiful shores. Or she would follow him to the mainland, when business carried him to market at Dalton or Rampside, for a kindly visit to the wives of one or two small farmers, with whom they maintained interchange of goodwill,—borrowing or lending,—nursing or claiming tendance in sickness,—exchanging a basket of fish for a brood of early chickens, or a measure of rape-seed or yarn, for fagot-wood or turf. It was one of the sacrifices exacted of Warnford's pride by his more nobly-constituted wife, that he should stoop in all things to his altered condition; and live, and let live, with those among whom Providence had appointed their career.

There was old Hal Hobbs and his dame, cotters on the Candish estates, which extend along the coast by Furness, who thought the month a long one in which Mistress Warnford, or her good man, forgot to bring Watty and Leeny to taste their honey, or garden-berries.

“Marry, the boy and girl were so sprightly, yet so jaunty and well-spoken withal,” that the old people hailed the coming of the young mother, (with her large loving eyes beaming tenderness on the fair child, the young Lucy, that still lingered in her arms, from fondling more than helplessness,) as a festival in their life of labour.

But as years drew on, the mother, as by nature appointed, began to outweigh the wife in the bosom of Lord Luttrell’s daughter. She had borne cheerfully with her lot for herself, and for her husband; she could not be so easily contented for her children. Her mind, and that of Warnford, had been formed by early education; and though no leisure or opportunity was left them now for indulgence of scholarship, they knew enough to derive double enjoyment from the phenomena of nature, which afforded the recreation of their uneventful lives.—But the children had no books—no instructors; and, engrossed by the homely industry indispensable to their support, their parents could do little in that task of unremitting preceptorship indispensable to drive the young and volatile through the thorny ways of learning.

Walter and Helena accordingly wandered all day long about the featureless fields of the islet, without a shrub or bush to fix their attention, or a field-flower to enliven the saline herbage. Hand in hand, they watched by the shore till the receding tide left clear to their eager feet those sparkling sands, to which every ebb of the waters afforded hazard or novelty;—purple seashells, lightly embedded there, the curious pebble, the stranded weed, detached from the podded vegetation clinging to the sunken rocks;—the “living jellies” of the sea—anemone or star-fish; or some shelly outcast, flung by the waves on the shore to crawl its awkward way back again to a more congenial element.—The white gulls would stand unheeding, while the two little ones went wandering up and down: or the curlew dip its wing into the wave within reach of their little hands; so gentle were their movements, and so customary their presence on the spot.

But when Walter attained the age of hardihood, and at ten years old delighted to unmoor the coble from its chain, and, having set the sail, steer boldly along the shore towards Furness, having compelled his sister to bear him company that they might encounter together the chastisement of their disobedience, Mistress Warnford felt that the boy’s spirit was breaking bounds. He had none of the usual occupations of youth to exhaust his elasticity of limb and muscle;—no pony to ride,—no tree to climb,—no companion to overcome in wrestling, quoits, or other athletic exercises.—He had no associate but his sister Helena; for a sort of innate arrogance kept him aloof from the herdsman employed in the out-door labours of the farm.

At length, having escaped one day from home to the fair at Dalton, and tarried away till the tide had flowed, and ebbed and flowed again, distracting his mother with apprehensions lest, finding himself belated, he should attempt to wade through the channel of the flowing waters when nearly breast-high, as she had often known him do before,—she resolved, when she clasped the truant once more in her arms, (after having dared the passage in a crazy tub of a boat, long condemned as unseaworthy by the fishermen of Rampside,) to make some attempt at rescuing her son from a state of life, where the energies of his arrogant nature were thus afflictively doomed to run to waste.

A letter was accordingly indited to the Earl of Luttrell by his daughter; pretending no penitence for the past, but setting forth the degraded prospects of her children for the future, unless he deigned to extend a succourable hand, and enable them by fitting education to assume at some future time a position in the world more consonant with their honourable kinsmanship. For herself, she asked nothing.—Low as was her estate, Lady Anne avowed herself content. All she intreated of her father, was to call her fair young son to his presence; and decide, by personal investigation, whether it were not foul shame for a youth so nobly gifted in mind and body, to sink into a hewer of wood and drawer of water. Unknown to Warnford was the letter written and despatched to the Dalton post-office; and as his wife stood watching the coble driving over the little channel to the mainland, bearing with it the missive which was to decide the destinies of her offspring, she almost trembled at the reflection that her proceeding might become a source of alienation in the little family; even as her island home, which at sunrise had been part and parcel of the continent, was now a severed islet cinctured by the roaring sea.

Time passed away, but no answer from Luttrell Court! Lady Anne felt that she had humiliated herself in vain. Her father's heart, like her father's door, was irrevocably closed against her; and she congratulated herself that she had not acquainted Warnford with her measures, and so procured him a share in her disappointment. For Warnford was now a gloomy-minded unyielding man. Hard labour and severe care had extinguished the happier impulses of his nature. His slavery had become mechanical to him, for he saw that it was to be the unamending portion of his life; but not even the gentle companionship of his angelic wife could bring smiles to his face, or words of gladness to his lip. His father's spirit was breaking out in him. He had grown devout; not with the wholesome piety of a heart at ease, which beholds motive for gratitude in even the least of the benefits conferred by the bounty of Providence; but with a sour, fretful, fractious spirit of superstitious fear;—a peevish interpreting of

texts—an angry resentment of the triumph of the king and his church.—With his wife, he was invariably irritable,—with the children tyrannical and unjust; and while grieving that young Walter must grow up in such bitter bondage, she rejoiced that the father knew nothing of the emancipation she had premeditated for his son.

One day, when the lad was assisting his father to cart shingles from the seaward shore, and Mistress Warnford busied in hanging out upon the rosemary bushes a web of fine linen, the product of her winter's spinning, which she had destined for clothing for the boy had he been called away by his grandsire, Helena shouted from the garden-stile tidings that two strangers, richly dressed, were crossing the sands on horseback, guided by young Hob, the stable-knave of the hostel at Dalton.—Involuntarily the matron blushed, and drew closer round her face the pinner's which the sea-breezes had blown away; as she hastened towards the porch of her humble home, to set her house in order for the reception of guests whom she suspected to be on their way to visit the Lady Anne Luttrell, rather than to confer with Master Warnford of Helisle Farm.

They came. They doffed their broad beavers courteously to the trembling woman, requesting her to announce to her mistress that the auditor and chaplain of the Earl of Luttrell were under her roof; and when her exclamation, "You come to me then from my father!"—revealed the truth, they were sufficiently wanting in tact to betray their amazement that the daughter of their illustrious patron should be clothed in weather-stained linsey-woolsey, and have her cheeks swarthy and withered by everlasting exposure to the sun and winds of that shapeless island.—

Their errand was quickly said. They brought missives from the earl, undertaking the charge of his grandchildren, on condition that they were given up to his care, to be bred as became the future inheritors of his fortunes. His elder daughters, the Marchioness of Saltram and the Lady Helena Mauleverer, having in their turn incurred his displeasure, he engaged to make forthwith a handsome settlement on Walter and Helena Warnford, upon a renunciation on the part of their parents of all interference in their future destinies.

Lady Anno trembled as she read; *not* lest her husband should refuse his assent to the humiliating proposals she had brought upon herself, but rather lest he should *agree* to part with the children. It was only for her son she had petitioned. She knew her own capability to bestow upon her blooming Helena such education as she held indispensable to an humble home-staying woman; and the project of the earl to deprive her of both her children filled her bosom with dismay.

She would fain have answered by a hasty negative, and dismissed the two delegates of Lord Luttrell ere Warnford could be apprized of their arrival. But this was impossible. Two horsemen could not easily arrive at Helisle unknown to the farmer; and accordingly, after the lapse of a few minutes, Warnford, in his fustian suit, and wearing his sternest looks, entered, and had a surly welcome to the strangers.

To the surprise of his wife, however, those looks brightened when the object of their mission came to be explained. The Helisle outcast had that morning discovered that he was likely to be a heavy loser by the season's crops; and had received, within a few days, an insolent letter from the attorney of his landlord, claiming arrears of rent, and threatening ejection; and having these evil prospects before him for his helpless family, the offers vouchsafed by Lord Luttrell came like manna in the wilderness. It was not a generous sentiment which decided his grateful acceptance. He thought nothing of the ultimate benefit to his offspring. He thought only of the joy of deliverance from a present burthen; of having fewer mouths to fill by the wasting toil of his hands; fewer eyes to keep watch upon his mental irritation, when he came from work to the contemplation of work to come.

The mother was silent when she heard sentence pronounced: for no arguments *she* could urge would prevail over his determination. The days were gone when her gentle voice could work miracles with his sullenness. She had gradually ceased to be the lovely Lady Anne in his eyes,—the angelic Lady Anne in his heart. She had become Mistress Warnford—Dame Warnford—Goody Warnford—the but of his ill-humour, the slave of his domestic despotism.

But while repressing her words and tears, the mother's heart was wrung with anguish. Master Rickatts, the auditor, explained that it was the earl's intention, on receiving the engrossed assent of the parents to his adoption of his grandchildren, to despatch his equipage and attendants to meet them at Lancaster; that a tutor was already appointed to prepare young Walter for Eton College; and a *gouvernante* of confidence to escort Helena to the court of France, where her aunt, the Marquise de Castries, sister to the Earl of Luttrell (holding a high appointment in the suite of Madame, the sister of Charles II.), would provide for her suitable education, better than could be done in the gorgeous seclusion of Luttrell Court.

Mistress Warnford listened in consternation. Courts and princesses for her Helena!—for the untutored child of nature, accustomed to chase her father's Irish hound along the sands, or hold the steerage of the coble for her wilful brother!—But there was no remedy.—Warnford decreed that it was to be so. The children were to go—he seemed to care nothing whither. When she wept

and wrung her hands at parting with them, her husband reviled her that the thing was of her own doing,—that but for her letter to the earl, there would have been neither thought nor speech of their removal from Helisle.

For many months afterwards, when roused in the watches of the night by the bellowing of the storm, she called upon the names of her children, and wondered how they fared at that unquiet moment, he would answer her with texts illustrative of the restless thanklessness of human nature, that had not virtue to content itself with the dispensations of the All-seeing and All-wise.

Thus admonished, she resigned herself. There was still the little prattling Lucy—with her open brow and clustering auburn curls, clinging yet closer to her mother, for having lost the young companions of her infancy. Lucy was now more than six years old; hitherto content with the enjoyments of her age,—the sights and sounds revealed by the common changes of season and the elements. But there was none now to lead her forth on the silver sands in search of purple seashells or streaming weeds: none to venture with her to the back of the island, where a long strip of crisp rank herbage gave forth, in the early spring, a few specimens of hard, stiff, prickly-blossomed weeds, the wretched Flora of miserable Helisle. Till, at last, baffled of all hope to wander, the gentle child disposed herself to follow like a spirit up and down the household movements of her lonely mother; to watch her while she set the milk or churned the butter;—spun beside the hearth in winter, or in summer, trimmed up the garden walks; or sat in the shadow of the house, making or mending garments for her husband or nets for his summer fishing.

Intense was the love that sprang up between them!—As the mother's hair whitened and whitened under her coil, Lucy's lengthening tresses grew to overhang her ivory shoulders, and proclaimed that the fair girl, so lately a child, was soon to be a woman; and for *her* Mistress Warnford never experienced one of those misgivings she had felt for her elder offspring. So refined was the natural look of Lucy Warnford,—so gently toned her voice,—so fine her aptitude in receiving instruction,—that the trammels of education appeared superfluous. Uninfluenced by the example of a boisterous brother, Lucy had never, even in her sports, outpassed the silken limits of her sex. In *her*, nature had made “a lady of her own.”

The talk of the mother and daughter was often of the absent ones: Lucy had gradually forgotten all but the name of her brother and sister. She had a vague recollection of having been clasped to her mother's bosom more graspingly and tenderly than usual, after parting from a group of grand personages, among whom the shadowy forms she remembered as Watty and Leeny,

had been born away ; but nothing further. It had been covenanted by Lord Luttrell, that no intercourse was to take place between the parents and children ; saving that on the first day of every year came a letter from Mister Rickatts, stating that Master Walter and Mistress Helena were in good health, progressing in their studies, and contenting the expectations of the earl.

Walter was now on the eve of being entered at Oxford ; Helena of being withdrawn from the Convent of Panthemont, where she had received her education, to be introduced by the Marquise de Castries into society. All this was duly discussed between Lucy and her mother, but always in Warnford's absence. Speech of courts or scholarship, princesses or earls, were things he could no longer abide. The influence of religious enthusiasm on a mind disturbed by disappointment had, in that uttermost solitude, produced its usual distressing consequences. He had become a fanatic,—a visionary. His delight was to wander from home ; to follow strange preachers among the dales of Lancashire or Westmoreland ; and lacking these, to hold forth in exposition of the scriptures, by misinterpretation of which his own mind had been led astray. Had it not been for the thrift and patience of his partner, the little farm must have gone to ruin. But the guardian angel,—the pearl without price,—the tender wife and mother,—watched over all ; received back with unrepining tenderness the miserable wanderer ; while, during his absence, she wrought with double diligence in his behalf.

While Helena (Luttrell as she was called, not Warnford) was emerging from her convent, graceful, skilful, accomplished, arrayed with all the cost and elegance becoming the position she was to hold in the world, Mistress Warnford, still only four-and-thirty years of age, was stretching her husband's nets to dry upon the stone fence of her little garden ; driving her few lean sheep to their fold ; salting the winter butter for the family ; folding the snow-white linen for the press ; not repiningly,—not with a yearning thought of better days ;—but with a mild serenity of brow and contentedness of soul worthy of admiration. Nay, sometimes on a cheery May morning, when Lucy's step was bounding before her, or Lucy's morning kiss had been more earnest than usual, a low-voiced tune, like the murmur of the waters rippling on the beach, would proceed from the lips of the hard-working tender-hearted woman. Her fair hands and well-turned arms were hard and brown with unremitting labour. But the soul within her was unchanged ; soft, fair, feminine, and noble, as in her days of helpless gentility.

It was a brilliant day, meanwhile, in the annals of Luttrell House, that witnessed the arrival of the Marchioness de Castries and her niece, to preside over its princely establishment. Hen-

rietta of Orleans had now been some years dead; and the marchioness was glad to abandon the city where the murderers of her beloved mistress remained unpunished, for her brother's lordly mansion in Scotland Yard. Overlooking the Thames, where floated, moored to its garden-stairs, several barges bearing the cognizance of the earl, Luttrell House was a fine old structure of the time of the first James; ponderously magnificent,—and consequently in strict accordance with the style of living affected by the man designated by Rochester, Buckingham, and Tom Killebrew, as “the pomposterous Earl of Luttrell.”

Harder in his nature and more worldly than ever, Lord Luttrell hailed with delight the coming of the stately marquise, whose breeding of Versailles was to add new dignity to his domestic circle, and the beauteous grandchild who was to breathe the rejuvenescence of her eighteen years upon his withered existence.—His vanity was tickled by anticipation of the gay figure these daughters of his line would make in the royal circle of Whitehall; and his malice gratified by the notion of the envy with which their elevation to his favour must be regarded by his two rebellious daughters, the Ladies Saltram and Mauleverer. Of his third daughter, his once-loved Anne, he thought no more than if she had been buried *dead* instead of *alive* in the *ultima thule* of Helisle! Morally extinguished by her *mésalliance*, his lordship deemed it superfluous to inform himself whether she retained so much as physical existence.

But there was one person at Luttrell House, to whom the arrival of the two ladies afforded anything but satisfaction. Sir Walter Luttrell (for the vain youth had been knighted by the king when officiating as proxy to the earl at the installation of Knights of the Garter), had long reigned supreme in the affections of his grandfather. Frivolous and licentious, the false position in which he was placed, by Lord Luttrell's peremptory alienation from natural ties, had effaced all natural affections in his bosom. To love the earl was impossible. His sister was banished to a foreign country. His parents were henceforward nothing to his tenderness or duty. The world was to be all in all; its splendours his solace,—its favour his sufficient happiness. The lessons of adversity were forgotten. As the manners of the young courtier softened, his heart grew hard. Dissolute in his habits, his chief anxiety was to keep from the knowledge of his grandfather's excesses of a nature to be held derogatory by the stately old nobleman; and Sir Walter justly feared that the establishment of female espionage at Luttrell House must be fatal to his superficial reputation.

“I kiss your fair hand, sweet sister!” cried he, throwing himself without ceremony into a seat in the gorgeous withdrawing-room appointed to the marchioness's use, the day after Helena's arrival

in her native country.—“I was dining last night with Muskerry, or should have been at hand to assist our lady aunt from her coach, and tuck the chaplain and lapdog under either arm to make their solemn entry into Luttrell House.”

“The latter duty you would have been spared,” said Helena, smiling at his affectation of dress and manner, which all but rivalled her own. “In place of chaplain and lapdog, the *chère marquise* travels with a pair of the prettiest and most adroit *soubrettes* that ever pinned up a fontange, or starched a stomacher; and neither Mademoiselle Péroline nor Mademoiselle Celeste, is in the habit of being ‘tucked’ under the arm of a cavalier so unlettered, as to groan under the weight of Alençon point after Easter, or to sport boots of chamois leather while Spanish morocco is to be had for money.”

“I’ faith, well said!” cried Sir Walter, enchanted by the grace with which the *belle Parisienne* sat tossing a *cassolette* of perfumes, affixed to her wrist by a golden chain, which ever and anon she caught in her snow-white hand, to cast it lightly forth again. “And I was wrong to talk of such old-world pets as lapdogs and chaplains to ladies of degree, who doubtless entertain a marmoset and an astrologer!—But tell me, sweet sister!—what is the last news from the Salle de Diane, and the circle of its purest Diana, Athénée de Montespan?—Is his holiness’s Bolognese bull promulgated yet by the cardinal, and sanctioned by *la bonne compagnie*?—And is it now a received thing to intersperse breast-knots of lilac on an amber-coloured bodice?”

“Even as you see, good brother!” replied Helena. “But trouble not your fastidious eyes with a thing so trivial as this my morning *négligé*. Suspend your judgment until Thursday night; when, having been presented to her Majesty in her private closet, we are to appear at the ball at court, and lo! you shall behold a certain robe of silver gauze, embroidered on the seams in Parma violets, whereof every eye hath an encrusted topaz; of which Lauzun protested the fashion to be unique when I danced in it as one of the handmaidens of Flora, in the last royal ballet performed at St. Cloud.”

“Silver gauze is altogether cittysh and tawdry,” said Sir Walter, disdainfully. “Gauze of silk or thread is your only wear. I protest to you, *ma mignonne*, that cloth of gold or silver is obsolete and unseasonable for this merry month of May.”

“Obsolete?” cried the young beauty, with rising bloom. “How long, pray, hath Scythian London presumed to affect principles of its own upon such subjects?—Have *we* Parisians so liberally supplied you with tailors, embroiderers, and bulletins of fashion, in the overflowing of our goodness and frippery, that you end by setting up as dictators on your own account?—Bah!—Content

yourselves—worthy fog-bewildered souls as ye are,—with legislating in musty parliaments and long-robed courts of justice; but presume not (as Elizabeth said in her haste to her senate) to meddle with matters beyond your reach. I maintain that gauze of silver is fitting wear for a ball-room, even were the dogstar raging. But here comes the marchioness, tottering under the weight of her rouge and *faux toupet*.—A salute on either cheek, if you love yourself, gentle brother!—To kiss her finger-tip, as you did mine, would pass for most unnephewlike *sang-froid*.”

“My dear soul, how is this?”—cried Madame de Castries, having courteously accepted from Sir Walter the gallant embrace suggested by her niece. “What is it I hear,—that my brother has neither evening set apart for the reception of society,—nor groom-porter, nor pharo-bank, nor ombre, nor basset, nor anything usual or decorous, established in the house?—What means such strange irregularity in an establishment of so much note and splendour?—and what does he intend us to do with ourselves when there is nothing going on at court, and neither ball nor masquerade in question? Does he expect us to mew ourselves up of an evening in his state-prison, to the light of half a dozen sconces, and perhaps the tune of a couple of fiddles, lullabying one to sleep with ‘Damon, god of my affection,’ or some other playhouse ditty?”

“Doubtless, my dear madam,” replied Sir Walter, having led her to the chair, “my grandfather will accede to all your reasonable desires. Hitherto his household hath been neglected: his office detaining him chiefly near the king, and my own naturally studious and retiring disposition having engaged me in literary and scientific society, whence such toys as cards and dice are necessarily banished.”

“I cannot live without my *hocca*!”—cried the marchioness, taking a long pinch of *rapée* from a glittering box, enamelled with a portrait of her friend St. Evremont, having a stanza from *Voiture* engraven on the golden reverse.—“To sleep without the incentive of my nightly game, is as impossible as to wake without the excitement of my morning coffee.—See to this for me, Walter. Consult the Chevalier Hamilton and the few other civilized beings you have got among you.—Make me up a little coterie, to wean me gradually from the cream of luxurious Paris to the skim-milk of splenetic London!—Conversation, taste, or elegance, we do not look for from you; but, in pity to two forlorn females, give us that which even blockheads can provide, a pack of cards and a tolerable cup of Mocha.”—

Thus adjured, Sir Walter decided that it would be more prudent to seek a confederate in the marchioness than attempt to out-general her manœuvres. He promised, therefore, to do his best for her ladyship’s enlivenment; and Lord Luttrell was induced to

endure, as the avowed guests of his sister, the society of the profligate companions of his nephew. Assured by the marchioness that high play was one of the vices *de bon ton* monopolised by the *grand monarque* for the delectation of his court, the earl submitted to see a bank established in the grand gallery of Luttrell House, illuminated twice a-week for the reception of visitors; and there, as a pretext for quaffing Spanish wines with the gay and brilliant Sir Walter Luttrell, and bandying light retorts with his beautiful sister, the Duke of Buckingham, Beau Fielding, Jermyn, Count Hamilton, and other leading fashionists and wits of the day, consented to sacrifice their patience to the tedious potter of the old earl, and a few gold pieces to the insatiable love of play of the Marchioness de Castries. It became one of the best-frequented mansions in London; and Charles himself sometimes laughingly deplored the etiquette which forbade him to become a loungeur in the gay saloons of his lord chamberlain.

But the fair Helena had not been educated in Paris to so little purpose, as to imagine that the brilliant homage of these libertines of fashion was the one thing needful. Her grandfather had promised her a noble fortune; but not even the broad lands he was to bequeath her would obliterate, at the court of a Stuart, the shame of ignoble and roundhead descent. The triumph of the new comer, in her robe of silver gauze and Parma violets, had excited universal indignation among the maids of honour, both of the queen and the duchess.

Who was this Miss Luttrell that smiled so insolently as she walked a minuet with the young Duke of Monmouth, after fixing the admiring attention of Grammont and all his satellites?—An impostor!—The offspring of a *roturier*, whose real name was besprinkled with the mire of the commonwealth. The whisper went round, and Helena's eyes sparkled with indignation. "They should repent the ignominy cast upon her. She would soar above them, and surprise them yet."

Already, the Earl of St. Albans was among her rejected suitors. She had set her heart—(*HER heart*)—upon a duke! The laurels wherewith she would fain be crowned were strawberry-leaves; and it was after forming this resolution, (while apparently devoting her attention to the beauty of a pair of cats of crackled porcelain gracing the marchioness's chimney-piece,) that his young grace of Glamorgan was invited by Madame de Castries to become her pupil in the mysteries of basset. Lord Luttrell was satisfied that the duke visited so assiduously at the house in compliment to himself,—the venerable friend of his grandsire. Sir Walter fancied that the youth was ambitious of forming himself in his school of good manners. The marchioness decided that he came there to pay his compliments to her snuff-box, and the four aces.

But Helena was equally positive that, whatever the Duke of Glamorgan might come to *seek* at Lovell House, he should *find* nothing less important than a duchess!—He was a gentle ingenuous youth; and fearing to alarm him by a display of her Parisian levities, she gave up coquetting with Harry Jermyn and bandying witticisms with Rochester, to edify the world of fashion by the strict decorum of her maidenly reserve.

While these glittering pageants were enacting in the vicinity of Whitehall, the desolation of Helisle waxed gloomier, and yet more gloomy. Warnford's reason was now completely disordered.

It was only by following him incessantly in his wanderings, that his matchless wife prevented him from becoming the victim of his delusion. Often did he rush forth upon the sands when the tides were rolling in, upon a winter's night; and amid the bellowing of the storm and the frightful violence of the night winds, command the waves to recede in confirmation of his faith; nor could any thing but the persuasive caresses of his wife (her voice being inaudible among the tumults of the scene) induce him to seek shelter at home from the inclemencies of the weather. At other times, she would follow him to Dalton, and from Dalton pursue her weary way to the mountains of Black Comb or Langdale; and while he wandered frantic among the ravines and recesses of the hills, attend his steps with bleeding feet and panting bosom, clinging to him protectingly when she saw him about to precipitate himself from some frightful precipice as an ordeal of the protection of the Almighty.

But, 'alas! during these frequent absences from home, her gentle Lucy was left alone with a boorish servant on the solitary islet; and this necessity was, of all her trials, the most painful to Mistress Warnford.

“Not unto *me* should this duty have been appointed!”—did she more than once murmur, while following the wanderings of the demented man through storm and ford, among perilous morasses or shelving rocks. “It is his *son* who should be here to do this; his son, with a strong arm to restrain, and a strong voice to overmaster the paroxysms of his fearful madness.”

But there was no son at hand to relieve her painful efforts by the sacrifice of his filial duty. Walter Warnford had ceased to exist; for the Sir Walter Luttrell, in whom his existence was merged, was a vain voluptuary, who would have pished and pshawed at the mere mention of his absent parents and their misfortunes.

“I have been pestered with a strange letter this morning,” said Helena to her brother, producing one day at arm's length a clumsy packet, by mere contact with which she seemed to think herself dishonoured. “Did you know that those people in the north were still alive?—My aunt informed me at Paris (on my

inquiry about them on some occasion or other) that they were all swept away by an inundation,—a conflagration,—or the Heavens know what.”

“Leave that knowledge to the Heavens, then,” my pretty Helena, drawled Sir Walter; “for it is written in black and white, that we are either to know no parents or know no grandsire; and I have a notion that our elderly gentleman, with a rent-roll of sixty thousand per annum, is the acquaintance worthier preserving.”

“The more so, that our aunts, Saltram and Mauleverer, have lately been attacking the earl on his weak side, per favour of his ghostly comforter, Father O’Mahony,” observed Helena.

“And what says yonder inopportune letter?”—demanded her brother settling his ruffles.

“Many things unseemly to repeat. ’Tis writ by little Lucy, (the child, though grown into a woman, is endowed apparently with scarce instruction or breeding for a chambermaid!) who informs me that her father is a lunatic, and her mother, it would seem, scarcely more rational;—since she trudges after him up and down, like an esquire of the body, leaving her young daughter to be devoured by rats and mice, and such small deer, but lacking nourishment of her own.—In short, they are all crazy, and all starving.—What is to be done?”

“Nothing!—The smallest intercourse would be followed by our expulsion from the favour of the earl. Such, since I attained years of discretion, hath been the reiterated lesson of old Rickatts, who stands so much our friend.”

“’Tis a most misjudging thing of this young girl to have placed me in so sore a strait,” observed Helena, tearing to pieces a rose, the gift of the Duke of Glamorgan, which she had taken from her bosom. “How am I to answer her letter?”—

“Take no note of it, child,—as I do by those of my unruly creditors.—’T would be an encouragement to importunity were such applications favoured with an answer. Miss Lucy will conclude that her petition miscarried; and we shall be troubled no more with her importunities.”

Lucy *did* conclude so; for, to her young heart, the monstrous idea of filial ingratitude had never presented itself. She pictured to herself her beautiful sister, shining, like a star, in courtly resorts, and revelling in the luxuries of life. She pictured to herself her brave brother, commanding the respect of society by the exercise of every manly virtue; (for, blest as both had been with the enlightenment of education, how could they be otherwise than high-minded and virtuous!) and could not refrain from conjecturing what would be their anguish, could they dream, that while *they* were pampered with the sweets of life, want was in the dwelling of their parents!—

For want was there indeed!—The fields of Helisle lay uncultured, the fences broken, the garden-ground a waste!—Not a head of cattle—not a sheep—not a living thing in the ruinous sheds, not a handful of meal—not a root—to yield nourishment to the miserable family!—For some time the neighbours were generous, and administered to their necessity. But the demand came too often. The season was a bad one, and there was a famine upon the land. Winter was coming on severely; fuel was unattainable. Mistress Warnford had shaped her own warm clothing into garments for the lunatic, while one by one Lucy insinuated *her* vestments into her mother's hoard; and with blue lips, and wasted shivering arms, protested, when charged by the tender woman with her good deed, that she could not work while encumbered with winter covering. The poor girl grew weaker and weaker; yet every day she went forth on pretext of rural labour, though there was neither stock nor crop to exact her cares. She only wished to hide from her mother the wanness and sadness of her hungry face.

Yet, even in that depth of misery, the mother bore all with resignation. Her faltering voice had yet strength to talk of better days in store; her languid eye to look forward to some remote epoch of worldly felicity, when her absent children were to be restored to her, and all was to be well.

“Heaven is merciful!” was her constant exhortation to the gentle girl, who brought water to lave her bruised feet when she returned from her painful wanderings,—and water was the only offering that remained to Lucy as a token of welcome to her parents. “‘Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.’ When your brother attains possession of his independence, will it not be his first thought to fly to our relief?—And what delight, to be rewarded for my past miseries, clasped in the arms of my lovely Helena; and beholding *thee*, my duteous child,—my youngest born—my best beloved,—walking at length in the sunshine of prosperity!”—

But, while talking thus with parched but patient lips of the sunshine of prosperity, “a hopeless darkness settled o'er her fate.” The miserable man, whose insanity had recently taken a furious turn, (the result of wretchedness, witnessed and shared,) was one day missing from the chamber where he was accustomed to lie and howl away the intervals of his more restless paroxysms; and his wife, girding on her tattered raiments, prepared herself, as usual, to cross to the main land, and, inquiring the direction of his course, follow and follow through the pitiless storm, till some lucid interval enabled him to recognize her voice and return with her to their destitute abode.

But, lo, as she was about to go forth, Lucy met her upon the

threshold, and in silence prevented her departure. It was in vain that Mistress Warnford remonstrated or questioned. Lucy could reply only by the tenderest caresses,—by clasping her mother's hand,—by imprinting kisses on her mother's cheek; till, after some time, she gathered courage to lead her to the spot where lay the dead and disfigured body of the maniac.—

For a single moment the widow beheld in him once more the lover of her youth, and wrung her hands in anguish. But better thoughts succeeded. The sufferer was gone to his rest. Though he had perished by his own hand, his will was guiltless of the deed: and the poor friendless woman had still fortitude to exclaim—“The will of God be done!” She remained alone with the dead while the weeping Lucy went her way to the main land, and brought back those who, with sore grumbling at the interruption, dug a grave in the deserted island for the mangled remains of the unhappy Warnford!—

To abide longer on that calamitous spot, the two helpless women felt to be impossible. Gathering together the scanty remnant of their property, they set forth to beg their way to London. A charitable friend at Dalton gave them shelter on that first homeless night; and even at that desolate moment, the poor widow felt, as she wept upon the head of her loving and lovely child, that a treasure was hers in the affections of her devoted Lucy, counterbalancing the evils of her lot.

Weeks of patient perseverance conveyed them to the capital.—But, alas! they arrived at a moment disastrous as the history of their own destinies!—The plague had broken out, and high and low were flying from the infected city. When at last the miserable wanderers made their way to the stately portal of Luttrell House, a train of coaches was at the door to convey the family in haste into Oxfordshire. The postillions were cracking their whips, lackeys uncovered stood thronging the door-steps, lining the way for the marchioness and her fair niece to reach the equipage; and when Helena, radiant with beauty, issued from the gate, her mother burst through the restraining throng, and flung herself at the feet of her bright and prosperous child, with sobs of ecstasy and love.

“Take her away—take her away!—’t is some poor infected wretch,” cried Miss Luttrell, recoiling with a piercing shriek from her approach.

“No, no!” faltered the seeming mendicant; “I bring thee no evil—I would *die* sooner than bring the evil!—I am thy mother, Helena,—thy loving, miserable mother!”

Another shriek betrayed the consternation of the young lady, to whom the terms of this address were wholly inaudible; but who fancied she beheld a plague-stricken beggar clinging to her feet. But Sir Walter, who stood inspecting the packing of his tra-

velling-chariot, had caught sufficient insight into the matter to feel that the results of this vexatious scene might be fatal to his prospects in life, surrounded as they were by household spies, by idlers, and above all, in presence of the Duke of Glamorgan, who was come to take a hasty farewell of Helena, ere he rejoined the family at Luttrell Court. Rumours of the strange incident would be sure to reach the ears of the earl, who had preceded them by a few hours upon the road. He felt persuaded that Lord Luttrell would not fail to resent upon his grandchildren so indecent an intrusion, unless they promptly marked their disavowal of the measure.

“Drive the woman hence!” cried he, to the herd of lackeys around him. “Would you see the life of your young lady perilled before your cowardly faces?”—

“Walter!—my own brave, beautiful, noble Walter!” faltered the half-fainting woman—“I die content to have looked upon your face once more.—Walter!—my sweet Walter, have pity!—It is your *mother* who is grovelling at your feet.”—

“Away with her!” cried young Luttrell, deaf to the tender words, which were drowned in the stir and tumult of departure; and while Helena stepped into her gilded coach, a servant in the Luttrell livery seized the helpless woman who sunk upon the door-steps, and flung her on a stone-bench fronting the opposite wall of the court-yard.

“Farewell,” cried Helena, kissing her hand to the young duke, as her heavy vehicle was dragged forth through the gateway by six equally cumbrous Flanders mares.

“Farewell, my dear Glam—*au revoir!*” added her brother, gaining his own gay carriage and following the van. “To-morrow, by dinner-time, at Luttrell Court.”

And away went the gaudy train of servants and outriders, and away the mob of idlers collected to gaze upon their bravery.—No one remained in the place but the decrepit porter, yawning on the steps of Luttrell House, the young Duke of Glamorgan about to remount his horse and ride homewards preparatory to his departure from town,—the body of the beggar on the bench, beside which a miserable girl was now kneeling;—and the all-seeing eye of Providence watchful over all!—The auburn curls fell scattered round Lucy’s beautiful face as she took the bonnet from her head, to fan the insensible mother, who lay there as at the point of death; and the eyes of the young duke were attracted by its matchless loveliness.—

“Can I do any thing to assist you?”—said he, in a gentle voice, approaching the agonized Lucy.—

“A cup of water,—in charity procure me a cup of water!”—cried she.

And at the request of the duke, both water and wine were

hastily brought forth by the old porter of Lord Luttrell's house for the wayfarer's relief. After some minutes, the sufferer unclosed her eyes.

"My children!"—was her first exclamation; "*where* are my children?"—Then, recalling to mind what had occurred, she added, mournfully, pressing the hand of Lucy to her lips, "But, no! there is only one child left me now,—the dearest and the best of daughters!"—

"You had better enter the house, my good woman, and rest a little," said the old porter, condescendingly, to the tramper patronized by a duke.—"You are welcome to the use of my chair!"—

While Glamorgan kindly added, "Ay, hie into Lord Luttrell's house and rest awhile,—hie into Lord Luttrell's house!"

"Steal like a thief and an outcast into my father's house?"—exclaimed the almost distracted woman. "No, no! I should then deserve the cruel indignities heaped upon me. Renounced by my father,—spurned by my ungrateful children,—I can go and die elsewhere!"

But though these ejaculations remained incomprehensible to his grace, Ralph, the old family porter, to whom the history of Lady Anne was familiar, and who knew the interdiction placed by the earl upon all intercourse between his daughter and her children, began to entertain suspicions of the truth; and tears gushed from the poor man's eyes, as he exclaimed, "My lady!—my honoured lady! my sweet young Lady Anne!—and *I* not to recognise her in all this misery and shame!"—

Rapid as were the explanations bestowed by old Ralph on the noble spectator of the affecting scene that followed, they sufficed to arouse his utmost sympathy and indignation. His very utterance failed him on learning that he beheld, in the victims of destitution before him, the daughter and granddaughter of the Earl of Luttrell,—the mother and sister of Helena.

It was to his *own* roof that he now insisted upon their being removed; and when, as they were accompanying him from the spot, there arrived a servant on horseback, despatched back by Sir Walter Luttrell, to have a care of the two beggars whom he had left at the gates of Luttrell House, the duke commanded the man to bear back word to his friend, that "henceforth his deserted mother and sister abided under the protection of the Duke of Glamorgan."

Such an intimation naturally apprized Helena that all hope was lost to her of securing the hand of her noble admirer. But it did not forewarn her of the still more unwelcome fact, that, after a few weeks' intimacy, his affections were to be transferred to her fair and artless sister, whose virtues gradually confirmed the conquest her beauty had begun.

The Earl of Luttrell, meanwhile, who had carried with him from London the germs of the prevailing epidemic, fell a victim to that frightful disease; nor did it surprise the world that a will, executed by the wayward man in his last moments, disinheriting his grandson, secured the whole of his vast property to "the daughter of his daughter Anne, on the day of her becoming Duchess of Glamorgan."

"But what then will become of my grandfather's fortune?"—inquired Lucy, when apprised by her mother's youthful benefactor of the singular terms of the bequest. "Surely the legacy will never take effect?"

"That, dearest, must depend upon yourself!" was his fervent reply. "By becoming Duchess of Glamorgan, Lucy Warnford, the daughter of the Lady Anne Luttrell, will not only render me the happiest and proudest of men, but be enabled to confer peace and independence on the best of mothers; and exemplify to the world the comparative influence upon the human character and destinies, of the Schools of NATURE and ART."

URSEL.



“’T IS mighty fine talking, Ursel,” cried Nickel Wechsler, a cobbler of repute in the archiepiscopal and archpicturesque city of Salzburg, to his sister Ursel, one of the prettiest damsels doing honour to the Sunday balls of the suburbs,—“but I tell you that no good will come of all this frisking and junketing. If half the time were passed at your knitting-needle, or spinning-wheel, that you spend before the glass or in capering at profane waltz-meetings and cross-bow shootings, your name would be less bruited in the neighbourhood.”

“For which reason, good brother, I prefer joining in a merry dance to dangling a woollen stocking through my palms seven days in the week, when six ought to suffice the diligence of the most persevering knitter in Salzburg. I choose to plait my hair before the glass, instead of twisting it up sullenly in a corner; I choose to dance,—I choose to sing;—for ’t is no reason because I am merry, that I may not be wise. If my name is oftener cited among the lads and lasses of the neighbourhood than suits certain prudish ears of my acquaintance, what is the worst word they string after it?—*Coquette!* Some call me pretty Ursel,—others merry Ursel,—and a few disappointed men and envious women, ‘Ursel the coquette!’—I snap my fingers at them!—So long as I remain Ursel the blameless, those who love me have no need to resent my being more thought of than other girls of my age.”

“Less thought of,—more *talked* of!” persisted Nickel, punching away at an upper leather, as thick as his own skull.

“Who dares to say less thought of?”—cried Ursel, planting her round and mottled arms upon the back of his chair. “Is it not well known that every Sunday and feast day, I have as many partners pretending to my hand, as you have made eyelet holes during the sermon wherewith you have been lecturing me?—Did not Count Formian’s head-gardener open the ball with me last St. Fiacre’s day?—Did not——”

“Why do you ask me,—since, frequenting no such ungodly assemblages, I am unable to reply?”—demanded Nickel, lifting his dismal face towards the joyous countenance of his sister.

“Truly no! and the life of penance you lead (by way of making court to Fraulein Agnesia, the old canon’s housekeeper) is almost an excuse for the cross-grainedness with which you pass judgment

on your innocent sister. It sours your blood, good brother Nickel, to hang over your last from morning till evening, and waste your breath from evening till night upon that detestable trombone, which is the cause that we cannot get admitted as lodgers into any genteel abode. It is only in this dull alley, with a coffin-maker next door, and a coppersmith opposite, that they will put up with clanging and tapping all day, and a trombone all the evening!—Take my advice, Nickel—(I have as much right to give advice as yourself)—throw over the Fraulein Agnesia—throw the trombone into the river—and your leathern cap over the windmill: and make a man of yourself! A mug of Bavarian beer now and then,—a waltz occasionally on the greensward,—a new suit at Christmas,—and a merry heart all the year round,—will render you happier than dangling after the prim prude, who you fancy must have dollars in her pouch, because she has the canon's keys at her apron-string!"—

"I would have you to understand, Ursel Wechsler, that it is not for the hope of pelf I sometimes repair in hours of recreation to the little temple of harmony in the cathedral close," said Nickel, mysteriously.

"For what, then, in the name of heaven?—You will never persuade me that you take pleasure in listening through the wainscot to the snoring of the Herr Canon, or to the discourse of the shrew of a housekeeper, which consists of cutting remarks upon innocent girls like myself, whose heart and heels happen to be lighter than her own?"—

"The Fraulein has undertaken to get me promoted to the post of trombone-player in the cathedral," said Nickel, in a self-satisfied tone.

"She might as well promise to get me made an archdeacon!" cried Ursel, with a hearty laugh. "Because you have a knack of fancying that you prefer Beethoven's symphonies to Strauss's gallopes, do you suppose that Herr Grumph (who is said to be the first chapel-master in the known world) would let you up into the music-gallery, even for so much as to become organ-blower?—Bah, bah, Nickel!—Be wise in time,—stick to your last, Nickel; and eschew the ambition of tromboning, or of rendering your sister a copy of the poor mortified-looking atomy of a woman, whom you allow to pay you her addresses."

"I am ashamed of you!—I say no more than that I *blush* for you,"—cried the cobbler, tapping away with redoubled zeal.

"So can I not say of yourself," cried Ursel, affectionately. "For of *you*, brother Nick, I am right proud, except when I find you the dupe of a hypocrite, or disposed to play the tyrant over your poor orphan sister."

"Don't say that word again,—for it goes right through my heart,

like my awl through this scrap of leather," quoth Nickel. "Well do you know, my little Ursel, that had you a father in life to control, or a mother to counsel you, it is not your brother Nick who would take upon him to interfere with your diversions. But you have none but *me*, Ursel.—We two are alone in the world; and should any harm befall you——"

"*Harm!*" reiterated the conscious maiden.

"Ill tongues are harm," persisted Nickel.

"Then heaven defend me from that of Agnesia!" ejaculated his sister.

"Better defend *yourself*," replied the cobbler. "Abstain, my pretty Ursel, from the pink ribbons that give offence in the eyes of the serious. Restrict yourself to one visit per month to the Rainbow Beer-gardens; and above all——"

Ursel saw what was coming, and adroitly evaded the intended interdiction.

"If it were but to pleasure *you*, brother, not a foot would I ever set in the Rainbow Gardens again. But I perceive from whose quiver this arrow is launched, and I defy it. The old creature detests every thing younger and better-looking than herself; and just because, and *only* because, the officers of the carabineer brigade chose to——"

"Ursel," cried Nickel, sternly, "I won't hear another word of all this!—You have no right to slander those who are more prudent than yourself. I frequent the Canon Dietrich's house, first, because I am artist to the establishment;—(I mend his reverence's soles, and keep Miss Agnesia's clogs in repair;—)and secondly, because, as I have already informed you, thereby hang my hopes of preferment. Once established in the music-loft, I might rise to be organist—*Kapell-meister*,—who knows, perhaps, to be a Haydn, a Mozart, a Beethoven!—But neither my pride nor my vanity has the smallest share in the advice which I give to my motherless sister, that she be more cautious in her comings, and goings, and delectations. That vapouring jackass of a drum-major, who holds himself for the finest sight between this and Innspruck, will be the undoing of your good name, Ursel. 'T is a fellow who will hint more slander by a twinkling of the eye, than others circulate by a whole week's backbiting."

"Not a word against Conrad Stein!" cried Ursel, primming her pretty mouth into an air of determination. "I am resolved not to listen to a syllable against the drum-major."

"You must put something thicker than cotton into your ears, then," exclaimed Nickel. "Not a man, woman, or child, within half a mile of the Linzer-Thor, but warrants him a jackanapes!"

"I don't say nay," replied Ursel, mildly. "Our neighbours

here at the Linzer-Thor are scandalous folks. The best word they have for yourself, brother Nickel, is *stockfisch!* I should be sorry to repeat the epithet they apply to the canon's house-keeper."

"And is Otto Wirbel also a man of evil tongue?"—demanded Nickel. "Inquire of Otto Wirbel what *he* has to tell of Master Conrad's proceedings at Naples, during the last campaign."

"Inquire of Otto! when I have your express interdiction against intercommuning with any thing that bears firelock, sabre, or sword," cried Ursel. "No, no, brother. If Otto Wirbel have anything to say against Conrad, he may put it in his pipe and smoke it, for me. I want to hear nothing on the subject, and least of all from *him*; of whom, as a fellow townsman and old acquaintance, I would fain think handsomely, and not as a vender of scandals."

"E'en as you list!" said Nickel, wearied by frequent repetition of his task of monitor. "All I can tell you is—(and I said as much last night, when warming myself in the old arm-chair beside the stove of the Herr Canon)—that after all the admonishments you have had, if you still persist in running head-foremost into evil, I shall think it no duty of mine to make a war of extermination against those who think and speak lightly of one who chooses to give them cause. I have said it, Ursel! Henceforward, as you are your own enemy, become your own champion."

"I have no recollection of having imposed a tax upon your valour in my behalf," said Ursel contemptuously. "You may even join, if you will, the host of my ill reporters; for I have more fear of the harshness of my own brother, than of that of Conrad Stein."

Yet with all this vehemence of defence, for Conrad Stein pretty Ursel cared not a straw!—Like others of her sex, the cobbler's sister strove to conceal her real inclinations by pretended enthusiasm in favour of one who was no more to her than a straw drifting on the waves of the Inn. Otto, her fellow-townsmen and neighbour,—Otto, over whom, from twelve to seventeen, she had tyrannized, just as, from two to twelve, the boy had tyrannized over herself,—was the secret idol of Ursel Wechsler; and nothing but the poverty, which had driven the poor lad into the ranks of the Austrian army, prevented the fair maid of the Linzer-Thor from giving him so much encouragement as might wring from him the confession of a reciprocal attachment. But the young soldier was pennyless. Ursel had not smiled, and Otto had not spoken. Reading rejection in the frowns of her scornful brow, he resolved to think of Ursel Wechsler no more; and if some evil spirit derided his vow by nightly reproducing in his dreams the form

he had dismissed by day from his thoughts, it was no fault of Otto.

To the interrogations of his commanding officer, he would sometimes half distractedly reply the name of Ursel : and to the sallies of his wild companions, still "the one loved name." The more the living Ursel despised and misused him, the more the Ursel of his dreams was disposed to heal the wounds inflicted by her breathing prototype. The spiritual copy bore truest witness of the secrets of Ursel's heart. Whenever at the Rainbow Gardens, or in the public promenades, or even in the aisles of the cathedral, or Theatiner's church, the saucy sister of Nickel turned slightly away at the approach of the handsome young carabineer, sometimes to bestow her choicest smiles on the drum-major, sometimes to exchange a glance with a group of young college-students, among whom the name of Ursel Wechsler was a favourite toast ;—as sure as he laid down his head that night on the straw bolster of his barrack-bed, the aerial form of the skittish damsel would glide to the bedside, breathing words of kindness, and promising eventual reformation to reward the constancy of his affection.

"Heaven knows best!" mused Otto at times, when facing a severe drill under a summer's sun, or enduring the ungracious reproofs of some boy-officer on a rainy field-day.—"In spite of her seeming savageness, at heart the girl surely loves me. The drum-major is a liar as well as an ass. It is the drum-major, and not poor Otto Wirbel, she is deluding. I would not give a kreuzer for the chance of the drum-major."

Ursel, meanwhile, would not have given a kreuzer for the drum-major's whole person, accoutrements included, from the tip of his regulation feather to the point of his jack-boots. A coquette at heart, she was unable to resist the temptation of leading in her chains a hero six feet four in his boots, and six feet nothing without ; and was too apt to accept his love-tokens of nosegays and Gratz gingerbread, and fine protestations. But in her soul she despised him for an empty coxcomb ; and did but follow the example of the great ladies her betters, who encourage empty coxcombs, when handsome and fashionable, to the disparagement of many a worthy fellow, plain-spoken and plain-looking.

Not that the latter epithet was applicable to Otto Wirbel ;—a fine soldier-like young fellow, who had brought back from his Neapolitan campaign a sprig of laurel, and a scar that added a more manly character to his fine bronzed open countenance, never clouded save when the skittishness of Ursel caused his heart to swell, and the gossips of the barracks to take note of his discomfiture ; and never so bright as when dreaming of making her his wife, when the death of a rich uncle, the miller of Newmarket, was to enable him to purchase his discharge.—In spite of the adverse

projects of the demure Nickel for his sister's establishment in life, and in spite of Ursel's perplexing coquetry, it was not more than twenty times a-month that Otto was driven to despair, or to the vowing of a vow that he would never again set foot in Nickel's house, or call down by his assiduities the disdain of Nickel's sister.

One afternoon, meanwhile, a week or so after the foregoing remonstrance, Ursel sat impatiently waiting her brother's return to the house from his visit to the cathedral close, that she might be at liberty to fulfil an engagement with the young wife of her neighbour, the coppersmith. Having drawn forth Nickel's darling trombone from its case, she laid it on the table, with a book of anthems open beside his chair, and a bottle of beer ready to be opened beside the book of anthems, placed a clump of wood in the stove, and closed the shutters for the evening in order that her brother might devote the time of her absence to his favourite pursuit. But, in spite of her thoughtful zeal, no Nickel made his appearance. In process of time, she was compelled to place a lighted candle beside the music-book, and gather together the embers of the exhausted clump.—Yet Nickel was still absent.

He had, doubtless, been retained to supper by the prim house-keeper. Regardless of his sister's convenience, he was sharing the Fraulein's light porridge, while the coppersmith's fritters were getting heavy and cold; and Ursel's heart grew heavy as they. She was actually vexed into a fit of fretfulness;—nor was it till, at half-past nine at night, it became time to put her glistening locks into curl-papers, she heard a low tap at the window, which was Nickel's mode of announcing himself. Hastily drying her tears, and assuming an air of sullenness worthy the injured wife of some truant husband, Ursel prepared herself to unbar the door.

But to her amazement, instead of the apologies for which she had prepared herself, Nickel brushed hastily past her, without an attempt at excuse; and leaving her to replace the bolts and bar, dashed down his fur cap upon his unoffending trombone, and threw himself doggedly into a seat.

“I hope you found the Fraulein's cheer savoury, brother, and her March beer sound?” cried Ursel, having completed her task, and taking up her candle to retire to bed.

“I have tasted neither the one nor the other,” rejoined Nickel in a surly voice.

“Another time, then,” resumed Ursel, with dignity, “when you have pledged yourself to smoke away your evening at the beer-house, forewarn me, that I may make no promises to go abroad. As your carouses occur not above once in a twelve-month, the difficulty will be the less for all parties.”

“I have not had a pipe betwixt my lips, nor have I crossed the

threshold of any house of entertainment," persisted Nickel in the same morose tone.

"I will make no further questions or conjectures, then," cried Ursel; "for they might lead to answers unseemly for me to listen to; but——"

"You will *not*—eh?"—cried Nickel, bursting forth into sudden violence. "Then, what I have to say to you, girl, shall be delivered without query or prompting. I have been to the carabineer-barracks, Ursel."

"So much the worse for your shoe-leather," replied Ursel, nothing daunted by the explosion of his voice; "for the hill is steep, and the pavement sadly out of order."

"It may be so; but my heart ached too sadly to leave me leisure to note it," replied Nickel, lowering his voice, and the alteration of his manner subdued at once the heart of Ursel. Her attention was now engaged. She set down her candle, and prepared to listen.

"You will not ask me what caused my heart to ache?"—continued the cobbler, pushing away the trombone, and making a space on the table for his two elbows, on which to rest his chin. "You, sister, who just now found so many idle questions to gabble over to me, are suddenly struck dumb."

"By no means. You visited the barracks to confer with your friend, Herr Hahn, the band-master, touching some professional matter of trumpets or cymbals," said Ursel, with assumed carelessness; "or, perhaps, because you wished to enjoy a game at dominoes with ——"

"No more trifling!" cried Nickel, sternly. "My visit, sister, was no matter of recreation. I went to the barracks to visit the infirmary."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ursel, in a faltering tone. "Has the drum-major got the ——"

"The drum-major has got less than his desert," replied Nickel, sternly; "poor Otto somewhat more!"

"Otto!" cried Ursel, turning pale as death. "Otto Wirbel in the infirmary?—I saw him yesterday.—How long has he been ill?"

"He was wounded this morning about half an hour after parade."

"Wounded?"—faltered Ursel, falling into a chair.

"By Conrad Stein, who is at this moment under arrest!" and Wechsler was about to add more, when he perceived that all colour had forsaken the cheeks of his sister; that she was almost insensible and wholly motionless.

"Ursel, look up!—Rouse thee, wench,—rouse thee!" cried Nickel, patting the palms of her hands, unfastening the belt that bound her slender waist, and terrified at the evil consequence of his harshness.

“What brought about the quarrel between Otto and Conrad Stein?”—said she, when at length she recovered the power of utterance. “Answer me, brother—answer me truly.”

“No mortal knows what caused the two blockheads to fall to the words which caused them to fall to blows,” replied Nickel. “They quarrelled this morning as the regiment was quitting parade; met half an hour afterwards, behind the garden of the old Kapuziner cloister; fought with small swords, like fools or madmen; and by dinner time, Wirbel was carried to the infirmary, mortally wounded.”

“No! not mortally;—if you love me, don’t say mortally!”—cried Ursel, springing to her brother’s arms and hanging round his neck.

“I say not only what I *fear*, but what the regimental surgeons have announced,” replied Wechsler. “The drum-major was arrested this afternoon and thrown into the black-hole; which is what causes, I suppose, these tears and sobs.”

“Who cares for the drum-major!—Let them hang or shoot him, if they will!”—cried Ursel, almost frantic. “But why sent you not home to apprise me?—I should have been at the barracks as speedily as my feet would carry me.”—

“Because I would not have you mortified by being bidden to trudge home as fast as they would carry you back again.”

“Are not women suffered, then, to enter the infirmary?”

“Not suffered? How else would poor Otto’s old mother be at this moment weeping and praying at his bedside?”—

“*Is she at his bedside?*”—moaned poor Ursel.

“Marry is she, poor heart-broken creature!—I felt half ashamed to show my face in her presence. But she bore me no ill-will. *She* guessed not the cause of the duel.”

“And do *you* guess it, then, brother Nickel?”

“I know only the common report of the barrack-yard. The soldiers were standing in groups, when I entered, discussing their comrade’s misfortune; and *your* name, Ursel, reached my ear in every direction as the motive of Otto’s disaster. Did I not forewarn you against that ass of a drum-major?—Did I not tell you that evil would come of your caperings and junketings?”—

“But as yet we know not that *this* evil, at least——”

“*I* know it,” interrupted Nickel. “In the look of compassion, sister, with which our poor dying friend regarded me, as I stood beside his pillow, I read your accusation. I am as convinced as I now strike my hand upon this table, that it was in defence of my sister’s good name poor Wirbel drew his sword.”—

“*O weh! O weh!*” faltered Ursel. “What cause have I ever given for slander?”

“As much as many who have gone out of the world leaving but

a ragged reputation to cover their memory," said Nickel. "It was only last night, the good Agnesia thought it right to apprise me that Conrad Stein had been giving out to all who chose to hearken, that you had met him last week by appointment in Count Firmian's garden——"

"And so I did," cried Ursel, too impatient to listen to the end. "But our meeting, God knows, had a blameless motive, and my friend Frau Schmidt for witness. And if such be the cause of dispute between Stein and my poor dear Otto, I will up to the barracks at day-break, and set Wirbel's mind at rest, by a full and true explanation of the affair."

"Wirbel's mind will be at rest by day-break without any explanation of yours," said Nickel, gloomily. "He is condemned. His name is on the black roadster. It is all over with Otto!"

"In danger—in imminent danger?—Methought you did but say so to punish my heartless coquetry," cried the now-distracted Ursel. "Good Nickel, dear Nickel,—beseech you accompany me this very moment to the barracks—beseech you, do. I have words to say that will bring comfort to the suffering man."

"I tell you it is useless," cried Wechsler. "Wirbel would no more consent to see you, than to see a demon; and even were he so minded, I was myself turned away by the surgeons. The patient is to be kept strictly quiet till the second dressing of his wound. They have ordered that none but his poor old mother shall keep watch by his side this night; and 't is thought this night will be his last."

"At least, dear brother, let us *try*,"—sobbed poor Ursel.

"I will forth upon no such fool's errand. Content yourself," said Nickel, doggedly.

"Then truly I will forth alone," cried Ursel. And in a few minutes, arrayed in her hooded cloak and bearing a night-lantern, she prepared for the expedition.

"Since you are so wilful, it shall not be said that I exposed my father's daughter to the insults and misuse of a barrack-yard," cried Nickel, clapping his fur cap upon his head; and lo! with Ursel hanging on his arm, he retraced his steps up the steep ascent towards the barracks; and there, bidding her await him a moment at the postern, contrived to obtain such an answer to her application from the soldiers on duty, as sent her home weeping and hopeless.—That was a grievous night for the penitent Ursel.—

Next morning, soon after day-dawn, she was again at the barracks; no longer accompanied by the surly Wechsler, but by her compassionate friend and neighbour, the coppersmith's wife. Her success, however, was no greater than on the preceding night. The surgeons would allow no visitors to Otto Wirbel.

She returned in the afternoon,—she returned again in the evening; and at this fourth visit managed to have her name taken up to the accident-ward, in which the wounded man was confined, by a comrade admitted to visit the infirmary. But alas! her last hope faded on the return of the soldier. Otto Wirbel begged not to be disturbed. He wished to hear no further mention of Ursel Wechsler.

Pride ought now, perhaps, to have come to the maiden's aid; but at this crisis of misfortune, not even pride would stand her friend. The more she found herself spurned by her victim, the more willing she was to grovel on the earth at his feet, confess her fault, and implore his forgiveness. There was no sacrifice Ursel would not have made to vindicate her honour in the ears of the dying man, and implore his pardon for her heartless levity. But it might not be. Otto was positive in his refusals; and Ursel was at length fain to content herself with despatching her brother to the barracks twice a-day to obtain tidings of the sufferer.

For some days, they sounded sadly in her ears. For some days, the surgeons feared the worst. But at the end of a week, Otto was declared out of danger; at the end of a fortnight he was almost convalescent. An unimpaired constitution had seconded the efforts of his attendants; and ere the month was at a close, Otto Wirbel was reported to his commanding officers, *not* as fit for duty, but fit for imprisonment. It was proved during his illness that the challenge had originated with himself; and he had now to answer for his breach of discipline.

A court-martial was accordingly empanelled. The two offenders were brought forth; and as it was known to be the emperor's desire to check by rigorous measures the propensity to duelling which had of late years manifested itself in the ranks of the Austrian army, a severe sentence was anticipated. All Salzburg interested itself in the event: the female kind in favour of the handsome drum-major,—the male in that of their brave fellow-townsmen, Otto Wirbel.—

But who can describe the bitter anguish of Ursel?—Who depict the struggles of conscience with which, till the sentence transpired, she accused herself as the ruin of her good Otto,—her beloved Otto,—her cruel Otto; wringing her hands in unavailing remorse, and supplicating her brother, almost on her knees, to go and bear witness against her in court, as the sole cause of his breach of subordination. Fortunately the cobbler was of a more sober frame of mind. It did not need the sage counsels of the Canon's housekeeper, to advise him that the council of war cared little for the cause, though much for the result of so condemnable a breach of discipline.

If, however, there existed among the gossips of the Linzer-Thor any so hard-hearted as to wish that Otto and Conrad might have to atone by the gauntlet, or perhaps a yet more cruel punishment, for their offence in the eye of the law, they were disappointed. As much to the amazement of Fraulein Agnesia as to the delight of Ursel, such honourable testimony was borne by his comrades and superior officers to Otto's gallantry in the Neapolitan campaign, that his sentence was commuted to hard service and suspension of pay for six months to come; while Stein was degraded to the ranks, and required to abdicate the staff of his beloved office of drum-major.

Most people admitted the sentence to be over lenient; yet regretted deeply the mode in which it had fallen upon Wirbel. For every *kreuzer* of the young soldier's pay and allowance had been heretofore devoted to his poor infirm mother; and as to hard service, the consequences of his wound had so enfeebled him, and the disturbance of his mind so tended to retard his recovery, that he was scarcely fit for his ordinary routine of duty, much less for laborious work. Still, the court had been too merciful to admit of his hazarding an attested petition to that effect to the president. He chose to submit in silence. It should never be said of him that he showed a more craven spirit on the occasion than Conrad Stein. Whatever duty, therefore, was assigned him, was cheerfully executed. Courage stood him in stead of physical force. His brave spirit conquered all difficulties; and while his comrades insisted that he ought to report himself sick, young Wirbel, with wasted brow and feeble step, was seen fulfilling tasks such as would have appalled a galley-slave. He fancied that should a portion of his six months of punishment be passed in the infirmary, the suspension of his pay might be extended beyond the term, to the injury of his destitute parent.

But there was one person who endured all this with a keener pang than the sufferer. Every grievance sustained by Wirbel fell with heavier weight upon the soul of Ursel Wechsler. Her strength failed with his,—her cheek paled with his,—her heart sank with his. She kept watch over all his movements,—*distant* watch, for his unrelenting heart still refused to entertain a syllable offered in extenuation of the past; and every day she breathed her self-accusing murmurs to her brother—"that the council of war had better have condemned Wirbel at once to an honourable death, than to die by inches!"—still ending with the declaration that *she*, the most unhappy maiden in all Salzburg, was the cause of all!—

These occasions were not, of course, left unimproved by so judicious a moralist as Nickel. Many a time and oft did he lay aside his awl of a morning, and his trombone at even-tide, to

repeat with "damnable iteration," in the ears of his weeping sister, the homilies daily recited to himself in the canonical tone of the cathedral close; setting forth that Otto was indeed dying of weakness,—Otto's mother of hunger and cold,—and that Ursel, the coquette, and no longer the blameless, ought to die of shame, as the remote origin of the evil.

Fortunately, however, for the wounded spirit of Ursel, she knew one part of these accusations to be unfounded. No privation had as yet befallen the old mother of the chivalrous but cruel carabineer; inasmuch as the hoardings of her previous industry, and all she could gain in addition by plying her spindle or knitting-needles at the leisure hours once devoted to girlish recreation, were now devoted to replenish the widow's cruise. Artless as she was, Ursel had too much delicacy to appear openly as the benefactress of Wirbel's mother. She contrived, with the assistance of the coppersmith's wife, to make her gifts appear the donations of a charitable lady of rank; and the poor old woman's limbs were warmed, and her meals made plenteous, by the industry of one who was denied, now and for evermore, the happiness of being to her as a daughter. Frau Wirbel was as resolute in refusing to have the name of the Wechslers pronounced in her hearing, as Lady Capulet could have been in turning a deaf ear to that of Romeo Montagu.

Unluckily, the winter set in hardly.—Early frosts darted their chilly influence from the gorges of the Salzburg mountains. Even in November the ground was covered with three feet of snow. The sledges went tinkling and whirring along the roads, and the glittering Inn, rippling through the city between shaggy borderings of ice, that vainly strove to unite its surface with the frozen banks. Poor Ursel was forced to cover herself in her cloak and eider-down quilt, while, for several hours after midnight, she plied her busy wheel, unknown to her brother, who snored away the night, dreaming of fugues and motets, oboes and trombones, unwitting the toils and sorrows of his disheartened and repentant sister.

But never once did Ursel allow herself to indulge in the luxury of fuel.—So long as the aged limbs of Otto's mother were dependent upon her for warmth, it was her duty to suffer, and be frugal. Her teeth chattered,—her blue hands could scarcely hold the knitting-needles,—her whole frame ached with intensity of cold; but not a murmur escaped her lips.

One night,—it was just twelve days after Christmas,—and all Salzburg was holding its feast of the Epiphany, or *heilige-drey-konigstag*, after the fashion common to all Christendom, of eating spicy cake, and electing a king for the night. The stoves glowed with social fervour from one end of the city to the other. The river reflected back the illuminated windows of the quay; and but

for the bitter whirling gusts that blew across its half-frozen waters, there would have been pleasure in contemplating the streaming of those innumerable lights upon the embankments of icicles and snow. But it was any thing but pleasure to be abroad in such a night. The cutting blast drove every living thing to shelter. A few miserable masterless dogs sat cowering close beside the house-doors, as if striving to imbibe the warmth exhaling through the crevices; and beside one or two doors, where the festivities of the inmates had congregated a sledge or two, the drivers, dismounted from their boxes, leant against their beasts for comfort, while the horses seemed reciprocally comforted by the vital contact. All was frost.—cutting, penetrating, darting, exterminating frost!—

Ursel Wechsler, meanwhile, having declined the invitation of the Schmidts to solemnize with them the cheerful festival of the *konigstag*, sat solitary beside her scarce warm stove; awaiting the return of Nickel from Canon Dietrich's, whither he had taken his trombone to recreate the ears of his ancient dulcinea with a sonorous *Weihnachtslied*. The evening had been long and dreary; but she comforted herself with the reflection that on that night, the second month of Otto's sentence of punishment expired; while the earnings of her preceding week had exceeded the amount of a whole month of Otto's forfeit pay. These happy thoughts and the hum of her busy wheel beguiled the time; till Nickel's usual knock was heard, and the cobbler, bearing his instrument in its green-baize bag, was admitted into his domicile.

“A cruel chilly night, take my word for't!”—cried he, proceeding to rake the all but extinguished embers of his iron stove. “'Tis not twelve minutes' walk from the cathedral hither; yet I doubt whether the most wretched French caittiff of the Moscow campaign had more ado to keep his fingers' ends from freezing, than I, as I crossed the bridge!”—And Nickel shuddered audibly, suiting the action to the word.

“I thought Fraulein Agnesia had promised you a draught of the Herr Canon's Twelfth-night spice-bowl?”—said Ursel, looking up from her wheel with a smile.

“And so she did,—and kept her word, and even favoured me with a second to wash down the first,” said Nickel, stamping his feet upon the brick-floor as if to restore animation. “But even spice and wine lose their zest in such a night as this. I swear to you, *liebe schwester*, I am as chilled as though I had been lying a twelve-month, stiff and stark, in the vaults of the cathedral.”

“Jest not upon the dead!”—replied the now sobered Ursel, in a grave tone.

“Faith! I am ill inclined to jest upon any thing,” cried Nickel. “The cold seems to have got into my heart.”

“Will you try a glass of *kirsch*?” demanded Ursel, compas-

sionately. "I have not yet opened the flask which our cousin Johann brought me from the Tyrol last summer."

"No, no!—keep the gift for some better occasion," cried Nickel. "Tyrolian *kirschwasser* is a thing not to be sneezed at, or tiddled idly in a corner. 'T is the sovereignest cordial on earth, and beats to sticks the cherry-water of Switzerland or the Black Forest. Some feast-day or other, I will tell you news of Johann's *kirsch*."

"Have you had a merry evening?" demanded Ursel, putting by her wheel, with the intention of preparing for bed.

"*Merry* is scarce a befitting mood for the sober hospitalities of the Canon Dietrich's establishment," replied Nickel, demurely; "but I played my *weihnachtslied* completely to my own satisfaction, and smoked my pipe by the stove, and drank my draught, or draughts, as I have already acquainted you; and had it not been for the intrusion of that noisy senseless brute, Agnesia's cousin, the foreman of the saltworks at Hallein, the evening might have sped glibly enough. But, for my part, I would as soon be in the company of an ox, as of that Alpine bear."

"He is often at the canon's house of late?"—said Ursel, carelessly.

"*Too* often,—as you would doubtless infer," replied her brother. "The excellent Agnesia takes more pleasure in his company than altogether pleases me, while *I* take nothing but disgust. Never does the rude rascal omit saying something malicious and mortifying;—sometimes reflecting on Salzburg,—(*he* is Bavarian born),—sometimes on my calling,—sometimes on my sister,—sometimes on myself; while, far more frequently than is becoming, his deluded relative thinks it courteous to reward with a smile the stale pleasantries of her kinsman. This night, for instance, when I apologized for the somewhat impaired tones of my instrument as being chilled by the frost, not only was he pleased to be jocose touching the freezing of the tune in Baron Munchausen's horn; but when I enlarged upon the bitterness of the weather, could find no better answer than to bewail the fate of Otto Wirbel, who, it appears, for his sins, is mounting guard this night on the summit of the Monchsberg.—The Herr Stephan passed him at nightfall almost expiring of cold, and swears that the poor lad will be dead before morning. He intended the intelligence, my pretty Ursel, as a reflection upon *you*."—

"On whom else is it a reflection?"—sighed Ursel. "But what cruelty to select a man recovering from heavy sickness,—a shadow, a very shadow,—to occupy such a post on such a night!—The Monchsberg!—Why, he will be scarcely able to keep his footing against the blast."

"And a storm of snow and sleet setting in for the night!" added

the considerate brother. "I warrant he'll be found three feet under drift, by morning, poor dear Otto!"

"At what hour is the guard relieved?" demanded Ursel.

"'T is a twelve hours' watch; from seven till seven, I fancy," replied Nickel. "Otto has now been three hours exposed to the biting night winds. A strong man is puzzled to withstand them in such weather; far more a poor puny sickly invalid. By Saint Stephen! 't is a heinous thing to expose a poor ailing being like Otto to such a peril. But they say there's strife against him among the officers of his corps. The lieutenant, young Zachy, has some cause of enmity against Wirbel.

"Who knows it, alas! better than myself?" ejaculated Ursel, conscious that her indignant rejection of the young baron's insolent love-suit, by a bold avowal of fidelity to Wirbel, was the origin of his animosity. "Nickel, if you are a charitable soul," she continued, "gird on your sheep-skin cloak, and carry poor Wirbel a draught of this comfortable cordial."

"And why, I pray you, should I put in peril my own life by confronting the inclement skies, to solace a man who has been the innocent cause of so much annoyance to us all?"—demanded Nickel, with indignation.

"Christian charity, gratitude for his services to your sister," Ursel began.

"Bah!" interrupted the cobbler. "Charity begins at home; and the difficulties I experienced this night in getting through my *weihnachtslied* convince me that, were I now to take cold, my trombone must be laid aside for the winter. My lungs, Ursel Wechsler, are no longer what they were!"—

"Nor your heart neither," mused Ursel, in the depths of her own. "You will positively not go then?"—said she aloud.

"Positively,—definitively,—firmly.—I will not budge this night from my comfortable home."

"Good night, then," quoth Ursel, seizing the candlestick, and moving towards the door of her bedchamber; "good dreams to you, brother, till to-morrow."

And having returned her salutation, and deposited his trombone in the cupboard and his beaver-skin cap on a peg, Nickel went and did likewise. In a quarter of an hour he was snoring sound asleep.

But it was not with a view to repose that Ursel had hurried into her chamber. Ursel's first movements there were to drop on her knees for a hasty prayer; and having commended herself to the protection of Heaven, she donned her warmest cloak, her clogs, her fox-skin breastplate, and having tied over her chin a long silk shawl of Italian manufacture, the gift of Otto Wirbel, on his return from Naples, waited till the silence of the place, interrupted only

by the ebb and flow of Nickel's audible slumbers, assured her that she might venture forth. Then, stealing towards their little but-tery-hatch, she filled a small bag with refreshments (not forgetting Johann's memorable flask of Kirschenwasser), and turning the key stealthily in the lock of the house-door, sallied forth into the snow. Her first encounter with the chilly night-wind deprived her for some moments of breath; and as she took her way towards the Monchsberg, Ursel continued to sob like a child recovering the shock of its first plunge into a cold-bath.

The way was long,—the way was bitter, the way was solitary: but so pre-engrossed was Ursel by her reflections, that she never once noticed its hardship. It was not till, having reached nearly the summit of the steep rock (through which the passage cut by a defunct archbishop bears the striking inscription, "*Te saxa lo-quantur*"), that she found herself scarcely able to stand against the whirling eddies of snow. The city lay at her feet with its thousand lights. Yet all appeared to be in utter darkness;—so blinding were the snow-gusts which drove against her frozen face.

Ursel, having now advanced within a few paces of the lonely out-post guarded by Otto, expected every moment to be saluted with the "*Wer da?*" of the vigilant sentinel.—But not a sound. The watch-box was close beside her. She stood upon the little eminence exactly overtopping the Monchsberg-gate; but not a word from Otto!—Overpowered by presentiments of evil, Ursel rushed forward. No Otto was in the sentry-box: it was only by turning the light of her little lantern in all directions that, a short distance off upon the snow, she discerned some dark object, which her forebodings did not deceive her in announcing to be the prostrate form of Wirbel!—

In an instant she was by his side, chafing his cold hands, warm- ing on her bosom his senseless brow, and at length, insinuating between his lips a few drops of the restorative cordial with which she came provided. But still, Otto gave no token of life!—His arms hung listless,—his form lay half embedded in snow,—his eyes were closed. No breath was on the blue lips of the soldier.—

"Oh God! he is dead—he is gone!—He hath died here, suc- courless, of feebleness and cold. And I, miserable fool that I am, have been the cause of this!—Otto,—my own Otto! my only love, —my love from childhood,—my good, brave, precious, generous, loving Otto!—Oh! what will become of his mother, when these miserable tidings reach the ears of the widow Wirbel!"—

And either the kisses wildly bestowed by Ursel upon the cheeks of her victim, or these frantic outcries, at length reached the torpid soul of the soldier. Wirbel heaved a deep sigh, and un- closed his eyes, to find himself lying under the overclouded canopy of heaven, his head upon the knees of a woman, whose warm

breath and falling tears seemed to have recalled him to life and consciousness.

“How is this?”—faltered the soldier, attempting to uplift his feeble limbs. “Where am I?—and who hath thus charitably relieved me?”—

“Drink this, dearest Otto,” murmured Ursel, again offering the flask to his lips. And without heed of the voice that addressed him, the soldier imbibed a mouthful of the kindly spirit. He was revived. Struggling with his sense of helplessness, he gradually raised himself; and Ursel too rose, and stood upright beside him. But the little lantern, which still lay on the drifting snow, threw no light upon her face; and Otto had still no suspicion that he had been assisted by more than an accidental passenger.

“I thank you, good woman,” said he, “for having thus providentially preserved my life. But for your accidental arrival at this desolate spot at this late hour, I should have been found dead at my post when the patrol came its rounds. A thousand and a thousand thanks. I am an ailing man; unmeet, God knows, to weather nights like this; and how I shall make through the hours to come He only can tell who hath this once preserved me. In *His* mercy do I put my trust—in *His* strength I am strong. Farewell, good friendly wayfarer. Take a grateful stranger’s advice, and lose no time in regaining the city. A hurricane is coming on.”

“Regain the city, and leave you here alone?”—cried Ursel, in her natural voice. “Never.”—

“*Ursel!*” ejaculated the soldier, starting from her side, “Ursel Wechsler?—Is it to *you*, then, my safety is owing?” cried Wirbel, snatching up the lantern and turning it upon the pale face of his devoted assistant. “Rather would I have perished in the snow, maiden, than be in aught indebted to such friendship.”

“Say not no!—Oh! say not, say not so!” cried Ursel, joining her hands in supplication. “Be merciful, Otto!—be forgiving. My fault has been expiated by the anguish I have endured during your danger—your sickness—your imprisonment—your trial. I am here, my own dearly loved Otto,—alone in the darkness of this dreadful night, only to aid and comfort you. I heard of your being on guard at the Monchsberg outpost, and guessing what would ensue in your present weak and wasted condition, flew hither to be your comforter. Do not reward me thus!—Give not curses for blessings.”—

Involuntarily the warm-hearted soldier extended a hand, which was instantly locked between those of Ursel, and covered with her kisses. “It is generous of you, I admit, to be here,” whispered he. “But far rather than that you should have done this rash thing for my sake, would I learn to forget that hateful

assignation with the villain Stein, at Count Firmian's garden. O Ursel, Ursell! you whom I had hoped one day to make my wife!—That you should have deigned in favour of that fool—that knave—that castaway—so much that——”

“What on earth did I ever vouchsafe to Conrad Stein which was not granted in the eyes of hundreds of witnesses?” cried Ursel, interrupting him. Once only, I admit, we met at the Firmianische gardens—once, when by invitation of Kaspar the head-gardener, I accompanied thither our neighbours the Schmidts to view the orangerie. The drum-major, having overheard the appointment, contrived, as by chance, to meet me there. But what did his sauciness avail him?—So coldly was he received by us all, that he was forced to say a hasty good day, and make his way back again to Salzburg.”—

“And was this really and truly all?”—cried the overjoyed Wirbel.

“All—all!—as God hears and judges me! Nay, there were witnesses! Inquire of my friends the Schmidts,—inquire of Kaspar himself,—too jealous a man to have supported the presence of Conrad Stein, or countenance my folly.”

“Ursel, I have been hasty,” cried the relenting soldier. “Yet had you heard the vilifying vaunts with which this lying fellow, in presence of the whole barrack-yard, alluded to the circumstance——”

“I should not, on such testimony, have condemned the friend of my childhood,” cried Ursel. “But enough of Conrad. To-morrow, Otto, if we live so long, I will bring you into the presence of those who witnessed the whole transaction. To-night, think we only of yourself and your sufferings. Eight terrible hours still remain to you, my beloved Otto. How will you abide the trial? You are scarce able to stand. At any moment the faintness may return.”

“I am indeed chilled to the very marrow!” faltered Wirbel. “A soldier ought to be ashamed to confess so much. But my wound has recently reopened. I am fitter for the hospital than for this post, only that I chose not to report myself on the sick list, for reasons relating to my poor mother.”

As he spoke a sudden whirlwind drove the blinding sleet in eddies around them; and while Ursel stood firm, the enfeebled soldier had great difficulty in keeping his feet.

“Were I but once warm again,” said he, with chattering teeth, “I would be wiser in maintaining circulation by keeping myself in continual motion.”

“That advantage might easily be accomplished,” said Ursel. “The kilns are not above a quarter of a mile down the mountain side. I rested there on my ascent; and could scarcely support the unnatural heat of the place.”

“Be the temperature what it may, it avails not to me,” cried Wirbel, “since I may not, for a moment, desert my post.”

“And who is to know that you deserted it?” cried Ursel.

“There pass occasional travellers and carriers along this road; who, missing the challenge of the sentinels, and suspecting that mischief had befallen him, would probably institute inquiries.”

“If that be all, I flatter myself I am as well able to shout, ‘*Wer da?*’ and demand the word, as the best man of you all!” cried Ursel, with spirit.

“You, Ursel?”

“Lend me your cloak, schako, and musket, and I will cheerfully mount guard till you return.”

“You fancy that I would leave you alone in this dreary desolate place?”

“I fancy that you will obey my injunctions, Otto, as you used formerly, when you loved your poor little Ursel. And I hereby protest to you, that only on condition of your repairing instantly to the kilns, and remaining there half an hour, till you are thoroughly warmed and restored, will I consent to overlook your want of faith in giving ear to the calumnies of Conrad Stein. Refuse me at your peril. But, no! you will not refuse me, Otto!—you will not afflict the soul of your own Ursel!—You will comply with my entreaties, *nicht wahr?* Dearest, dearest Otto! say yes, and set my heart at ease.”

“But should the captain take it into his head to go the round of the outposts, at midnight, according to regulation?” demanded Otto.

“You well know that it is not once in fifty times, the Monchsberg post is visited. But let us not lose our opportunity. Quick! your schako, — your carabine, — and away with you to the kilns.” —

The woman tempted Otto, and he did go. After more disputing than it might amuse the reader to record, he eventually complied with Ursel’s request. Arrayed in her lover’s accoutrements, the stout-hearted maiden assumed his post; while her lover, with faltering steps, staggered his way towards the genial atmosphere of the kilns.

Ursel Wechsler’s meditations, in the interim, were far from agreeable. She was alone on the isolated summit of the Monchsberg; alone, in the most dreary night of the dreariest winter. All that Ursel had ever listened to in childhood, by her father’s fireside, of goblins and *geister*, black, white, or grey, — aerial or terrestrial, — forest kings or gnomes, — Rübzahl and every other spirit of Germanic account, — recurred to her imagination! She was in the very position to be exposed to the temptations of unearthly beings. Half-way betwixt earth and sky, on the top of

a mountain, it would be a mercy if she were not half-way between the Monchsberg and the antipodes, before day-break. It would be a mercy if she were able to call her soul her own by the time of Otto's return.

The wind whistled shrilly, like the spectral voice of some unseen power. The sleet, like arrowy darts, drove piercingly against her face. Deeper howlings soon appeared to arise in the distance,—the howlings of the night wind, imprisoned among the stems of the mountain pines. But the terrified soul of Ursel ascribed them to another origin. She had heard tales of wolves frozen out of the Rhetian forests, coming down in herds upon Salzburg, during an inclement winter. These prowlers of the night were doubtless already abroad, to prey upon such human stragglers as they might obtain. The wolves were upon her! Otto would find nothing on his return but her mangled remains!—

Overpowered by this new terror, Ursel sank upon her knees; and closing her ears resolutely with her hands to exclude the hideous sounds by which her spirit was appalled, began to mutter aves and paternosters, determined to beguile the time of Wirbel's absence by unremitting prayer. The fiercer raged the inclement winds, the closer she ensconced herself in the sentry-box—the more fervent became her orisons.

“Heaven will have a care of me,” thought Ursel. “I should never have persuaded poor Otto to quit his post, but by representing to him the ruin his untimely death must bring down upon his poor destitute mother. The same good motive which determined him, will secure divine protection to us both.”

And lo! as she uttered this pious aspiration, a pattering was heard upon the snow. It was too soon for Otto's return. The beasts of prey were doubtless at hand; and groaning aloud in her agony, she covered her face with her hands, to meet her fate. In a moment, she was roughly seized—fiercely shaken. But as her ears became uncovered by the movement, it was easy to discern that the rough terms in which she was addressed were uttered in good round German, and that the brutes by whom she was beset were of the human species.—It was Zachy!—It was the captain and his guard!

The consternation of Ursel at this discovery was only to be exceeded by the astonishment of the officer and his men, on finding the Monchsberg outpost guarded by a woman, and that woman Ursel Wechsler. The young baron, who had been moved to this unusual zeal of duty by knowing that Wirbel was on guard, and hoping that he should find the feeble soldier at fault, was irritated to frenzy by so public a display of Ursel's fidelity. Directing the girl to be dragged to the guard-house, and refusing to give ear to her protestations of Wirbel's dying condition, he left

two of his men at the piquet, with orders to arrest Otto Wirbel in case he should make his appearance.

Next day the barracks rang with intelligence that the antagonist of Conrad Stein was once more a prisoner; and on this occasion, for an offence so heinous in the estimation of military law, that there remained no hope of pardon. Over his accomplice in error, the commandant of the garrison could exercise, of course, no authority. After passing a night of misery and shame at the guard-house, softened only by the compassionate good faith with which the soldiers listened to her recital of their comrade's sufferings and her own share in producing his misdemeanour, the fair maid of the Linzer-Thor was suffered to depart; to encounter on her brother's threshold the most cruel revilings, as a dishonour to her father's house and a curse to his existence. Not a word would Nickel hear in extenuation. Her good name, he protested, was gone for ever. What honest man would take to his bosom a maiden detected in passing the night with a soldier at a lonely outpost?

Though hard to bear, Ursel Wechsler listened to these upbraidings with comparative unconcern. Before quitting the fortress, she had been assured by the oldest soldiers that nothing remained for Otto Wirbel, but to commend his soul to Heaven; that he was a dead man, as thoroughly as those alluded to the preceding night by her brother as tenants of the cathedral vaults. There was no pardon for an Austrian soldier convicted of having deserted his post.

For a moment, the spirit of the exhausted maiden gave way under this pressure of calamity. Otto was to die,—*she* would die too. The widow Wirbel would find shelter for her grey hairs in the grave; and Nickel, who had cast her from his heart, perhaps afford tears to the memory of his poor sister. But her natural energies were soon roused again. She would not despair—she must not despair—she would throw herself at the feet of the mayor of Salzburg, in whose household her late mother had been a domestic servant;—she would engage Kaspar to intercede with Count Firmian for his interposition; she would beset every member of the town council,—she would procure a petition from her neighbours of the Linzer-Thor.—Even the Canon Dietrich should be pressed into the service of mercy.

But strong as was Ursel Wechsler's courage, and diligently as her projected measures were brought to bear, all profited her nothing. The mayor addressed a memorial to the commandant,—the town-council interceded,—the neighbours petitioned;—while the spectacle of Ursel's sweet face, perpetually bathed in tears, might have moved the very stones of the Monchsberg, far more the human heart of an Austrian general of brigade. Yet the

commandant remained inflexible. In military law, example is everything; and for example's sake, Otto Wirbel must be shot, in order to secure the subordination of the hundred thousand men at arms of his kingly and imperial majesty, the Emperor Francis.—Sentence of death was duly pronounced upon the prisoner.

And how did Ursel support this consummation of her evil destinies? Alas! who could reply? Driven from her brother's roof by the severity of Nickel and the taunts of the savage Agnesia, Ursel had already disappeared. Most people were of opinion that the waters of the Inn rolled over the corse of the fair maid of the Linzer-Thor!—

The day of execution arrived. At daybreak, the troops of the garrison were drawn out, in order to witness the legal butchery of the poor, frail, wasted form of Otto Wirbel. The soldier had exchanged words of comfort with his priest,—words of forgiveness with Conrad Stein. His comrades had shaken hands with him, many of them with watery eyes and heaving bosoms; while his old mother remained locked silently in his arms, till the booming of a gun from the battery gave signal that the procession was approaching. The coffin of the condemned man was straight borne forth; the *de profundis* rose from the attendant priests. A company of his fellow soldiers, with their carabines reversed, were in attendance to perform the behest of the law upon Otto Wirbel!—

Every heart sickened, as the brave young soldier stepped forth into the winter sunshine; his countenance fixed and firm,—his athletic form wasted by confinement and disease. With unflinching gait, he took his place in the procession; and the crowd, which had forced its way upon the platform of the fortress appointed for the execution, drew together in closer condensation, to breathe a friendly ejaculation as he passed.

“God bless thee, Otto Wirbel!”—cried one.

“Heaven have mercy upon the soul of the best of sons!”—cried another.

“Die bravely as you have lived!” shouted a third; “and God forgive your judges.”

“He is the only son of his mother, and she, a widow!” was murmured in fainter accents by many.

A gleam of satisfaction at these tokens of human sympathy irradiated the sunken eye of the victim.

Arrived at the fatal spot marked out by the provost-martial, Otto stood a moment erect, raising his eyes and hand to the sparkling winter sky, as if breathing the submission of his soul to a decree sanctioned by the will of Heaven; and all eyes gazed with sorrowful admiration upon the wreck of that manly form.

At that moment, in compliance with the orders of Baron Zachy, the

officer on duty, he was about to strip his uniform from his breast, in order to kneel down for better exposure of his breast to the fire of his friends and comrades. When lo! a deafening shout rose from the multitude,—a shout not to be overpowered by the roll of muffled drums, or repressed by the authority of military despots. Every face was turned towards the spot where the commandant and his *état-major* were stationed. For lo! a scroll was in the general's hands, and Ursel Wechsler was at his feet.

“A reprieve!—a pardon!—a special messenger from Vienna!” rent the air in all directions. And for once the general voice spoke true.

Moved by the forlorn condition of a stray lamb of his flock, who had thrown herself upon his mercy for personal interposition with the emperor, the venerable Archbishop of Salzburg had condescended to forward to the Imperial Council of War the documents and certificates providently collected by Ursel. The prayer of the righteous man had availed much. The archbishop, a rare petitioner, was not to be rashly refused. The case was taken into consideration, and consideration had redeemed the life of Otto Wirbel.

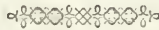
Not a soul in Salzburg but rejoiced in the commutation of his sentence. Not a soul in Salzburg was surprised when, within a twelve-month of that fatal sixth of January, the discharged soldier was united, at the cathedral altar of St. Ursula, by the hands of Canon Dietrich, and under especial archiepiscopal favour and protection, to the sweet sister of Nickel Wechsler.

It is rumoured, though not expressly written in history, that the Fraulein Agnesia would fain have profited by so auspicious an occasion to become “Frau Nicklas Wechsler.” But the reserved cobbler had withdrawn his suit. Vexed at having suffered himself to be deluded into harshness towards his innocent sister, (or perhaps satisfied that through Ursel's influence he was secure of his promotion to the music-gallery without the interference of either the Canon or his housekeeper,) the trombone-player avowed his intention to remain a bachelor. In evidence of this determination, on Ursel's secession from his household, he persuaded the widow Wirbel to become its inmate; who, being stone deaf, presided to the day of her death over the chopping of his *sauerkraut*, and the salting of his *gurken*, undisturbed by the gruntings of the trombone.

Of all the happy couples now alive and merry in Salzburg, commend us to Otto and Ursel Wirbel, at the Wirthshaus of the “Jolly Carabineer;” from whose lips we had the satisfaction of learning this “true story of true love.”

THE ROYALISTS OF PERU.

A TALE OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.



THE sun was setting gloriously, as became the midsummer sun of a tropical country, over the extensive plains spreading from the lower ridges of the Andes to the Peruvian coast, glittering at intervals upon the distant domes and towers of Lima, and streaming with fervid influence on *tapia*-fenced fields of maize and luzerne; between which, occasional thickets of wild cane, enlaced with glaring blossoms of the nasturtium of Peru, shot up in airy lightness into the summer sky.

But amid the fertile luxuriance of the season, and brightness of the scene, a blackening blight was discernible. The iron band of the War of Independence had imprinted its fatal traces on that devoted province, the immediate scene of a contention which has happily bequeathed another nation to the list of the free people of the earth.

The troops of the two factions of Patriots and Royalists, (or, as they were termed in South America, "*El Padre Rey*," and "*La Madre Patria*,") successively cantoned in the environs of Lima, had left smoking and blackened ruins in place of prosperous villages; and, amid the olive gardens, or beneath the shade of the banana trees, many a spot of rugged and recently-turned earth revealed the existence of those hurried and unconsecrated graves, to which the soldier is compelled to consign his comrades of the recent strife. Nay the husbandman, retiring from the noonday heats into the shadow of the willow trees, planted along the banks of the *Azequias*, was often startled by the spectacle of a blue and swollen corpse polluting the stagnant waters; the festering gashes by which it was disfigured bearing testimony to the untimely end of the victim. War, in short, had been there, with all its horrors — nay, was *still* there. The Patriot general, San Martin, had been proclaimed Protector of Peru; but the Royalist generals, Canterac and Carratalà, were marking the progress of their retreat before the Liberating Army, by the commission of a thousand enormities.

The Indians, the *montoneros* or guerillas of South America, and

other irregular hangers-on of either faction, rendered, meanwhile, the disorders of the period a plea for the indulgence of their own lawless and marauding propensities.

The viceroy of Lima had not yet, however, abandoned the city; and though all avenues of the *cercado* were invested by parties of *montoneros* hovering round to cut off the supplies, the troops under Santalla and the brigades of Carantalà, were still confidently expected to make good their promises of support to the Royalists. Already they had sacked, burned, and plundered throughout the province. Of the town of Cangallo not a trace remained; the villages of Ulcamayo, Huailly, and Zancao, were razed to the ground; the stores of the silver mines of Pasco plundered, and the works suspended. All was ruin and desolation!

On the morning, however, of the 23d of June, an Indian, deserting from the retreating army of Carratalà to the division of Arenales, spread tidings, on his passage, of the defeat and the discomfiture of the troops under Canterac, and the mutiny of the Royalist garrison in the castle of Callao; and the harassed Peruvians, crowding to welcome his reports, fell on their knees by the wayside, to render thanks to the Almighty for the termination of their afflictions. "Long live the Liberators!" "Long live San Martin!" "Peace to the *Madre Patria!*"—resounding on all sides. The long-submitting Peruvians felt that their sufferings had sufficed; that Heaven, content with their patience, at length decreed them the reward of liberty. The *mita*, or compulsory labour in the mines, was to be abolished; the exactions of the priesthood restrained; the Spanish tyrants expelled. Henceforward Peru and all her provinces were to be free!

The little town of Carguancuanga, situated, for its misfortune, in the direct route to Xanxa,—was among the warmest in its demonstrations of rejoicing at the intelligence.

"But a few weeks more," cried the people, assembled in the Plaza of the town to pour forth acclamations in honour of the liberadores, and we and our families must have resigned ourselves to approaching famine. Our crops are destroyed,—our farms pillaged,—our stores demolished. Every horse has been taken from us by the villain Santalla; every ox carried off. How, then, should we have faced the winter, but for the protection of the patriots?—Blessings on Cochrane and his fleet!—Blessings on Miller and San Martin!—for, thanks to the exertion of these heroes, our children shall live and be free!"

Under the roof of one habitation of the little town were these thanksgivings more calmly, but not less piously directed. It was from the lips of Juan, her son, that Osoria Almedo, the wife of the sexton of Carguancuanga, received the welcome tidings:—Juan, the eldest of nine children with which Providence had bur-

thened her poverty, and brightened the sunshine of a warm and loving heart. For Osoria had tenderness for them all—industry for them all. Her nights were short, her meals scanty—short, as they were often disturbed by unquiet dreams, the result of aching limbs, from excessive labour during the heat of the day; and scanty, because robbed of every delicate morsel, to be appropriated to the wants of her offspring. But her morning waking was to happiness, when hurrying from her hard pallet to attend upon the helpless ones which, like fledgelings in their nest, cried aloud upon her with fondling names to minister to their wants; and triumphant with motherly love were the impulses of her bosom, as, one by one, she dismissed the little creatures from her careful hands, fresh-faced, smiling, happy;—herself their providence,—herself their never-failing fountain-head of happiness. Yes! hungry and weary she might *sometimes* be; but triumphant at *all* times and seasons, as the parent of such fair, and good, and loving children. Osoria often asked herself, indeed, as she bent over their sleeping heads, whether she loved them the more that they were the children of Isidro, or whether Isidro himself were the dearer, as the father of those promising children!

It is true, Osoria had more than common motives for wife-like devotion. Isidro Almedo, the son of wealthy parents in Lima, had quitted his own people and his father's house, and, incurring disinheritance for her sake, become the husband of a maiden filling a menial station in the household of his parents. In the depths of penury which followed their rash marriage, he had even accepted a hateful occupation, supportable only as affording bread to a wife and child on the verge of starvation.

But from the period of that self-sacrifice, all had comparatively prospered with Isidro and Osoria Almedo. Their bread, though black and bitter, had sufficed to the rapidly increasing wants of the little family. Their daily mess of legumes became augmented in size, when, every year, another little face smiled beside their frugal board. The industry of Osoria supplied homely but decent garments for the family; and when at night Isidro returned from his sickening occupation, he was sure to experience that electric gleam of household comfort, a smile of love and peace upon the threshold of his home.

“Courage, man, courage,” Osoria would whisper, when he occasionally gave way to dejection. “I am young and healthy,—the babes strong and beautiful,—our will is good,—our intentions honest.—We shall yet prosper; we shall yet be happy. Our children, thriving and laborious, will do honour to our old age.—There is a golden time in store for us.—Isidro! the helpful hand of the Almighty is over our house!”—

A blessing goes, indeed, with a cheerful spirit. Poor as they

were, the homestead of the Almedos was ever joyous. The neighbours loved to loiter in friendly gossip before their threshold, although too humble to deal in hospitality. Their children were general favourites; all in Carguancuanga had a kind word for them. No sooner did Juan, the eldest boy, attain the height of his father's elbow-chair, than the worthy Father José, the *cúra* or officiating priest of San Carlos, undertook his instruction; and his sister Juanita was already employed as sweeper and weeder in the fine gardens of the Alcalde, Don Pepe di Agüero, in the suburbs of Carguancuanga. By this august protection, food and raiment were provided for two out of the nine; while, of the seven other little ravens crying to the Lord for food under the roof of the poor sexton, the youngest still nestled at the breast of its mother.

“Welcome, welcome!—Joy and triumph for us and all!”—cried Osoria, as she sprang to the neck of her husband, on the evening of that eventful day. “The patriots are successful.—Peace is at hand; and, with peace, plenty!”—

“Peace will scarcely add a measure of lentils to our granary, or maize-meal to our chest,” replied the calmer Isidro. “But God's will be done!—The Spaniards reap the reward of their oppressions; and, if the new people fulfil their engagements, our brethren will at least eat of their own harvests, and sit under the tree of their own rearing.—But for thee and me, Osoria, what benefit?—The church of San Carlos is not like to profit by the downfall of its ancient benefactors, or to deal more liberally with its servitors in the decline of its revenue. Father José may be displaced; and Don Pepe himself has sworn to abandon Carguancuanga, should San Martín obtain possession of the province. What omen, therefore, of good to us and ours, in the triumph of the liberators?”

“Do not talk thus before the boy,—pry thee, do not talk thus!” cried Osoria, throwing back the long braided tresses, discomposed by the ardour of her reception to her husband. “Let not Juan learn that we are thinking only of ourselves, while our enslaved countrymen of Peru bless God for their prospects of freedom. A heavy hand has been upon the land. The efforts of the people have, with the aid of Providence, wrought their deliverance; and, oh! be not our thoughts, at such a time, of the rags that cover us, or the morsel that sustains us. Providence hath hitherto filled our cruse: in Providence, dear husband, be our trust!”

“My trust is in *thee*!”—murmured Isidro, throwing his weary limbs upon a seat, and glancing round their humble but cheerful abode—ornamented by the hands of little Juanita, for the eve of St. John, with a profusion of flowers, bestowed on her by the old gardener of Don Pepe.—“A blessing is with thee, wife, and with all thy doings. Thy quiet confiding spirit is as an anchor to my

restlessness. But for thee, I should have long ago quitted Carguancuanga; which had been but a wild speculation. For, lo! all is well with us; and, as thou sayest, our children thrive; and there is, doubtless, a golden time in store for us and them."

Cheered by these reflections, (inspired, like every other noble thought arising in his mind by the higher courage and finer spirit of his wife,) Isidro called his children around him, bestowed a word or gesture of tenderness on each; and taking, on either knee, the little prattling Luigia, the image of her mother, and a boy still younger—*too* young as yet for prattling—he placed himself at his accustomed post at table, and prepared to do honour to their evening meal.

"Mother, dear mother!"—said Juan, suddenly placing on the board before Osoria a basket of limes sending forth a delicious fragrance amid their fresh-culled leaves, "this fruit was given me by Father José, to celebrate our evening festival, as a reward for my diligence of the week."

"I myself saw it plucked fresh before sunrise this morning, in the plantations of Don Pepe, as a token for his reverence," added Juanita. "And here, dearest mother, is a musk melon, given me to-day by the Senora Dolores, to make merry with my brothers and sisters on the Eve of St. John."

"We are to keep holiday then, at the expense of our children?"—cried Isidro, in a cheerful voice, drawing his knife from its sheath, and dividing into shares the juicy and orange-tinted melon. "Well! 'tis a memorable day—a day of triumph for Peru!—Children, draw near!—Osoria, bring the babe on thy arm, and take a place by my side. The blessing of the Holy Trinity upon our meal!—The bread is broken. Children, let us eat and be thankful."

And the little voices that echoed the blessing thus pronounced were soon heard rising one above another in joyous turbulence. For the morrow was held as a solemn festival in the church of Carguancuanga; and Juan was to be spared from his studies, and Juanita from her toils, and father and mother had promised to accompany their little family in the fresh evening, to witness the *fandango*, *maiguita*, and *guachambai*, danced under the shade of the willow-trees bordering the ramparts of the town—

Where young and old come forth to play
Upon a sunshine holiday.

So loud, indeed, was the confusion of their gay voices, and so absorbed were the happy parents in noting to themselves and each other the progress of health and strength developed in those bright faces and exulting tones, that, for several moments, an intruder stood unnoticed on the threshold; and, when Isidro at length observed the shadow interposed between them and the crimson

gleam of the setting sun, an exclamation from his wife of "Father José—a visiter to our poor abode—rise, children, and welcome your benefactor!"—scarcely sufficed to reduce the young ones to silence.

Already had Isidro placed a huge arm-chair of wicker-work, the only one in his possession, for so honoured and unexpected a guest; while Osoria hastened to lay aside the infant that slept upon her bosom, and place fresh bread upon the table. But Father José was there neither for rest nor refreshment. The old man's face was pale with consternation, and his voice more tremulous than when heard, in his moods of deepest emotion, calling from the pulpit some hardened sinner to repentance, as he led Isidro apart from the children, and bade him give ear to his instructions.

"All is lost for Carguancuanga,—all—all!" faltered the old man. "The tidings spread this day among the people were the words of a deceiver. The troops of Carratalà are within a few hours' march of us; and what will then befall my unhappy flock?—It is known to the Royalists that but a month ago the Carguanguangites forced the wealthy and noble *cùra* of San Carlos to flee the town, instituting myself, a poor and humble Benedictine, in his room; and the vengeance of Carratalà will overtake them." And, as the old man clasped his hands despondingly, a heavy groan broke from the bosom of Isidro.

"Carratalà may, perhaps, be within a few hours' march of Carguancuanga," said Osoria, who had overheard all. "Yet surely, reverend father, till daybreak we are safe? and, before daybreak, succour might yet reach us. A detachment of the troops of the Madre Patria is at Xanxa."

"Even so; and with *them* rests my only remaining hope," faltered the venerable priest. "The alarm once given to the outposts yonder at Moya, all might go well."

"But *how* to give the alarm?" cried Isidro; while the children, awed by the panic-struck looks of their parents, cowered in silence in a corner of the room. "The country is beset by *montoneros*; and the reports spread this morning have probably lessened the alertness of our friends. Who could be found to encounter the hazard of such an errand?"

"*Myself!*" replied the old man, in a firmer voice. "Should I become a victim, there will be neither widow nor orphan to accuse my rashness. I owe myself to the country, which has maintained me—to my parishioners, who love me; and, so I but succeed, would cheerfully lay down my few remaining years for their sake. But I feel that I shall *not* be sacrificed. The servants of religion command respect, even among the lawless. I shall go safe and free, when the young and brave could expect no quarter. My mule is sure and swift. Before midnight I could reach Moya;

whence the commandant would dispatch further instructions to head-quarters."

"This must not be!" interrupted Isidro, gradually recovering his self-possession. "It is to *me*, Father, this work is appointed. Give me the use of the mule. Not a minute must be lost!"

"And *these*?" said the old man, extending his shrivelled hand towards Osoria and her children. "What have they done that thou shouldst desert them?—And what would be their fate, helpless, in the hands of the murdering ruffians of Carratalà?"—

A cold shudder was the sexton's expressive reply; for he was no stranger to the tender mercies of the Royalist troops. Nevertheless, when he bent his eyes upon his benefactor,—the aged servant of the Almighty standing before him, he dared not sanction the perilous enterprise of Father José.

"Trifle not with me, my son, nor with the precious minutes that are wearing away," hastily resumed the priest; "but attend to my instructions. To spread unnecessary alarm were mischievous; for resistance hath already proved in vain. Should the Spaniards gain ground, and reach Carguancuanga before succours from Xanxa are on the march, all that remains for you is submission. Nevertheless, I would fain preserve the treasures of the mother church from sacrilege. To you, my good Isidro, rather than to the Alcalde, who is old and pusillanimous, I therefore intrust the keys of San Carlos; and, I charge you, yield them not one minute sooner than is indispensable for the safety of the town. Be firm, Isidro,—be wise; and the blessing of God and his saints upon your good service!"—

Again the bewildered sexton strove, by earnest entreaties, to shake the resolution of his superior, and obtain for himself, instead of the guardianship of the church and its treasures, the more active mission usurped by the priest of the altar.

"In both duties, my son, there is danger," replied Father José, depositing on the table a bunch of ponderous keys. "For thee, for me, this night must alike be a night of peril. The moon that is to light me on my way to Moya, may never rise again for either; and since, as regards this worn-out, worthless frame, a violent death will but forestal by a few years the sentence of dust to dust, verily, Isidro, my son, it is for thee that my prayers shall ascend to the Omniscient, that he will stretch forth his right hand to be thy buckler in the hour of trouble."

Remonstrance was unavailing. The sexton and his wife, accustomed to stand in the presence of the man of God as in that of a superior being, were easily subdued by the mere authority of the voice from which they were accustomed to accept their tidings of salvation; and all that Osoria presumed to attempt, as Father José bent his steps towards the threshold, was to cast her-

self, with her elder children, at his feet, and humbly implore a benediction.

He consented that Isidro should bear him company to the extremity of the suburbs, to receive his last instructions; and, as the stalwart Spaniard outstripped the paces of the mule, the town's-people standing beside their door-posts, believing the curate of San Carlos and his subordinate to be on their road to administer the sacraments of the church to the new-born or dying in some farm adjoining the town, had "God speed them" as they went.— Even the children, returning from the village-gardens, whither they had betaken themselves to beg for flowers for the celebration of the morrow's festival, in the exultation of their little hearts, held up their baskets to Father José, mingling in their acclamations the name of the patron saint, and of the triumphant Patriots of Peru.

"Poor children!—poor innocents!" murmured the good priest, when they had passed the last hut of the suburbs, and had nothing before them but the open plains, over which the shades of evening had already gathered, while the brilliancy of the fire-flies shone out upon the cane-stalks, and the heavy flight of the bee-moth was heard humming around.—"May their hearts be as gay and fearless at this hour to-morrow; and thou and I, Isidro, once more clasp hands together!"

Then, leaning from his mule, Father José bestowed a fervent grasp on those of his colleague. "Remember," said he, in a solemn voice, as Isidro returned the pressure, "unless thou see the torch of the incendiary uplifted against the walls of San Carlos, I charge thee, on thy salvation, surrender not the keys."

After a few more counsels, Isidro returned towards the town, pausing now and then to ascertain whether the echo of the mule's hurried paces were yet lost in the distance.

"A protecting hand is with him," murmured he, as he resumed his way. "The fiercest of the guerillas would respect the white hairs of Father José. But for us—for Carguancuanga—for Peru, alas! what hope?"—

A light was already burning within, when he lifted anew the latch of his dwelling; and a single glance sufficed to show that the housewifely hand of the matron and mother had not, during his absence, suspended its routine of duty. The remnants of the meal were removed, the little ones laid to rest, and the two elder seated side by side, and hand in hand, listening with downcast eyes to the exhortations of their mother. Young as they were, the mystery of the good priest's enterprise was safe in their keeping, for that tender voice had abjured them to secrecy. No further thought of holiday, of rejoicing, for Juan and his sister; the evening was at hand, and their parents in peril and tribulation. Again

a few minutes, and they too were laid down to rest, their nightly prayer murmured beside their pallets of maize leaves, sanctified by an *Agnus Dei* suspended at the head of each.

And now all was stillness and sadness under the roof of the sexton. Door and window were closed for the night;—only a small casement in a passage adjoining the bed-room was left unclosed, that Isidro might keep watch over the weather and its prognostics; his ear and eye alike vigilant to catch the most remote indications of alarm. But Osoria, instead of betaking herself to her distaff, as was her wont, until the children were soundly asleep, sat with folded hands beside the table, her eyes fixed upon the keys, her lips compressed; till Isidro, who, after wandering hither and thither with unquiet footsteps, suddenly placed himself by her side, encircled her waist with his arm, and drew her head towards his bosom; not a word passed between them.—Their tenderness was too sad and deep for utterance.

“Scarcely six and twenty years have passed over this good and precious head,” said Isidro, at length imprinting a long kiss on the forehead that lay cold and pale upon his shoulder. “Scarcely six and twenty years, yet already there are traces of silver amid its raven tresses—already these brows are hollowed with labour and care. Wife! thou hast suffered much—hast struggled bravely with want, with weariness, with a mother’s sorrows. Few have been thy hours of sunshine, my Osoria—many thy days of storm, even while I was beside thee to soothe and to sustain; and now, how will it be with thee,—henceforward, how will it be with thee, and how with them, if thou must adventure single-handed against the troubles of the world!”

“No!” faltered the woman, clinging convulsively to his arm; “God is merciful. It will not be thus,—it cannot be thus;—help will be vouchsafed us.—These innocent children will plead for us to the Mother of Heaven, who herself sorrowed as a mother.—Isidro, be of better cheer!”—

“I am of good cheer,” replied the sexton, drawing her still closer to his side; “for I feel that thou art strong against suffering;—strong in courage,—strong in virtue; and thus it will be easy for me to die.—But die, Osoria, I shall,—perish, I tell thee, I must and shall!—I have had warnings. Omens have been around me. It was but this morning, girl, that, lacking employment in the Cathedral, I betook myself to the cemetery of San Carlos, my pickaxe and spade on my shoulder; and, under the shade of the two old cork-trees that branch from the western wall, digged a deep grave. What right had I to anticipate the decree of Providence, and dig a grave which there was none to fill?—I, who have so loathed the calling which the wants of a wife and child forced on my adoption, what secret influence prompted

me to go forth and exercise it in very wantonness?—It was a tempting of God, Osoria; and in that grave shall I be laid to rest!”—

“Pray Heaven that hundreds of our countrymen be not soon lacking graves!”—was the solemn rejoinder of his wife, whose thoughts were occupied rather with the position of the two armies than with the plight of their single household.—“But a few hours ago, peace seemed restored to us; yet, again, alas! we are to be harassed with the terrors of war and the oppression of the Royalists.”—

“To us and ours, their oppressions are of small account,” replied Isidro.

“Is it nothing to have your wife stigmatized as an Indian?—your children as the children of a bondswoman?”—remonstrated Osoria.

“Nothing!—Osoria’s name to *me* is wife—to my children, mother,—whether styled by the corregidor of the province Spaniard, Peruvian, or Indian.”

“Hush!” eagerly interposed Osoria, closing his lips with her hand. “I will not listen to what grieves me from the voice of my husband. Yet in such sentiments were you nurtured. When Isidro saw the light, his father’s father filled, in the city of Lima, the office of Alcalde; and though you threw off the authority of your family, to become poor and humiliated, for my sake——”

“Enough! enough!” cried Isidro, in his turn, straining her anew to his breast; and, to conceal his emotion, he betook himself to the still unclosed lattice, and looked forth, through the stillness of night, into the open country, over the bridge of Iscuhaca;—on a rising ground above which ran the street in which was situated his humble dwelling.

“San Lorenzo be our aid!” he exclaimed. “Beacons are already blazing on the distant hills!—Father José’s warning came too late!—Carratalà must be at hand!”—

“You forget that it is the eve of St. John?” replied his wife, with a gentle smile. “Yonder fires are tokens of rejoicing in the villages, according to the ancient custom of your nation.”

“True—true!—I had forgotten,” replied the sexton in a desponding voice; and again he threw himself into a seat, and moaned heavily.

“You will wake the children.—Let the poor babes rest in peace!”—said Osoria.

And, carefully shading the night-lamp with her hand, she led him towards the happy little sleepers. On one bed, enlaced in each other’s arms, lay three lovely girls, whose dark curls, mingling on the pillow, presented a picture worthy of Murillo. Beside them was the resting-place of Juanita, on whose protecting arm nestled the infant.

“Behold them!”—cried the happy mother. “What smiles upon their lips!—what peace upon their brows!—The angels of God are with them in their rest.—*Their* dreams are not of toil and suffering, like unto our own; but of happy islands and heavenly beings that hover over them, to comfort and protect.—O Isidro,—Isidro! is there not joy, is there not wealth, in the possession of these treasures?”

The sexton replied by a pressure of the hand. He could not confirm her apostrophe. *His* heart was not that of a mother; with *him* the harsh realities of life were all in all!—

“Thy rich brother yonder at Lima,” pursued the exulting woman, “has but a lame and distorted son. Heaven, which gave *him* abundance, denies him the sight of fair and smiling faces round his board, and the sound of loving voices blessing him by the name of father!”—

“And how is it, when they call upon a father for food, that he cannot give,—for protection beyond his power of granting?”—replied the sexton, whose thoughts were embittered by the labours of his loathsome avocation, and the apprehension that the helpless ones before him were about to be consigned, fatherless, to the hard dealings of the world.

“Be not thus solicitous for the things of this world!” faltered Osoria.—“The God of Christians, Isidro, hath his own good time for conferring benefits on his creatures. *Ours* may be at hand; if not on earth, in a brighter and happier place. There is a world elsewhere;—a world of compensation,—where the poor are exalted, and the weary find repose. Be patient, husband; led us kneel and pray for patience!”—

And the sexton and his wife knelt down, side by side, near the resting-place of their children, and prayed and were comforted.

In another hour, Osoria, having taken her babe to her breast, lay down in her turn; in another she was gently sleeping. But the sexton still watched. He took down his old Spanish fowling-piece from the rack, and examined the lock; he drew his knife from its sheath, and whetted the blade upon his hearth-stone. He listened;—he looked forth again and again; but all was still silent.

Morning dawned at last,—Midsummer morning, bright and joyous; and, scarcely had the twilight given place to perfect day, when bands of children gathered in the suburbs of Carguancuanga, with garlands of flowers and torches, and bird-cages suspended from poles entwined with wreaths, chanting hymns in honour of the festival of St. John.

“Go forth with the rest!” said Osoria, to her elder children, as she rose to her morning labours.

But Juan and his sister refused.

“There is sorrow in thy face, dear mother,” replied the girl; “let us tarry at home and comfort thee.”

And Osoria, remembering how much the children had overheard of the communication of Father José, judged it better to accede to the proposal.

Meanwhile, no tokens of the good father’s return!—Twice did Isidro make his way to the extremity of the suburb where they had parted the preceding night, but without success; and, thus disappointed and frustrated in the hope of succours from Xanxa, the sexton felt it incumbent upon him to warn Don Pepe of all that had come to pass, in order that the rejoicings of the day might be suspended, and the town of Garguancuanga placed in a state of defence.

“Close up thy house,—keep thy spirits tranquil, and thy babes under thy wings,” said Almedo, addressing his wife. “I must away, for a time. As soon as may be, I will return to thee again.”

And, after imprinting on her face a kiss of more than ordinary fervour,—a kiss such as the hour of danger wrings out of the heart,—he placed the keys of San Carlos within his inner vest, and departed.

Meanwhile, re-assured by the comfortable tidings of the preceding day, the Alcalde of Garguancuanga, Don Pepe di Agüero, was seated in his brocaded dressing-gown, enjoying his morning chocolate. A branch of orange blossom lay on the table by his side, presented by his withered *gouvernante* in honour of the fête, but scarcely overpowering with its fragrance the high flavour of vanilla emanating from his dainty repast; when Isidro, the sexton of San Carlos, was announced as entreating an interview from the man in place.

“Let him choose a more convenient season,” mumbled Don Pepe. “Is a festival of the Holy Church a time for the execution of worldly business?—Bid the fellow return to-morrow, my good Dolores,—bid him return at noon to-morrow!”—

“The man’s business seems pressing, and he is urgent,” replied the ancient *gouvernante*. “’Tis the father of little Juanita.”

“Perhaps he brings a message from father José—perhaps——”

“My mind misgives me, Senor Alcalde, that things are amiss in the town. The matin bell is still unringed—the doors of San Carlos——”

“Send Isidro hither!—It was my intention to have attended, in person, high mass this morning,” said the Alcalde, with dignity. “He must account for these omissions. Let him enter.”

And the sexton, once bidden into the presence of the great man, his errand was briefly sped. He related, with force and brevity, all that he saw motive to unfold;—the advance of Carratalà, the departure of the priest, and his prolonged absence.

“Carratalà and the royalists advancing on the town of Carguan-
cuanga?”—ejaculated the mayor. The saints forbend!—The In-
dian deserter of yesterday was then a traitor and deceiver?—A
plot,—a manifest plot!—And father José to take himself off by
stealth in our hour of peril!—Succours from Xanxa?—Absurd—
ridiculous!—Summon the Town-Council!—Let the tocsin be rung!
Auxilio,—auxilio! Dolores, my vest of ceremony!—Dolores, my
staff, my wig, my scarf, my—*Auxilio,—auxilio!* Carratalà is
marching upon the town!—At all events, no resistance. What
did we gain by opposing the entrance of Santalla, five months ago?
—Butchery and bloodshed, but not a word of thanks from San
Martin, or the *Junta Gubernativa!*—No, no! Free way to the
troops!—It is for the armies of *la Madre Patria* to meet them
with repulse, and leave our peaceful town’s-people to their civil
duties.”

Scarcely had Isidro heard and comprehended the instructions
of Don Pepe, than, in all haste, he prepared to leave the house.

“The priest has, doubtless, carried with him in his flight the
keys of the church?”—inquired the Alcade, as the sexton was
quitting the room. “Ay, ay! his only care was for the treasury
and altar-chest!—Let his dwelling, however, be searched; and,
should the keys come to light, bring them instantly to be deposited
with the town-council.—Away!”

“Wife!” cried the agitated Almedo,—having instantly made his
way homewards,—“I promised thee to return, and I am here;
but for a moment only. The cowardly Alcalde is resolved to op-
pose no resistance to the ruffians of Carratalà. My only chance,
therefore, of fulfilling my promise to our benefactor, is by taking
up my position in San Carlos, and keeping fast the doors. The
royalists may have neither time nor inclination to proceed to ex-
tremities. Should I be sought, therefore, say that I have set forth
to meet Father José; but, as thou art true to Heaven, let nothing
force from thy lips the secret of my concealment.

“Nothing!” ejaculated Osoria.—“And must we then pass the
day here,—and alone?”—

“Wouldst thou rather bring thy children, and spend it with me
in the church?”—

“In San Carlos?—The children shut up among those chilly
aisles—those damp grave-stones?—No! the wren is safer in its
humble nest than in a palace chamber. We will abide at home,—
too insignificant to attract attention.—”

“While, in traversing the streets towards the church, they
could scarcely fail to draw notice. Now then, my gourd and a
loaf, as when preparing for a long day’s labour; and, once more,
farewell!”—said Isidro, striving to throw off, or at least conceal
from his wife, the dejection of his spirits. “Not a word to the

children—not a word to neighbour or friend; but give me thy prayers, that, with God's aid, I may be the means of preserving San Carlos from the hands of the spoiler.”

She smiled assentingly, then turned aside to weep; and, when she looked again, her husband was gone. She had not time to watch his departure; but, lifting bolt and bar, closed the door of the house upon the sunshine. Already the flowers, suspended to the lintel by the children the preceding night, were withered in the early sun.

“All withered,—all dead!” cried Osoria; and she would fain have given way to desolate presentiments. But what leisure for vain repining has the mother of nine helpless children?—

Presently, indeed, her household labours were suspended by the sound of the bugle of the town-crier, and a proclamation to the inhabitants of Carguancuanga, to repair to their several habitations, and keep close till sunset. Then came a murmur of voices and tread of feet, as of people dispersing homewards; then a general silence, save when the snatch of a royalist song, muttered by some half-drunken reveller staggering through the suburb at the risk of arrest, gave token that the hopes of the party of *El Padre Rey* were re-awakening.

While the town-council was assembling, Isidro, with stealthy movements, reached the postern of San Carlos, entered unobserved, and locked and re-locked its small, massive, iron-knobbed door of solid oak.—The great gates, trebly and quadruply barred and bolted, were rarely opened, save for the high ceremonies of the church;—such as on that very day, under the blessing of God, ought to have filled the groined roof of San Carlos with incense and anthems of praise.

And now, Isidro was alone in the venerable temple, bequeathed, three centuries before, by Pizarro, to the worship of the Catholic faith. Often had he been there before, when engaged in the duties of his calling, but never under the influence of such a sense of loneliness. A vapour of damp, as if emanating from the caves of death under his feet, seemed to oppress him. And yet the high altars, and those of the Virgin and the Heart of Jesus, had been adorned with flowers the preceding evening, by the nuns of the convent of St. Agatha;—flowers which, thanks to the damp and sunless atmosphere, preserved their freshness. Tapestry had been spread over the altar steps,—the richest tapers stood ready in their sconces,—all seemed prepared for a solemnization. Whence, therefore, the unnatural stillness,—the unnatural solitude of the place?—Isidro half expected to hear the solemn peal of the organ suddenly awake amid the echoing aisles!—But he checked the fantastic notion; and sternly reminded himself that he was alone—that he must *remain* alone,—sole guardian of the treasures, tem-

poral and spiritual, around him ;—that none could come to disturb him in his retreat, until it was his good pleasure to bid them enter.

He raised his eyes to the grim-visaged saints, whose effigies adorned the chapels of the side aisles, imploring their features to relax, and their lips to commune with him. But those gloomy faces looked down un pitying. The Immaculate Mother, her infant on her knee, preserved her immobility.

“Better have recourse to God than to his saints!” muttered Isidro ; and falling on the marble floor before the high altar, he breathed, audibly, a simple paternoster, to which the hollow vastness of the deserted church returned an impressive echo.

That Father José had fallen into the hands of the montonéros, Isidro nothing doubted. The grey hairs of the good old priest, his benefactor, were, in all likelihood, defiled by the hands of ruffians. Or the mule might possibly have missed its footings in fording the stream, when none were at hand to give him succour. But on *his* behalf, good as he was and in the fulness of years, there was little cause for lamentations. The young, the helpless, the unprepared of Carguancuanga, were victims demanding ampler commiseration.—And *their* doom might be at hand!—

He listened and listened. Not a sound!—save the flitting of a bird long domesticated in the old church, and accustomed to perch unmolested on the reading-desks of the chancel!—Isidro longed to silence even the feeble interruption of its faint note, its fluttering wings ; as if those scarcely audible sounds could have drowned the tumults of an approaching brigade, the trampling and neighing of war-horses, the clang of hostile arms.

One other sound broke in, however, on his solitude ;—the heavy toll of the clock, proclaiming hourly, half-hourly, quarterly, the weary progress of the day. Noon had long chimed ; evening was approaching ; for the sun had attained the lofty and richly-stained windows of the church. And now a murmur seemed gradually rising in the streets.—

“Glad tidings,” thought Isidro, “have surely reached the town. The Council may have obtained news that succours are approaching, or that Carratalá desists from his expedition.” And, while this notion, glancing into his mind, seemed to thaw the frozen current of his blood, the clatter of a charger suddenly resounded on the pavement, and loud and repeated blows were struck against the great gates of San Carlos.

Isidro laid his hand upon the keys, in the belief that he was summoned to admit some messenger from Father José ; when lo ! his ear was startled by a citation to deliver up possession of the church to the troops of *El Padre Rey!*

“Within there—ho—reply!— By St. Christopher, not a black-gown left in the place!—All fled—all vanished!” exclaimed

the trooper. And Isidro, thus apprised that his retreat was still undiscovered, maintained a strict silence. After several vain attempts on the part of the Royalist soldier, to shake the ponderous gates from their staples, accompanied by fearful blasphemies and threats of vengeance, horse and horsemen galloped away; and Isidro Almedo was left to a solitude a thousand times more fearful than before. For the Royalists were in possession of the town, and all was lost.—Their disappointment of obtaining access to San Carlos might, perhaps, stimulate them to the acts of vengeance threatened by the trooper. His own humble household, his wife, his babes, might be included in their acts of violence. The blood throbbed in his temples, his hands were involuntarily clenched; and, resolving to escape from his self-sought prison, and fly to the defence of those he loved, the sexton, with hurried steps, entered the sacristy on his way towards the postern.

But what sound,—what shrill, shrill cry startles him on his entrance?—Why does he stand transfixed on the stone floor of the sacristy, with his eyes riveted on the grated window through which, during his daily occupations in the cathedral, his two elder children were in the habit of delivering him messages from their mother?—It is the voice of Juan!—It is the frantic outcry of his eldest born, that curdles his very blood!—

“Father, hasten!—O father, father,—hear me, and hasten, ere it be too late!”—cried the agonized boy. “The soldiers have fired our house,—the soldiers have dragged forth our mother.—Father, father!—”

In a moment, the wretched man was in the street, rushing, wild and frantic, towards the suburb.—Open, now, were the aisles of San Carlos to all comers.—What were church or churchmen unto him?—His abandoned home, his undefended wife;—*there* were his treasures, *there* was his accusation!—

Yet Osoria, amid the horrors of her fate, had never accused him. All day did she sit, her children round her knees, striving to console them with songs, and tales, and endearments, for the loss of their holiday. Her cheek was pale, indeed, and her eye wild and burning, as she sang to them, and caressed them. But for worlds would she not have had their innocent bosoms daunted by the terrors that hung with leaden weight upon her own.

“Why are the doors and windows closed?” lisped one little fondling girl, kissing the mother’s hand that rested on her head.—“Sister Juanita promised me that to-day we should have flowers, and fruit, and music, and dancing under the green trees?—And, after all, we are shut as prisoners.”—

“Peace, babe!” whispered the mother, ending her murmurs with a kiss.—“To-morrow, thou shalt go forth into the fields, and enjoy a double holiday.”

“And wilt *thou* be with us, mother?”—prattled another.

“I shall be with thee, my Luigia.—I promise thee to be with thee.”——

“Joy, joy!”—responded several little voices, while Luigia clapped her hands. “It is so long since our mother went forth with us.—But she has promised.—We are all witnesses.—No work to-morrow!—The mother—the mother will join in our holiday!”

In these exclamations of joy, however, the two elder children refrained from joining. *They* were initiated into the secret of their gentle mother’s apprehensions; *they* had heard all, and only abstained from questioning her, lest they should add to her affliction.

Towards evening, however, Osoria suddenly started up, and advanced towards the still closed door. Her ear had caught the sound of a distant bugle. Drums, and the tramp of cavalry soon followed. Then outcries of alarm,—a discharge of musketry, shrieks, confusion.—Yes! the enemy had entered the town, and as she wrung her hands in despair, the children, crowding to her feet, hid their little faces in her garments, and wept.

Soon, fearfully soon, they heard the name of “Isidro Almedo” called upon by angry voices; while numberless footsteps approached the door.

“Isidro, Isidro!” cried his neighbours, “come forth from your house.—Father José is not to be found,—Father José has absconded; and the Royalist colonel demands the keys of the church to quarter his troops for the night.”

Osoria crossed herself devoutly. Even amid the tumult from without, she could distinguish the sound of her own beating heart, as the children clung closer and yet closer to her knees.

“Isidro!”—shouted the people, incensed by delay, “come forth.”

“My husband is not here,” replied Osoria, in a firm voice, as they attempted to force the door.

“Where is he?”—

“I know not.”

“The sexton has concealed himself,” said they among each other. “Break open the doors, and search the house.”—

The door yielded with a crash, and in an instant, every corner of the house was ransacked.

“What seek ye here, ye pitiful villains?”—cried one of the troops of Carratalà, attracted to the spot by the tumults of the people.

“Only the sexton of San Carlos, who has made off with the keys of the church.”

“In what direction?”—

“We know not.—Interrogate this woman, who is his wife.”

“Where is thy husband?”—cried the soldier, striking a harsh blow on the shoulder of Osoria, while she vainly attempted to extricate her little ones from the trampling of the crowd.

“Where is thy husband?—Speak, or it will be the worse for thee!” he repeated, while the distracted mother warded off the pressure from the affrighted infant clinging to her bosom.

“I have already answered that I know not,” she replied, when the question was, for the third time, repeated.

“And the keys of San Carlos?”—

“Father José,” she began—

“Is safe at the bottom of the river!” interrupted the soldier. “But before the old carrion was pitched by our men into the stream, they took care to search his pockets. No keys or key helped to sink the priest. Speak, therefore—where is thy husband hidden?”—persisted the man, seizing Osoria roughly by the arm.

“I say to thee, again, that I know not,” answered she, with mild firmness.

“What art doing within there, Lazo?” cried an authoritative voice from the door. “What art thou at?”—

“Demanding from the wife of the sexton of San Carlos the keys of the church,” shouted the soldier.

“And she refuses to give them up?”

“Refuses to tell where her beast of a husband has concealed them.”

“Drag her out,” said the serjeant, whose troop now invested the house. “Let us hear what she will have to tell us when the hovel is burning before her eyes.”

At this fearful threat, the town’s-people still remaining under Isidro’s roof came yelling forth. A fuse was applied to the thatch, and the blaze burst forth before the shrieking children could be extricated. Speechless with horror, Osoria Almedo burst from the hands of the brutal soldiery. In an instant she was recaptured, —mocked with shouts of derision,—tortured by the grasp of ruffians,—amid loud appeals to the horror-struck people to rise in her defence and rescue.

“What shrieking fool have we here?”—cried one of the officers of Carratalà, riding up to the spot, attracted by the blaze that was beginning to redden the evening sky.

“’Tis but an Indian woman, the wife of a Spanish rebel, a sworn foe to government,” answered the Ex-Fiscal of Carguan-cuanga, by whom he was accompanied.

“An Indian, yet so insolent?”—interrupted the royalist captain. “Let my troopers teach her better manners!—Away with her, boys; but take care to make an end of the business, that no tales may be told to-morrow.”

At this brutal command, the frantic wife of Isidro was dragged from the street; while the terrified crowd shrunk in silence and consternation to their homes. The last object that met her eyes was the blazing roof-tree of her house;—the last sounds that met her ears were the moans of her defenceless babes;—the last thought that sustained her courage was the thought of the safety of her husband.

But at that moment, Isidro, warned by his little son, was on his way homewards, maddened by the shouts of all who met him by the way, bidding him haste, for that his wife was in the hands of ruffians. The street wherein his house was situated was thickly crowded with people; but all made way when they found that the panting breathless man, by whom they were pushed aside, was the husband of the wretched victim they had seen hurried to destruction.

“Stay, Isidro!” said one compassionate woman, as he approached the burning ruins. “I pray thee, go no further.—All is over.—Thou wilt see her no more. Surrender the keys, if thou hast them; but, in pity to thyself, avoid this place. We neighbours will have a hand to thy children.”

“*His children!*”—It was not of *them* he thought!—His soul was with *her*—his chaste wife,—his faithful wife,—his companion,—friend—blessing!—And, as a thousand conflicting terrors rushed into his mind, he reeled against an adjoining house,—his arms fell powerless to his side,—big drops of faintness and exhaustion rose upon his forehead; and but that pitying arms were extended to support him, he would have fallen to the earth. The woman who had before addressed him brought a cup of water for his restoration; and, when Isidro recovered his senses, he seemed inspired with the deadly ferocity of the wounded tiger.

“Whither did they bear her?”—he inquired of those around him, in a concentrated whisper. “Whither did they bear my wife?”

“Across the bridge of Iscuchaca, to the suburbs!—But seek not to follow them; it is too late!”—cried the people, trying in vain to restrain him.

Away, however, went Isidro. No curse upon his lips—no glare of vengeance in his looks; but, like a senseless thing, impelled to action by some inexplicable influence.

“The bridge of Iscuchaca!”—How often had he traversed it with her in sport,—how often in joy!—How often held their young children on the parapet at eventide, to watch the rippling of the blue waters, while the terrified mother stood tenderly chiding by his side!—*And now!*—

A group of intoxicated soldiers, shouting and exulting in their drunkenness, passed him on the bridge. Other troopers stood in

groups on the road beyond, preparing to return to the town; and, further still, he discovered a confused assemblage of the town's-people of Carguancuanga, gazing upwards to a tree by the way-side.

"One would think the fools had never before seen a woman hanging to a tree!"—cried one of the soldiers. "Well, her fate will be a warning to the rest!"—

"She begged us to put an end to her miseries," replied his comrade. "What could we do but comply?"

The next moment, the knife of Isidro was buried to the hilt in his breast. Ere the ruffian ceased to exist, however, the speedy justice of military law had avenged him on his assassin. The disfigured body of the sexton of San Carlos was swinging in the evening air beside that of the released Osoria!— * * *

Short was the triumph of the Royalists. On the following morning, warned by their scouts that a brigade of cavalry, under the command of the brave O'Brien, was advancing rapidly upon Carguancuanga, the troops of Carratalá precipitately evacuated the town, leaving the way clear for the Patriots.

A deputation from the town-council, dispatched to compliment Colonel O'Brien, met him in advance of the brigade, just as he reached the bridge of Iscuehaca.

"I thank you, gentlemen, for your good intentions," said he, in reply to their address, having reasons of his own for misdoubting the good faith and patriotism of Don Pepe de Agüero; "but, with your leave, I would confer with the curé of Carguancuanga."

"Father José is, unfortunately, missing; and, as we fear, fallen into the hands of the Royalists," replied the Alcalde, with an humble obeisance.

"A venerable ecclesiastic will undoubtedly be given up on the tender of a sufficient ransom," replied the colonel.

"Not by butchering ruffians, the soldiers of El Padre Rey!"—cried several eager voices from the crowd, which now burst forth from the suburbs to welcome their deliverers. At that moment an Indian woman, who had advanced near enough to cling to the horse's mane of Colonel O'Brien, pointed silently to a tree near the spot, where hung the discoloured corpses of Isidro and his wife.

At the foot of the fatal tree, with uplifted hands and piteous wailing, knelt eight miserable orphans, crying upon their father—their tender mother—to come down to them;—still unconscious, in their innocence, of the extent of their bereavement!—

"Let the bodies of this unhappy couple have decent burial," said Colonel O'Brien, after having lent a compassionate ear to a brief relation of their unhappy fate. "I trust it is needless to commend their helpless children to the mercy of the good Patriots

of Carguancuanga.—Courage, my friends!—The oppressors are serving our cause. GOD will not suffer such barbarities as these to pass unpunished!”—

That evening the bodies of Isidro and Osoria Almedo were laid in the grave, under the cork-trees, according to the prediction of the sexton. The infant, which had perished for lack of food, was placed on the bosom of its mother. Not even an humble grave-stone marks the spot. But every midsummer morning, their surviving children assemble there, to strew flowers upon the grave; and already the cause of these humble victims is gloriously avenged in the freedom of Peru! (1)

(1) Lieutenant-Colonel O'Brien commanded the advanced guard on the following day; and, entering the town of Carguancuanga, near the Bridge of Iscuehaca, inquired for the priest of the parish, supposing that he could give the most correct information of the enemy; but, as he had absconded, O'Brien next asked for the sexton. The Indians pointed in silence to a tree; and, upon approaching it, he beheld the sexton and his wife suspended by the neck from one of the branches. The crime of the unfortunate man was, the not being in attendance when one of General Carratala's officers, on passing through the village, demanded the keys of the church, which he required to quarter his troops in. The crime of the woman was, in not revealing the hiding-place of her husband, which was, however, discovered; and both were immediately hanged. O'Brien saw their nine young children on their knees weeping most piteously, and praying to their lifeless parents to come down to them.—*Memoirs of General Miller, in the service of the Republic of Peru*, vol. I. p. 367.

THE RED MAN.



POPULAR tradition asserts that the palace of the Tuileries has been for centuries the resort of a demon, familiarly known by the name of "*L'Homme Rouge*," or the Red man; who is seen wandering in all parts of the château whenever some great misfortune menaces its royal inhabitants; but who retreats at other periods to a small niche in the *Tour de l'Horloge*, the central tower built by Catherine de Medicis, for the use of her royal astrologers.

Béranger has described the royal Red Man as

Un diable habillé d'écarlate,
 Bossu, louche, et roux,
 Un serpent lui sert de cravate;
 Il a le nez crochu,—
 Il a le pied fourchu.—

Other red men, however, are to be met with in Paris besides the celebrated scarlet devil of the Tuileries; who, after all, is but a sort of Parisian Zamiel, little better than the *Feuergeist* of a High Dutch melodrama. Whoever, for instance, has chanced to visit the Quai Desaix with the intention of finding the *Marché aux Fleurs* on any other day than the official Wednesday or Saturday, when it presents so charming an aspect, must have been startled by the sight of half a hundred reddish men and women, the old iron-vendors who ply their unattractive trade beneath the dwarf acacia-trees of La Vallée.

Even these, however, are the mere half castes of the calling. But should some courteous reader be smitten, like ourselves, with a taste for the by-ways rather than the highways of a great city, let him dive into one of those tortuous, fetid, narrow, ten-storied streets of the ancient cité of Paris, where Notre Dame uplifts its Gothic towers, and the hospital of the Hôtel Dieu bathes its leprous feet in the polluted waters of the Seine, which ought to have been devoted to the exclusive purpose of dispensing salubrity and purification to the capital,—there, either in the Rue de la Boucherie or de la Huchette,—it matters not to give the exact locality,—he will discover a retreat, something between the modern shop and ancient *échoppe*, the front open to the narrow street, in order to display its rust-bitten contents,—viz., heaps, bunches, and trays full of old iron, of every form and mould:—old locks, old keys, old

implements and instruments of every trade and calling;—exhibited to the admiration of the public with as dainty a spirit of arrangement as in the curiosity and *virtù* shops of the Quai Voltaire. This ominous den is presided over in proper person by the proprietor—**THE RED MAN.**

Fifty years has Balthazar followed the business. Fifty years have done their work in imparting to his face that copper-coloured complexion;—to his hair, beard, whiskers, habiliments, even down to his leather apron, a hue of dingy red, which appears engrained into his very nature. The walls, the floors, the ceiling of his dusky habitation, are red; nay, the very atmosphere he breathes is impregnated and coloured by the particles of rust thrown off from the ever-shifting materials of his trade. What with buyings and sellings, the time-worn rods and bars, hooks and nails, blades and staples, are in perpetual motion. He has always some worn-out pot or cauldron to examine,—some lock, hinge, bolt, or bar, to dislocate; some jack-chain or fetter to unrivet,—some trap or spring to pull to pieces. For Balthazar is an amateur, as well as a man of business. Custom has rendered his rusty occupation second nature to him. He can breathe no other than the ferruginated atmosphere of his shop; and the lilacs of the Bois de Romainville, or the thorns of the Pré St. Gervais, stink, by comparison, in his nostrils. He would rather behold some piece of complicated machinery, oxidized here and there into the rusty hue, marking it out as likely to become his property, than cast his eyes on all the Raphaels of the Louvre—all the Rubenses of the Luxembourg.

Balthazar has not yet travelled from his shop so far as to view those chefs-d'œuvre of modern architecture, the Arch of Triumph or the Madelaine. Of the Museum at Versailles he has heard rumours, and the Suspension Bridge has been duly reported to him. But till their iron stanchions become rusty, they will acquire no interest in the sight of Balthazar; whose cares and enjoyments are bounded within the narrow sphere compassed between his den behind the Hôtel Dieu, and his sleeping-room in the most ancient house of the most ancient Rue St. Jacques. He is unluckily too much a man of business to be much of a gossip. Nevertheless, take the old man at the right moment, when he has achieved a lucky bargain, and is making the stifling red particles fly around him in clouds, while handling some worn-out piece of machinery, before consigning it to his treasury or appending it to a stall-hook of the *échoppe*, and you may cajole a world of information out of the **RED MAN.**

At some such auspicious conjunction of the planets, it was our fortune to accost him. Returning with sickened soul and bewildered eyes from the Barrière St. Jacques—a spot appointed (since the Place de la Grève underwent consecration by a libation of the

blood of heroes) as the place of public execution, we had a mind to visit Nôtre Dame for early mass. Our spirit hungered after the pealing organ and the music of pure young voices. We longed for the murmurs of a requiem, the tranquillity of a holy place; for the security of the sanctuary; for the groined roof, the echoing aisle, the word of God, the promises of salvation. In such a mood of mind, it was our destiny to stumble upon the stall of the RED MAN!

For a moment we fancied that our eyes deceived us; that the hue of the blood had attached itself to the whole external creation. And probably the horror of the impression depicted itself in our countenance; for the old man, having gazed for a moment in silence, laid down the rusty chain he was shaking into form, and humanely tendered the evangelic offering of a glass of water; which was gratefully accepted and swallowed before we became accurately cognizant of our whereabouts.

Under such circumstances, Balthazar's wooden chair seemed a luxurious refuge. We were glad to sit there, and pour into sympathizing ears the confession of our blood-hatred. The old man happened to have scruples of his own anent prison discipline and the penitentiary system. *He* too was an eschewer of the punishment of death; and as an inhabitant for sixty years of the Quartier St. Jacques, resented with much bitterness the indignity inflicted upon his parish by the transposition of the guillotine.

Our minds were mutually attuned for horrors; we could talk of nothing but killing,—nothing but death. Balthazar had witnessed the execution of the monomaniac Papavoine; and at the conclusion of his thrice-told narrative of the event, suddenly disappeared towards the back of his *échoppe*, and having penetrated into one of the subterranean recesses containing the choicer specimens of his trade, hobbled back to place in our hands a rusty complication of iron machinery, one portion of which seemed to be formed of pieces of bone or ivory. After turning it over and over without much enlightenment of our ignorance as to its nature and destination, we ventured to cast an upward glance of inquiry towards the old iron-dealer's face.

What a study for Rembrandt!—The otter-skin cap of Balthazar, foxy as his own iron-dyed hair and whiskers, was pulled close upon one eye, while the other peered out, bleared and fiery from the excitement of its habitual atmosphere, with the leathern cheek around puckered into a peculiar expression of cunning and exultation. His thin lips were compressed, as if waiting the irrepressible interrogations of our curiosity; and while he stood leaning against a fascis of jarring rods, he rolled unconsciously within his red hands a corner of his rusty leathern apron, from which the ferruginous particles flew off in volleys.

“Well, sir?”—said he, at last, tired of our perversity of silence.

“Well, my good friend?”—was all the question we chose to vouchsafe in reply.

“Why, what I have to say,” was his somewhat more explicit rejoinder, “is, that the Armada-armoury of the Tower of London, which you have been describing to me, contains no choicer instrument of torture than the one you regard so carelessly.”

“Instrument of torture?—Is this piece of rusty iron, then, a relique of the Inquisition?”—was our involuntary exclamation.

“Not exactly. But you have not examined it. You have not observed the artist-like manner in which the springs close upon the bones—You do not perceive that it is one of the cleverest gins ever formed by the cunning of man.—Try to extricate the skeleton hand—Try!”

“The skeleton hand?—the *bones*?”

“Ay! attempt to liberate them from the trap!”—

And the effort, when made, was, as he had announced, unaccomplishable.

“But do you really mean,” was our next inquiry, “that these pieces of bleached bone are, in truth, a portion of some human skeleton?”—

“What else?”—cried the old man, chuckling. “It needs no Cuvier to decide the point. Any student of anatomy between this and the Jardin des Plantes shall teach you as much.”—

The skeleton of a human hand, and inclosed in an intricate fetter-lock of rusty iron!—

“The bones are diminutive; the hand must surely have been that of a female?” was the fruit of our cogitations upon this ugly instrument of barbarity;—“of a female,—probably young,—perhaps beautiful;—one who must have lived, or rather died, a captive.—But where?—Not, surely, in France;—not in gallant, refined, chivalrous Paris?—This curious specimen may have been imported from the East,—from Tunis, Tripoli, or Fez!”

“No such thing!” interrupted Balthazar. “The ironwork does honour to a trusty workman, who must have served his time to a master-mechanic of the *cité*. The hand is that of a woman, French-born,—Parisian-bred.—The victim was, in short, one who lived and died almost within sight and sound of the very spot where we are standing!”

“Centuries ago, of course. The times of the Frédégondes and Brunéhauts have probably legends of domestic horror to match with the crimes of their historical archives.”

“Bah, bah!” cried the old man, petulantly. “Human nature is the same in all ages and countries. Every day,—every city,—produces some monstrous wickedness, secret or discovered,

arising from the triumphs of ungoverned passion ; from hatred,—lust,—revenge,—or mere blood-thirstiness. The crime in which this piece of ruthless machinery had its rise was done in my own lifetime,—in a place which I weekly and calmly traverse.—The perpetrator went down to the grave, I will not say unpunished, but undiscovered. No one pitied the victim,—no one cursed the assassin.—The whole story is, and is better, buried in oblivion.”

“Impossible, impossible!” we exclaimed, again carefully examining the whitened bones and their fiendish enclosure. “Since you confess yourself acquainted with the origin and destination of this mysterious instrument, do not tantalize our curiosity.”

“What avails it to rake up memories of the frailties of our fellow-creatures?”—said the Red Man, dropping the corner of his leathern apron, replacing his cap horizontally over his brows, and turning towards a tray of screws and hinges, as if provokingly bent on devoting his attention to indifferent objects. “Let the dead bury their dead!—I was perhaps wrong to speak of the last throes of the unhappy wretch Papavoine, whom I beheld precipitated into eternity. Yet *his* life was given for a life, according to the decree of the Almighty, according to the laws of the land.”

“The lesson to be imparted by such examples were lost,” we observed, “were the deed hidden behind a curtain. It is for the good of mankind, not to gratify an individual craving for retribution, that the penalty is paid. No man has a right to connive in the concealment of crime.”

“Unless when, as in the present instance, Time, the universal avenger, hath swallowed up the offender and the offence,” rejoined Balthazar. “All that could be done now in atonement were to curse with bell and book the place where the crime was perpetrated. And to what avail?—You would affix an eternal stigma upon a spot of earth, the work of the Almighty’s hands, fast by his holy house, and sanctified by the daily echoes of his holy word.”

“The *Parvis de Notre Dame!*” we exclaimed, certain of having now attained the heart of the matter.

“The *Parvis de Notre Dame!*” reiterated the Red Man, in an affirmative tone. “And since you appear so obstinately interested in the subject, it may save my time and your own to enter at once into explanation. Know, then, that this relique came not into my hands in the way of traffic. At the epoch of the first revolution, when the very name of priest had become abomination in the ears of people, and so many venerable servants of the church were arrested and sacrificed in every part of the kingdom, the greater number of the Canons of Notre Dame were wise enough to seek safety in flight or in concealment. One, however, there was,—an aged man, familiarly and favourably known to the poor of the

island by the name of Père Anselme,—who disdained to follow the example of the fashionable abbés or beneficed nobles; and attached beyond all power of separation to the old towers and aisles of the cathedral, or, as some thought, to the little, gloomy, official habitation wherein, for thirty years, he had abided, refused to stir,—surrendered himself, as it were, to his destinies,—and was eventually numbered among the victims of the massacre at the prison of L'Abbaye. It was on the evening following his arrest, that a decrepit mulatto serving-man, attired in shabby mourning, entered my *échoppe*, entreating my assistance in opening the springs of the fetter-lock in question, one end of which was still attached to a chain and staple, which had evidently been wrenched by force from a stone wall. Vain, however, were the utmost endeavours of my skill; the cunning of the springs effectually defied my artificership; and having rendered it back to the old man to be re-enveloped in the cloth in which he had transported it to my dwelling, I could not forbear an inquisitive remark or two concerning the mysterious task he had sought to impose upon me, and the inexplicable nature of the instrument.

“He shook his head mournfully in reply; but at length admitted that the trap was connected with certain family secrets, which he was desirous of screening from the scrutiny of the National officers in a house to which, that morning, the seals of office had been affixed.

“‘It required some exertion of strength, as you may perceive,’ said the poor old mulatto, opening his shrivelled hands and displaying the mangled palms, ‘to wrench the staple from the wall. Thank Heaven, however, I succeeded: and all that now remains for me to accomplish is to unclosethe the springs,—consign these wretched bones to consecrated earth, and this wicked instrument to the furnace;—that so may finish all memory of one of the cruellest deeds darkening the history of human kind.’

“Smitten with an interest in the business, almost equal to that you now evince, I instantly proffered a renewal of my efforts in so pious a cause; and promised, if the lock could be left in my possession, to apply the whole of my leisure to the task. Christophe’s first impulse was a decided negative to this proposal; but, on consideration, he admitted that the trap would be safer from observation in my hands than in his own, and having extorted from me a promise of secrecy, he departed with the intention of returning in the course of a week. Many weeks elapsed, however, before I saw the mulatto again; and when he once more entered the shop, I could scarcely bring to remembrance my former visiter. He was so worn, so wasted, so tremulous, so fearful, that I had scarcely courage to refer to the painful secret by which we had been originally brought into collision. But Christophe was the first to

recur to the fetter-lock ; and after a vehement burst of almost childish tears, admitted that the great motive for secrecy was now at an end. ‘God has avenged all—God, in his own good time, has poured down retribution!’ was his reiterated exclamation. ‘My poor old master was butchered in the massacre of the 2d of September. All is over!—I have nothing now to care for!—Let those come and see who list! My own days are numbered:—to others lie the accomplishment of my task,—to you, Sir, if it be the will of Heaven, the expiatory deed of opening this fatal spring, and consigning the bones of Lucile to hallowed ground!’

“Touched by the helplessness of his grief, no less than by the fidelity of his attachment, I undertook to fulfil, as far as my powers might avail, the task proposed; and in the process of another week’s acquaintance with old Christophe (the last week of his mortal existence), derived from his lips the particulars of a family history of unequalled interest and horror connected with the lock. You seem at leisure to listen:—hear, and moralize upon the tale.

“Anselme Lanoue, Sir, was the only son of respectable parents, occupying a small property in the neighbourhood of St. Etienne; destined from his infancy to follow in their footsteps as the unambitious cultivator of his paternal estate. But having at a very early age, distinguished himself at the Lycée of St. Etienne by a remarkable proficiency in mathematics, and, at his leisure hours, by a singular tendency to mechanical pursuits, the proprietor of one of the chief engine-foundries in the country, a distant kinsman of Madame Lanoue, persuaded his father and mother to bind the boy in apprenticeship to a calling for which he evinced so marked a vocation, and which afforded such auspicious prospects of future fortune. Anselme accordingly became an engineer; and soon confirmed the prognostications of his new master by striking out various improvements and inventions of high account. At three-and-twenty, he had achieved the post of chief engineer in the establishment; and at eight-and-twenty was not only a partner, but the affianced husband of his master’s daughter. His parents did not survive to witness the consummation of his prosperity. Both were already in the grave, and Anselme’s patrimony disposed of to augment the capital of his thriving trade.

“Nothing now remained for him to desire. Lucile Moronval was a lovely girl of eighteen, whom he fondly watched from childhood, with a gradually increasing hope of being enabled, at some future time, to aspire to her hand; and though it was whispered among the commercial coteries, that she had for some time testified considerable repugnance to the marriage arranged for her by her parents, on the grounds that Anselme, in spite of his enlightenment and high moral principles, was of a silent, stern, jealous, and morose disposition, mistrustful in his temper and sullen in his

deportment,—all was finally reconciled ; and ere the bride had attained her nineteenth year, they were settled as man and wife in a pleasant house in the suburbs of St. Etienne, the dwelling attached to the foundry being supposed disadvantageously situated for the health of the young matron. Lanoue seemed indeed to derive double happiness when established in his cheerful home at the close of his labours of the day, from the circumstance of their temporary separation. Lucile had household cares to occupy her time in the interim ; and at the close of the first year of their marriage, had a pretty little Lucile of her own to display to her husband on his return from the foundry.

“ Still it was remarked by the same prying gossips who had been the first to notice her disinclination to become the wife of Anselme, that after the first few months of her motherly triumph, Madame Lanoue appeared to take little pleasure in her child. She grew dispirited, indifferent, negligent in her person and household ; and the more her husband evinced his discontent at these changes in her deportment, the more her spirits were depressed. Some of her neighbours were prompt to attribute the mischief to the arrival of a young cousin, a certain Clément Manoury, who had been the companion of Lucile’s early years, and for some time past detained by the arrangement of his family affairs in the island of Martinique. It was even said that her kinsman had returned with the intention of claiming her hand ; and that Lanoue, on discovering his abortive pretensions, had forbidden Clément the house, insisting on a rupture of the family connexion.

“ Certain it was that the door of Anselme was closed upon his supposed rival ; and certain also it was said to be, that Lanoue, who had hitherto contented himself with returning home at the close of his day’s labours to his evening meal, was now frequently seen traversing the town from his foundry at the river-side to his cheerful habitation in the suburbs, with hurried step and gloomy countenance, at various unaccustomed periods of the day. Those who were busiest on the watch managed to ascertain that he had, at different times, broken in suddenly on the solitude of Lucile—but, happily, only to find it solitude. Nothing transpired to justify his suspicions, but nothing seemed to pacify the disturbance of his mind.

“ Often does a husband or wife possess confirmation strong of fickleness or infidelity, which less interested persons account as nothing ;—symptoms of coldness, of estrangement, of loathing in moments once devoted to endearment—tears where smiles should be, or smiles of scorn instead of the playful self-abandonment sanctioned by reciprocal tenderness. And Anselme had good reason to see that he was no longer beloved. Had he not, therefore, reason to suspect that another had superseded him in the affections of his wife ?”

“He *did* at least suspect it, and the suspicion maddened him. He read it in the averted eye, the quivering lip, the hand withdrawn from his own; and when at length he gathered from his wife that he was about again to become a father, the admission, instead of filling his heart with the rapture which had preceded the birth of little Lucile, struck him with disgust. Perplexed in the extreme by the agonizing misgivings which had taken possession of his mind, he soon became brutal, wild, ungovernable in his exasperation against his unhappy victim. Yet strange enough it was that Lucile never resented his violence;—never appealed to her neighbours’ compassion or her father’s protection. She suffered all in silence;—too mild to murmur, too gentle to resist. It was even hinted that harsh words had been followed by hard blows; yet still the humbled creature uttered not a syllable of complaint!—

“At length the time was accomplished, and Madame Lanoué brought forth a son. Her father eagerly desired that it might be named ‘Anselme,’ after her husband; and Lanoué stood eagerly waiting in the hope that Lucile would second the request. But amid all her exhaustion and debility, the young mother found strength to implore that her father, who was to be its Christian sponsor, would bestow his own name on the infant; and that name happened, unluckily, to be no other than ‘Clément!’—From that moment it was a fearful sight to watch the glances cast by Lanoué upon his unwelcome offspring.—

“Not long, however, did Lucile find courage to encounter the concentrated wrath of the now desperate man; and exactly five weeks after her confinement, she disappeared from St. Etienne. One evening, on returning from the foundry, Anselme found his little home abandoned—the cradle empty—the nurse dismissed;—while a few lines, in the hand-writing of Lucile, acquainted him that he would see her face no more, and that his little daughter was deposited with her former nurse, at a village two leagues distant from Lyons;—for *that* child, at least, was his own.

“By this fatal announcement the miserable truth became manifest to the world. Anselme was pardoned his former mistrust, his previous jealousy, when it was seen that Madame Lanoué had eloped with the object of her early attachment, and embarked for Martinique;—that her father’s name and her husband’s roof were dishonoured;—that Lucile was an adulteress!

“Poor old Moronval!—He had not long to support his load of obloquy, or the consciousness that his daughter’s former declarations of attachment to another ought to have prevented him from interposing his parental authority to complete her union with Anselme Lanoué: but died repentant and self-accusing, driven to despair by the accusations of his indignant son-in-law. And thus,

freed from all engagements and bereft of almost every tie to life, Anselme grew weary of his former haunts, his former avocations; and resolved to dispose of the foundry, and seek happiness in some province where his name and misfortunes did not serve to point him out to public notice. It was expected that his child would bear him company; but having visited the little girl shortly after the disappearance of his wife, the unhappy man discerned or fancied he discerned some resemblance to her kinsman Manoury in the countenance of the infant Lucile; and thenceforward resolved to exclude it from his home. A liberal annuity was accordingly settled upon the nurse;—it was arranged that Lucile should be reared as her own;—and Lanoue became a Cain and a wanderer!—

“From that period, all trace of the once thriving engineer was lost at St. Etienne. Rumours prevailed that he had entered into the ecclesiastical state, that he was even a member of the fraternity of La Trappe; while a fellow-townsmen, who happened to have business in the West Indies, protested that he had seen Anselme Lanoue fulfilling the duties of a missionary in the island of Martinique. The lapse of a dozen years, however, tended to obliterate all curiosity respecting him or his movements.—His very name came to be forgotten at St. Etienne; and little Lucile, reared in all the simplicity of a Lyonnese farmer’s daughter, began to think of her unknown father as numbered with the dead.

“Scarcely, however, had she attained her fifteenth year, when there arrived at the village a priest of severe but venerable aspect, who proceeded to exhibit to Manette and her husband the necessary proofs empowering him to claim the guardianship of Lucile Lanoue.—For many hours was the stranger closeted with the afflicted couple; who, at the close of the conference, announced him to their charge as her uncle and future protector. Lucile, who had hitherto considered her father an only son, and her mother an only daughter, could by no means reconcile herself to this unlooked-for tie of consanguinity. But Manette satisfied her beloved nursling that so it was, and was to be;—that her only chance of happiness lay in unlimited submission to the will of her new uncle, with whom she was to reside in Paris, where he enjoyed a small benefice under the metropolitan see; and who, though a stern man and reserved, regarded her with the tenderest affection. Nothing remained but to submit; and Lucile, still bewildered by the sudden transition in her destinies, bade adieu to her native province, and accompanied her uncle to his gloomy abode in the *Parvis Notre Dame*.

“For many months, the gay-hearted and bright-eyed girl found little in her new home to replace the simple occupations and affectionate tending of her childhood. Waited upon by a decrepit mulatto

servant, who seemed to regard her as an intruder, immured from the sunshine and the free range of nature, she became weary of life, even unto the utmost heart-sickness of weariness. But, in course of time, the studies to which her uncle began to claim her attention acquired interest in her eyes. She was taught new languages,—sciences hitherto undreamed of.—The page of history unrolled its wonders to her eyes,—the mysteries of nature unfolded their miracles to her comprehension. The gentle mind of Lucile became fascinated by her uncle's lessons of wisdom. She had long listened with reverence to his exhortations from the pulpit; she now began to admit the extent of his attractions as a companion, the value of his regard as a friend and monitor.

“There was but one point on which his lessons were distasteful. It struck her that the stern ascetic insisted too often and too strongly on the virtue of chastity; and the pure mind of Lucile revolted from the frequency of a charge she deemed superfluous. Père Anselme persisted in warning her against unclean thoughts, when her soul was spotless as that of a nun; and inveighed against the attraction of temptations which to *her* were foul and offensive. He seemed, in fact, to invest the whole force of female excellence in a virtue which to Lucile appeared a necessary and spontaneous obligation; for the white rose in its first expansion of purity was not more spotless than Lucile Lanoue!—

“At length, she revolted against these iterations of his daily sermon.—‘You talk to me, dear uncle,’ said she, ‘of crimes that enter not into my apprehension. What pleasure can you suppose me to find in seeking after books, images, ideas, expressions of an immodest nature? What sense of enjoyment can possibly attach itself to things which bring a blush to the cheek, and confusion to the heart?’—

“‘Nevertheless, *beware!*’ rejoined the stern pastor. ‘Circumstances may arise to invest with unknown charms these very accessories of evil. And remember, Lucile,—remember, my niece,—remember, my beloved child,—that sooner than see thee yield to the backslidings by which so many of thy sex sink into the gulph of perdition, I would tear thee limb from limb,—behold thee perish inch by inch,—and minute by minute. The soul of woman is the brightest emanation of the eternal fountain of light and life. But the smallest blemish upon its spotlessness, and corruption and utter darkness ensue! Either thou must be as the angels of Heaven, secure from the influence of every grosser passion, or fall under the domination of the worst, and become a thing for men to trample on and fiends to scoff at.—Half the mischiefs, half the crimes of this world of woe, are produced by the levity of woman!—And though I love thee, Lucile,—love thee with a yearning spirit of tenderness, greater than can be dreamed of by the ima-

gining of thy young experience,—know, that should a day of contamination come, thou must look to find in me a ruthless judge,—a stone-hearted executioner. There would be no mercy in my soul for an offence of thine.’

“Harsh as were these denunciations, they sounded more like the ravings of fanaticism, than the remonstrances of a spiritual teacher, in the ears of Lucile. She had no power to attach them to a foregone conclusion, or even to the shadowing forth of future evil. Even when, about a year after the first outpouring of the strenuous exhortations of Père Anselme, she became acquainted with the brilliant aide-de-camp of the King of France, who was charged to command a solemn service of *Te Deum* at the metropolitan cathedral on occasion of the birth of a Dauphin, and the young and handsome Count de Valençay contrived shortly afterwards to entangle her in a secret correspondence, Lucile saw no occasion to connect the honourable expressions of attachment of her impassioned admirer with the prohibitions of her uncle!

“Valençay beheld in the bright cynosure of the Parvis Notre Dame the nominal niece of a hypocritical abbé, and far too fair a creature to be consigned to so ignoble and degrading a destiny; while Lucile beheld in Valençay her future husband, and the noblest and most captivating of mankind. They stood relatively in a false position. Mademoiselle Lanoue was too much afraid of the harsh interpretation of her uncle to disobey her lover’s injunctions by acquainting the old man with the secret of their engagement. She dared not even involve in her confidence the old mulatto servant, Christophe, lest at any time he might be induced to betray them to the animadversions of Père Anselme.

“Time passed. It is needless, and would be painful, to relate how often, during her uncle’s discharge of his official duties, Lucile managed to escape from her gloomy home, and accompany her noble admirer on expeditions to the heights of Romainville, or the unfrequented banks of the Marne;—to evening promenades in the Royal Gardens, to obscure spots and secret resorts, even *she* scarcely knew where.—It was in vain she implored Valençay’s permission to acquaint her guardian with their engagements, and at length with the union they had secretly contracted.—The count pleaded the opposition of his family—the resentment of the king;—and Lucile felt too happy in the homage,—the tender affection of the man she deemed her husband, to investigate the motives of his evasions.

“It chanced that, while these mysteries were proceeding unsuspected in the quiet household of the canon of Notre Dame, Père Anselme was requested by one of the ministrants of the church of St. Sulpice to undertake for a few days the clerical charge for which he was incapacitated by sudden and severe

indisposition. The active priest, rejoicing in an opportunity of augmenting the sum of duties which he had adopted as a sort of expiation,—a species of mysterious atonement,—readily complied: and thus, for several days, Lucile was left more than ever at liberty to pursue her favourite avocations, and cement her rash connections; little apprehending the consequence of her uncle's ex-official occupation. Nay, little indeed did Père Anselme himself anticipate, when he entered the confessional of his unaccustomed church, to how painful an exercise of his priestly functions he was about to be submitted.—

“For behold there came to his judgment-seat a young noble of the court of the Trianon, an associate of the Lauzuns and Pognacs, who, engaged in a duel of deadly provocation, had chosen to address himself to a strange confessor for a remission of his mortal sins. Count Valençay admitted himself to be every way an offender;—intemperate, debauched, a gambler, a seducer of innocence; and among other crimes which he charged against himself, was a pretended marriage with a pretended niece of a canon of Notre Dame, for whom he admitted the utmost violence of a criminal attachment.

“‘Lucile is about to become a mother,’ said he, in the unreservedness of confession; ‘and her child will become fatherless, and herself a castaway, should I fall to-morrow.—Am I to be forgiven?’

“Père Anselme wrung his hands and sobbed aloud at this declaration; while Valençay, attributing the good man's despair to the unction of his zeal, implored his intercessions with Heaven for the more than widow who was about to be left to the evil-dealing of a cruel world. He demanded also absolution, and Père Anselme trembled while he pronounced the words of grace. He had not, indeed, *so* trembled since the day when he first learned the elopement of his wife with Clement Manoury of Martinique!

“That night, on his return home, Christophe the mulatto received orders from his master to light the fire of a small furnace erected at one end of the little garden attached to the canon's house; where, during the winter days, he was wont to amuse himself by the exercise of his skill in smithery, such as the manufacture of curious locks and safety-bolts, which he caused to be sold for the benefit of the poor. During the summer, he usually devoted his leisure to other pursuits; and what might be the cause of his selecting a fine midsummer night for the renewal of his occupation, no one could guess. Till morning, however, the bellows of the forge were heard in operation, and then, instead of retiring to rest after his unaccountable exertions, Père Anselme went forth to his daily duties, having charged his domestics with certain household services to be performed during his absence, and taken with

him the key of the house-door, in order to enforce the commands he had already issued, that none should pass the threshold during his absence. He desired also that the morning and evening meals of Lucile might be served to her as usual; nor did he return at night, till his daughter had retired to rest. But there was nothing in all this to occasion surprise to Lucile. Her thoughts indeed were otherwise engrossed; and had they been free for cogitation, she knew that the time of the canon was just then doubly engaged with the duties of his brother curé.

“She was wrapt in sleep when, at midnight, he re-entered the house; a sleep so heavy, that she observed not an unusual sound in an uninhabited chamber on the opposite side of the corridor from her own, the walls of which abutted against those of a public hospital. Heavy, ay, heavy indeed must those slumbers have been, that heard not stones displaced and replaced,—the blows of the heavy mallet,—the smart strokes of the sledge hammer,—which so strangely disturbed the rest of the old mulatto.

“On the morrow, at an early hour, a hired *berline* stood at the Canon’s door; and when the lovely but pale and wan Lucile made her appearance at the breakfast-table, the Canon bid her with a grim smile prepare for a holiday. Together they ascended the carriage; but her eager inquiries could obtain no clue to their destination.

“‘Be satisfied,’ replied Anselme in a hoarse voice. ‘You will discover anon. I have secured to you a day of pleasure.’

“At length she perceived that they had passed the barriers of the city, and were ascending the heights of Charonne.—In another minute’s space they were following a splendid funeral procession, that took its way towards the cemetery of Mont-Louis. The hearse was covered with gorgeous escutcheons,—the noblest armorial bearings of ancient France graced the long train of carriages following the dead;—and as the cortége stopped at the gates of the cemetery, Lucile perceived that a sword and belt, a coronet and cushion, were placed upon the coffin.

“Involuntarily she gave vent to expressions of interest, as with a pale face she gazed upon the solemn scene;—involuntarily evinced her curiosity as to the name of the hero about to be consigned to the dust. She addressed herself to her uncle; but Père Anselme was reciting aloud his prayers for the dead, whom the priests, with their crosses and banners, had come forth to welcome to the grave. Their driver now prepared to let down the steps, having received previous orders from the Canon.

“‘Whose obsequies are these?’ inquired Lucile, with faltering accents, as she prepared to place her foot on the step.

“‘Tis the burial of the young Count Valençay, Aide-de-Camp to

his Majesty, who fell yesterday in a duel at Montrouge,' replied the man in a careless tone. 'He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Yet 't is said that he hazarded his life in a drunken quarrel for a worthless actress.'

"He spoke to unheeding ears;—Lucile lay senseless at the bottom of the carriage; and when the miserable girl recovered her powers of recollection, she found herself in a strange room, chained by her right hand to a bare wall, a loaf of bread, a vessel of water, and a missal, lying by her side. Even then, she neither heard, nor saw, nor felt distinctly. Strange words sounded in her ears. A figure which she deemed to be that of her uncle stalked before her, proclaiming himself her father, and addressing her in opprobrious terms, and with fearful denunciations that fell meaningless upon her heart. Yet the accusations were full, too full, of truth; and the invectives with which he accosted the dying girl were such as defile the ears of the lowest of her fallen sex.

"'True child of an abandoned mother!' cried he—'of a mother who deserted thy cradle for the arms of a paramour,—of a mother whom I abandoned all ties of nature and country to punish as she deserved,—thy doom is decreed!—I forewarned *her*, yet she fell!—I told *her* that so surely as she dared to outrage her vows of matron chastity, the hand of my vengeance should be heavy on her;—that her blood should flow drop by drop, in atonement for her sin. And so it did,—and I beheld it,—and was content!—Then returned I to Europe, in the hope that the sorrows of my youth might be compensated by a tranquil old age, passed in the bosom of my child. And thou, too, Lucile, did I forewarn!—I ventured not to assume over thee a father's authority, lest peradventure the babbling of those who surrounded thy childhood should have described him to thee as harsh and intemperate. But as a near kinsman, as a spiritual teacher,—my voice was loud in thine ears, with exhortations against the evil promptings of the salt blood of thy mother flowing in thy veins. Yet thou hast fallen, and the ruin of my house is accomplished,—my last hope withered,—my last joy defiled! Out on thee, castaway,—out on thee!—For thee, even for thee, shall there be no mercy—no ear of pity for thy bemoaning—no heart of flesh for thine anguish. My own hand, a father's hand, forged the snares that hold thee fast; and now will I feast mine eyes on the sufferings of thy penance.—*Despair and die!*"

"To these outrages Lucile had no other reply than the name of him whom she believed to have been her husband. To die was all that she desired. But despair she could not,—for she trusted that death would reunite her to the object of her soul's affections. Her mind was at times perturbed, at times lucid; but of her peculiar jeopardy she knew and could comprehend nothing. It was

all a miserable confusion of suffering,—of terror—of darkness—of desperation!

“At length came the appointed hour—the hour of a mother’s agony; and all night the lonely creature writhed and struggled with her pain, her miserable right hand still fettered within the master-bolt; but towards morning her moans grew fainter, and the feeble wail of a new-born child was added to the sound. Lucile was still alive when her father entered the room, and her dying eyes reopened in fearful dilation only to witness the paroxysm of disgust with which he crushed into nothingness the tender frame of that offspring of shame!

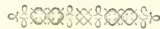
“It was well, perhaps, the miserable babe should die,—for already it was an orphan!

“That night, Anselme Lanoue watched beside the dead;—the young mother with her little infant laid upon her arm, and a bloody cloth enveloping the right hand of the corpse! When placed in her coffin, and the bier brought forth from that hateful chamber, the Canon of Nôtre Dame closed its door for ever, that no one might look upon the mangled hand still fixed within the manacle left hanging to the wall; and it was Christophe, the mulatto, who, on the apprehension of the old priest, nearly twenty years after the fatal catastrophe, bethought him of the mysteries to be revealed in that deserted room, and found strength to wrench the staple from the stones.

“Look upon it again!” said Balthazar, replacing the terrible relique in our hand, at the close of his narrative; “and tell me whether your country contains a more fearful testimonial of the ascendancy of ungovernable passion?”

7

THE CHRISTENING CLOTH.



“TELL you a story?—About whom—or what?—It is true I have seen as much of the world as most people,—whether by the world you understand nature, or human nature. But, somehow or other, I seem to have wanted the gift of observation; for never has it fallen to my lot to run my head against a picturesque robber in a wood, or an interesting swindler in a city:—the blackguards with whom I have been involved in adventures being all sneaking fellows of small account, not fit to figure in the poorest of melodramas. Nor was it ever my luck to travel, per coach or mail, inside or out, with anything sufficiently above or below my own condition of life, to become the hero or heroine of a romance.

“Nevertheless, I remember, once when I was collecting-clerk to the furnaces of old Coquerel, in the neighbourhood of Liege, hearing the merry laughs and songs of the lads and lasses in the meadows, when they were getting in their after-grass by moonlight, near Battices, in the Netherlands; and for the life and soul of me, I could not persuade myself but what the good people were at work doing an ill turn to the farmer, by destroying at night what his men had completed by day. No such thing, however!—’Twas nothing but the farm-folks, working double-tide, by the light of a moon that might have served a nun to thread her needle by for embroidering a mantle of point lace for the Blessed Virgin of Liesse.

“It was on that self-same night, that I met with something which, for the want of a better, I shall call an adventure. I had been making a circuit of the country for Coquerel’s house; visiting Namur, Luxembourg, Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, and divers other places of traffic; and was to finish, before I returned to business at Liege, by giving up my accounts to old Coquerel, who was residing at his favourite country house at Spa. It was a fine moonlight night, as I have already told you; and I was trotting briskly along the high road, on a steady old beast of a Mecklenburg mare, which at thirteen years was as fresh as a four-year-old. The heats of a sultry August day had brought out all those fragrant country smells which *we* city-bred people think so much finer than the finest of perfumes; and the road lay for a mile or two through a wildish sort of wood, where the spiciness of the

resinous fir trees and the astringent scent of the weeping birch, and here and there a gush of overpowering sweetness from a thicket of wild honeysuckle, filled the air with wholesome perfume. Then there was the yellow broom, somewhat sickly in its odour, but soon overpowered by the aromatic vapour of the juniper plants, crushed by the hoofs of my mare, as I indulged the old jade with an occasional canter on the strip of turf skirting between the coppice and the road.

“I was guiding her somewhat more cannily among certain dikes which intersected the grass ground just at the extremity of the road, when, lifting my eyes from the ground, which I had been carefully examining for the sake of my nag, I perceived, on one side the road, a few hundred paces before me, one of those stone shrines or chapels so common in the Netherlands; in a great portion of which, the influence of the bigoted Austrian government of other times may be traced. I may be wrong in my views on that subject; but, wherever I have met with those simple shrines in a country,—those spots of holy ground amid the vines, the woods, and the corn-fields,—I have found the peasantry the better for it. The husbandman’s is, we all know, a life of early labour. He must be astir while the dew is on the grass. The shepherd must lead his flock betimes to the pastures, and the reaper must stand, sickle in hand, before lark or grasshopper begin their song. Theirs is not the life of those who kneel down at leisure, like a lord,—(though, in spite of leisure, velvet hassocks, and gilt psalm-books, I am afraid even lords themselves are sometimes hurried in their devotions;) and ’t is a happy thing for the hinds, in the pauses of their toil, to find the image they regard as holiest of holies, standing beside them, under the great glorious canopy of heaven, inviting them to say a grateful prayer, or to breathe an intercession to the Almighty for a continuance of his mercies.

“Well, useful or useless, *there*, as I said before, stood one of those little shrines;—a sort of stone alcove which glimmered white as marble in the moonlight, sheltering what they call, in Papist countries, a Calvary;—that is, the Saviour on his Cross, and the three Mariés at its foot; and, round the head of Christ, a garland of fresh vine-leaves, or hop-leaves, or ivy, according to the productions of the neighbourhood.

“As I passed, my eyes glanced towards the Calvary, for a beautiful effect of light and shade was produced on the kneeling figures of the Virgin and Mary Magdalen, by the moonbeams streaming full upon them, while the Cross itself remained deep in the shadow of the alcove. But, behold! just as I was about to resume the burthen of the song with which I had been cheering my way, the sight of this sacred object warned me that I was upon holy ground; and lo! I fancied that a dark object, close on the northward side

of the shrine, (which at first I had mistaken for the withered stump of a tree, such as one often sees beside similar monuments, outlasting the verdant shade under which they were originally erected, and the remains of which have acquired too much sanctity from such neighbourhood ever to be rooted up,) was the crouching figure of some living thing!

“I have admitted that I am no robber-finder. Habituated to both the highways and byways of foreign countries and my own, I never yet hit upon a highwayman—no!—not even on a simple footpad. But *this* time, said I to myself, ‘I have him!’ or, to have better expressed my thoughts, I might perhaps have phrased it, ‘He has me!’ The pocket-book snugly deposited in the bosom of my waistcoat, containing notes and bills of larger amount than Coquerel would have cared to lose, or than I should have cared to account for to his cashier, began to grow as troublesome to me as a certain magic book to a certain moss-trooper, whom I have read of in one of Sir Walter’s stirring stories, prose or verse. I made up my mind, in short,—the lonesomeness of the place considered,—that I was about to be called upon to render an account of my clerkship to some fellow nowise entitled to claim the balance at my hands.

“I forget whether I grew hot or cold—whether I stood upright in my stirrups, or whether my hair stood upright on my head—and no great matter. Only, I observe that, whenever story-tellers protest they were frightened out of their wits, they seemed to have retained exactly wit enough to note every beat of their pulse, and how the owls shrieked and the crickets cried. Leaving them to account for their presence of mind, I own *I* had so thoroughly prepared myself for a rattling blow about the ears with a cudgel, or the whistling of a bullet, that I was scarcely less surprised than pleased to find myself trotting on as safely a hundred paces after as a hundred paces before I reached the little chapel. What I said to myself *then* I shall not repeat; for my words were complimentary neither to my courage nor my understanding; but, as there was no one at hand to gainsay the epithets bestowed, I thought it right to assure myself that I certainly had seen something; and that, if neither the trunk of a tree nor of a brigand, it might be Satan in proper person.

“Now, if I acknowledge myself to have had small personal intercourse with those who have been called clerks of Old Nick, still less have I to boast of with their master. I have read Tam O’Shanter till I almost regretted this; and, on the present occasion, a sort of dare-devil, gallop-by-moonlight spirit came over me,—the species of heroism that sometimes grows out of fear. As the aforesaid notion accordingly flashed into my mind, I turned the mare’s head so much more suddenly than was my wont, that the

old lady began to testify, by divers snortings and wincings, her disapprobation of my change of movements; and seemed as determined to go on, as I to go back.

“‘Is it even so?’—thought I, overmastering her obstinacy without much effort. ‘T is a well-known thing that dumb beasts have a quicker instinct of such matters than the human kind. Katchen is, no doubt, aware that we are in a bad neighbourhood. Yet, so near the Calvary?—Impossible!—Well, ’t will be no great trouble to set my doubts at rest.’

“‘I was proceeding at a foot’s pace. The shrine lay before me, now, to the right of the road, with its little screen of abele trees close behind; rustling (foolish, fluttering things!) with even so little of a breeze as the soft night air of an August night. Up went the ears of Katchen, as she started and stood listening!—What did the old mare hear besides the shivering leaves of the white poplar trees? A woful wailing cry, like the voice of an infant, and, a moment afterwards, that gentle soothing which no voice but a woman’s, and few voices but a mother’s, can administer in reply!—

“‘Take it for granted that, whatever Katchen might be, I was not much daunted by such music. I made up to the old shrine, without a moment remembering that Satan is said to invest himself in whatsoever shapes or sounds he may prefer; and, dismounting as I reached it, soon realized my supposition that a woman and a babe were resting themselves beside it on a bank of turf. The woman was on her knees—the babe nestling in her bosom,

“‘Can I be of any service to you?’ said I, perceiving, from the linen cloak with the hood drawn over her head, that I was addressing one of the peasants of the country.

“‘No one can be of service to me!’ sobbed a voice under the hood—‘no one but *them!*’ she continued, raising her head towards the sacred images to whom she had been addressing her supplications. ‘But I have prayed and prayed, and they will not give ear to me. Sinner must I be, since they suffer me to be thus heavily afflicted.’

“‘I could not but recall to the half-frantic woman that well-known text which assures us that the chastisements of God are dealt heaviest on those whom best He loves; and the poor woman would fain have replied, but the child, startled perhaps by a strange voice, set up so piercing a shriek, that all her efforts were now directed to the task of appeasing its terror.

“‘Is the child ill?’—said I.

“‘Ill and hungry,—ill and *famished!*’ sobbed the poor mother. ‘We shall perish here by the way; and *he* will never know what we have borne for him, and that I died, as I lived, for his sake.’

“‘With the ‘*he*’ and ‘*him*’ of the stranger’s doleful ejaculation,

myself had nought to do. Husband or lover, to *me* it nothi mattered. But what was to be done for the two poor helpless creatures drooping for want of sustenance in that strange place, at that strange hour?

“ ‘I have not food to give you,’ said I, as soon as the screamings of the poor infant were pacified; ‘I have only money, which is of no immediate avail.’ But, as I was proceeding in my explanations, I saw that the woman was now in a half-fainting state, incapable of listening or replying. There was but one thing to be done;—to gallop on in all haste to the nearest habitation, procure bread and wine, and hasten back to her relief. For the last four miles, not a house or cottage had been in sight; it seemed unlikely but that, now that I had reached the open country, I should soon chance upon a dwelling-house.

“ Never before had I so earnestly looked out for the twinkling light of a human habitation. I began to curse the moonlight, which, I thought, perplexed my eyes, as I galloped on and on without success. At last, somewhat more than a mile from the spot where I had left the sufferers, I was struck by the sound of music and laughter, proceeding, as I thought, from the meadows far down in the valley, below the raised road I was pursuing. For a moment, as I have already owned, I was puzzled as to the origin of these unusual sounds. I saw, by the moonlight, groups of male and female haymakers, diminished by distance into pigmies; and it was only my recollection of what I had heard asserted of the harvest-industry of the Flemish, which convinced me that these night labourers were flesh and blood. Katchen’s bridle was accordingly fastened to a wayside tree. I slid and climbed down the embankments of the road into the pastures below, made over hedge and ditch, and soon found myself in the midst of a goodly company of Walloon peasants, busily carting a fine growth of aftermath.

“ My story was soon told—readily believed; and some slices of black bread, and a gourd full of Brabant beer, were heartily offered to me. But, what was more to the purpose, I was instructed that, a short distance further on the highroad, I should find a house of public entertainment, where it would be easy to obtain a horse and cart to remove the sick woman and child to safe lodgings for the night. So said, so done. I made my way to the little inn of The Golden Artichoke; and, if I did not take out twopence and give them to the host, played the good Samaritan to so much purpose that he flung aside his cotton nightcap and offered to drive the little waggon so far as the Calvary.

“ To make a long tale short, or rather to abbreviate that part of it of which I am myself the hero, suffice it that the poor woman gratefully accepted our succour; and, when refreshed by food,

was lifted into the cart, and, within an hour of my first appearance on the spot, seated in the chimney-nook of the kitchen of The Golden Artichoke, watching the simmering of the broth I had ordered to be prepared for the child; while mine host, a recent widower, was busy settling his horse and cart for the night, so as not to incommode Katchen, an inmate of the same stable.

While the woman sat waiting for the strengthening of the food that was to nourish her feeble boy, with her poor blue lips compressed, and her long thin hands trembling with weakness, as, every now and then, she skimmed the simmering pot, the child was laid to rest upon a clean deal table near the fire-place, a blanket folded beneath it for a bed, and her own cloak over it as a covering.

“ ‘That cloak is too heavy for it in so hot a room,’ said I, longing to stimulate my interesting companion to a word or two of conversation.

“ ‘Perhaps you are right—so weak and so exhausted as he is,’ said she, removing the weighty garment from the body of the poor attenuated babe; and, taking what seemed a piece of cloth from her bosom, she spread it carefully over the child and returned to her place.

“ ‘I could not bear this. The babe, thus covered, presented exactly the appearance of a little corpse. I had once seen the body of a young child laid out, under circumstances so afflicting, that the force of reminiscence was too much for me. I fetched a bright-coloured Barcelona handkerchief from my small saddle-valise, and, snatching away the cloth, substituted the less ghastly silk in its room.

“ ‘Ah! do not move it—do not touch it!’—cried the young woman, apparently shocked by my irreverential action.

“ ‘The handkerchief is lighter and cooler for the little creature,’ said I, in a tone of remonstrance.

“ ‘Perhaps so; but the other is a relic—there is salvation in the other!’ said she, crossing herself. And, taking it from my hands, she pressed it to her lips and heart; and, again uncovering the face of the sick child, replaced my despised offering with the fine damask napkin she seemed to prize so dearly.

“ ‘I longed to ask for explanations; but, between the sufferings of the child and the duties of attendance, there was little time for questioning; and it was only when, on the return of Pierre from the stables, I learned that the few sleeping-chambers of The Golden Artichoke, such as they were, were engaged to the extra hands at the adjoining farm of Gros Chenet, that I offered my services to sit up through the night in the kitchen with poor Mina. I could scarcely do otherwise; for the men, when, at four in the morning, they returned from their carouse at the farm, were so merry with

Louvain beer, that it needed all my eloquence to induce them to respect the sufferings of the dying child.

“It was before they had returned, however, and by the gleams of flickering embers and a melancholy watch-light, that Mina related to me her history. Let me tell it you as nearly as possible in her own words.”

“I am the child,” said she, “of wealthy farmers on the frontier towards Charleroi,—their eldest born and their idol. My mother, too, was come of thriving people; and when she gave herself and her handsome portion to the rich farmer Regenhardt of Florennes, it was said, in all the country round, that *now* she might sit like a lady all the rest of her days, spinning fancy thread, according to her favourite taste, of no mortal use for any earthly purpose.

“Unluckily my mother got hearing of the taunt, for she was of a high spirit, and liked not to be made a jest by her neighbours; for, at the close of a year after her wedding-day, all those who had indulged in the remark were invited over to the farm; and *there* my good father made it his glory to display to them a damask tablecloth with napkins to suit, the like of which had never been seen for fineness of texture in that part of the country. Each one of the napkins, sir, could be drawn through Madame Regenhardt’s wedding-ring. Where they had been woven (’t was in some foreign city—the name I know not; it might be Hamburg—it might be Elberfeld), my father deigned not to disclose. He only explained that the flax was grown on his own lands, and the thread spun by the dainty fingers of his dear Marjory, ‘who,’ said he, ‘might, if idly inclined, sit like a lady in her sanded parlour, with her hands crossed on her knees, for the remainder of her life, and no one to say, ‘Why dost thou so?’—

“‘And what may be the use of this delicate napery, neighbour Regenhardt?’ asked Klartsh, the blacksmith, a bolder man than the rest. ‘Is it to be spread yonder, over your cherrywood table, for holidays, to be stained with beer sops, and daubed with prune sauce?’

“‘No!’ cried my father, planting his hands sturdily upon his hips, and surveying the whole company. ‘I have too much respect for Marjory’s handywork to throw it away in welcoming such as *you* to my board. No! goodies,’ said he, addressing two of the most cankered gossips of the village; ‘’t is neither for you nor me to sup our porridge off a web the thread of which might have been woven into Mechlin lace. This suit of table-linen, my fine friends, is destined to no less a person than his Highness the Stadtholder; and I sent for ye to have a sight of it before ’t is packed and forwarded to my cousin, Regenhardt, the merchant of Antwerp, who has undertaken to convey it to the Hague.’

“Great, indeed, was the amazement of the envious neighbours; and though, for some days afterwards, they continued to scoff among themselves at the notion of a Flemish farmer pretending to send presents to a sovereign prince, yet when, at the end of a month, there came a letter to Marjory, with the seal and true handwriting of her Highness the Princess of Orange (own sister, sir, to the King of Prussia, as you may have heard), full of thanks and commendations of the present, and begging her acceptance in return of a costly tankard of gilt silver—to look at, as good as gold,—you may guess whether my poor mother was pleased, and the neighbours mortified! My father had the Princess’s letter framed and glazed, and hung up next to a sampler of needlework (the ten commandments worked in the house of her parents by his beloved wife), as the chief ornament of their state parlour; while, in the glazed corner cupboard of the same chamber, was installed the splendid tankard, on a cloth of Utrecht velvet, with nothing on the shelf above, but a rich japanned ewer and basin of green enamel, presented as a wedding gift by my cousin Regenhardt of Antwerp; and nothing on the shelf below, but a tea-kettle and service, of Meissen porcelain, bought by my father, as a courtship-token for Marjory, at the fair of Düsseldorf.

“Well, sir, all this magnificence did not serve to put my mother and her neighbours in better humour with each other. The very next year, there came to be trouble in more countries than one; and crowned kings were put down from their thrones, and kings without crowns set up in their places,—in plainer clothes, perhaps, with just as good a mind to make their greatness a bugbear to the people. Among those who were forced to fly their country, were the Stadtholder and his Princess; and I have heard my poor mother say that not a soul in our village but was right glad of their misfortunes, only because the rich Regenharts were now forced to remove from their parlour the letter and tankard, so great an eyesore to many. His Highness took refuge in England; perhaps, sir, you may have heard of him in your own country?—

“My parents, however, had other things to think of than to guess whether their fine damask had been pillaged with the rest of the Princess’s belongings; for, on the following year, I was born; and, though my father had sadly longed for a son, glad enough he was to hear the first cry of a daughter. In spite of the ill-will of the neighbours, he determined to call me Wilhelmina, after the great Princess who had written so kindly to my mother; and it was decided, according to the custom of the country, that, ten days after my birth, my christening should be celebrated; and a gay and gaudy day it was to be at Florennes.

“‘Ay, ay!’ said the gossips—‘Farmer Regenhardt is killing his fatted calf, and the finest of his Chinese pigs, and the choicest of

his flock. His people have been up to the cheese-loft, and down to the beer-cellar. They have emptied jars and jars of pears and plums for sauce; and the dove-cot and the hen-roost will have something to say of their waste. There will even be a canister of Antwerp Regenhart's perfumed Persian tea, with sugarcandy as fine and as white as alabaster. The good curé, no doubt, will be invited to the feast; and the farmer will scarcely grudge him a golden ducat for so grand a service as baptizing my young Lady Regenhart with the name of her royal godmother! Remains to see whether Mistress Marjory will have the audacity to put off some old house napkin as the christening cloth;—she, forsooth, who chose to make herself spinstress to princes and princesses.'

“Thus they talked, sir, but they talked without book; for when the day came, and the baptistery of the old church of Florennes was decked with fresh flowers in honour of the ceremony, and my comely godmother, wife of Hans the miller, presented me to the priest, it was seen, by all the idle and curious thronging the church and peeping through the iron palisades of the baptistery, that the christening cloth which, according to custom, my father respectfully presented as a gift to the curé at the close of the ceremony, was whiter and finer than the finest lady's kerchief.—There it lies, sir; judge yourself of its texture!

“‘This is your wife's famous spinning, Regenhart?’—asked the old priest, while a kindly smile lighted up his face.

“‘It is,’ said my father, with a pleased proud look. ‘My Marjory would have been loath to have it said that she gave to the throne what she grudged to the altar; and long after she was so round and portly (with submission to your reverence) that I had forbidden her to do a turn of work for me or mine, hum, hum, hum, went the wheel by my fireside. My good wife would not hear of laying it aside till she had completed a becoming offering to tender to Monsieur le Curé.’

“‘Marjory is a good housewife,—Heaven prosper her labours!’ replied the priest. ‘See that she become not *over* thrifty in the things of this world. It is good to labour, and it is good to gather riches; but better still to preserve a quiet mind and humble heart towards God. May this infant,’ he continued, signing me anew with the sign of the cross, ‘grow to be a grace and blessing to ye!—and, with my benediction, I bestow upon her this specimen of her mother's industry. It will serve as a foundation to begin her marriage *trousseau*.’

“He smiled as he spoke, imprinting a kiss upon my forehead; and my godmother, Vrow Hans, told my poor mother, on her return to the farm, and has often told me since, that I smiled up in his venerable face in return, when she laid the rich christening napkin over my cambric swaddling clothes, and carried me proudly

home and laid me in my mother's bosom. Poor mother! she had not much occasion to rejoice in me. Some harm she took in her lying-in hung upon her ever afterwards; and she was an ailing sufferer to the day of her death.

“There is no need to tell you, sir,—who are, no doubt, a book-learned gentleman,—how, soon after this, the French armies came fighting out their grievances on the Belgian territory. The first thing I can well remember of these changes of kings, and nations, and languages, was an outcry at Florennes that the brother of the French Emperor Napoleon was going to be king in Holland, where my namesake, the dethroned Princess of Orange, had reigned before. Our neighbours took care that *we* should have the earliest tidings of it; and seemed to rejoice in the news as a mortification to our family. They thought it, however, no rejoicing matter *themselves*, that we had a Frenchman put over us in the new Mayor of Florennes, and French gendarmerie to rule the country, and French prefects to rule *them*; and, above all, that their sons were to be carried off by the conscription to fill up the armies of Napoleon. My mother, sickly as she was, and without hope of further offspring, now rejoiced that she was not the mother of a boy, to be carried off in his turn to the Grand Army; and both she and my father seemed to treasure me the more, that I was likely to abide with them always, and be a comfort to their old age. I was the darling of house and household; a happy child—a very happy child; and, I may say, *then*, a dutiful.”

Wilhelmina paused, and went and hung over her babe; and, after she had wiped the cold dew from its forehead, with a corner of the christening napkin, methought I saw her raise it to her own eyes, as if to prevent the tears from falling.

“Time went on, and went well with us,” she continued, after resuming her place on the settle. “Whatever king might reign, my father was master of his farm; and he seemed proud of seeing me grow up to womanhood, who was one day to be its mistress; and still the only charge he laid upon me, was—‘Mina!—girl,—never let thine eye be dazzled by a laced jacket; never dream, child, of marrying a soldier. Who thou wilt beside, so he can prove himself an honest man, and an honest man's son. *But no soldier!*—Hav'n't we seen the fellows sell themselves from service to service, from king to king, as I might transfer a flock or herd?—And ar'n't they heard of in foreign lands—yonder in Prussia, for instance—making shame to the name of Frenchman or Belgian, by pillaging houses and lands,—burning down barn and garner,—making free with money-chest and plate-press,—with wife and daughter?—Robbers and reivers!—to plunder and burn the fruits of a hard-working fellow-Christian's industry, merely because a bayonet on the shoulder, and cartridges in the pouch, seems to

sanctify such wickedness!’—And *then*, sir, I was of my father’s way of thinking; for, then I had not seen Bernhard.”

“And who is Bernhard?” said I, with an involuntary glance towards the sleeping child.

“You guess rightly,—Bernhard is the father of that boy. A better father, a better husband, never breathed.—It was not till after the death of my poor mother, that he came so familiarly to the farm; for a mother would have seen the danger of admitting a fine young man like Bernhard, at all hours and seasons, meal-time and prayer-time, nutting in the woods or fishing in the Sambre. But my father liked Bernhard for the frankness of his sociability; and I, at first perhaps because of my father’s liking; and, at length, for my own, and in good earnest. And, when, sixteen months after the commencement of our intimacy, Bernhard was drawn for a soldier, and refused the offers made him by his family to furnish a substitute to the conscription, I thought my very heart would have broken.

“It was the eve of the grand expedition to Moscow, and substitutes were getting scarce; so that, to have paid the money requisite, would have ruined Bernhard’s friends, who were small, *very* small farmers in the neighbourhood of Florennes; so he was perhaps right to persist, and on with the knapsack, like the rest. I did not think so *then*; neither did my father, who was almost as loath as myself to part with the lad. Only he was displeased to observe what he thought a leaning in Bernhard’s mind towards a military life; for, during the three days intervening between the drawing and the marching off of the conscripts, which is the custom of the young men to pass in parading the town and neighbourhood with the drum-major preceding them and flaunting cockades on their heads, Bernhard was the noisiest of them all. He did not wish his friends to see what a bitter thing it was to him to quit Florennes.

“Those three days, meanwhile, were grievous days to *me*. Bernhard had never spoken to me of his affection,—for *I* was rich and *he* was poor;—but I knew pretty well how it was with him, and better still how it was with me. I could not stop the tears from running down my cheeks, as I pretended to busy myself with my mother’s old spinning-wheel; and my father seemed so much concerned when he saw me weeping, that I could not but hope, in my heart, he would do something for Bernhard to prevent him going. But my father was proud, and expected Bernhard to ask him, or, at least, to speak first on the subject. He never left home during those three days, though his presence was wanted in the farm; but kept loitering near our door and looking out whenever the conscripts were coming; and when, after the third day, the lads passed our door for the last time, my father banged it to with a sort of desperate fury; and, as the drum and fife

sounded fainter and fainter in the distance along the high road, fixed his eyes upon me with a sort of settled obstinacy—as much as to say, ‘I have sworn you shall never be the wife of a soldier, and I will keep my word!’

“I so perfectly understood the meaning of his looks, that I sank back in my chair without power to speak. I even seemed to forget for a moment, that Bernhard was quitting his native village for danger and death. All I had power to understand was, that my father had sworn I should never become the wife of a soldier.

“From that day, a sort of enmity seemed to grow between me and my father. He was always proposing to me some marriage or another,—I, always refusing; and, though he must have known how completely my happiness was wrapt up in Bernhard, there was no end to the pains he took to prevent my obtaining intelligence of the progress of the Grand Army. He forbid me all intercourse with Bernhard’s family; and, at length, forbid me even to quit the farm, lest I should, by chance, encounter them. Heaven knows I had little inclination to go abroad.—My sorrows, and my spinning-wheel, and the chimney corner, engrossed my whole attention.

“My father even threw out hints that he would marry again, unless I changed my proceedings. He said his home was grown worse than a prison; and, to get rid of its gloominess, used to make off, evening after evening, to the house of my godmother, the widow of Hans the miller, to whom all Florennes persisted that he was paying his addresses. I never believed it, however, till he invited me one day to his wedding; when experience taught me how great had been my folly, and what it was to have a step-mother. The new Madam Regenhart had six grown-up children of her own, four of whom were soon settled at the farm; and, thenceforward, my life became a burthen to me.

“Trüdchen and Maria, my good friends in childhood, were now always twitting me with my love for a conscript. To please my father, they tried to laugh me out of my attachment for Bernhard, as if such things were to be rooted out of the heart by idle scoffing!—A year passed thus—a very sad one; not because the hand of my mother-in-law’s authority was heavy, but because bad tidings from the army darkened daily into worse and worse. At last, the great blow came. Napoleon was defeated, to rise no more; and how was I to learn whether Bernhard was among the victims already sacrificed to the madness of his ambition? The spring of 1814 passed over ere I obtained a word that I could trust in; but one summer morning, as I came out of church, a little child plucked me by the gown, whispering to me, in the name of Bernhard’s mother, that her son would shortly be at Florennes!

I had a silver dollar in my hand that I was about to drop into the alm's trunk of the poor, as I had constantly done since my days of trouble ; but I hastily thrust it into the hand of the child. Nay, it was all I could do not to fall down on my knees and bless God *there* in his holy house. *He* lived—and that was enough. That I was about to behold him again, seemed almost too much!—

“That evening did not pass but I had learned the best and worst of my destiny. Bernhard came, presented himself at the farm,—no longer a laughing lad, but a way-worn hard-voiced soldier. My father held out his hand to him when he entered, which was more than I expected ; and sat listening, with changing colour and glaring eyes, when Bernhard recounted all the horrors he had witnessed,—the blazing city, the frost-defeated troops, the massacres, the desperation. He even pledged him in a cordial cup, and I thought kind feelings of old times were springing up between them ; and Trüdchen and Maria pointed out, scornfully, to each other, the bright red flush of delight that was burning on my cheeks. But when the time came for Bernhard to take leave for the night my father spoke out :—

“‘ You and I, my lad,’ said he, ‘ must understand each other. If you come here as a neighbour's son whom I liked in old times, to taste my beer and have a dish of gossip over the strange sights of the times,—well and good. But if you fancy things are to be as they used, or that you are to patch up the threadbare coat on your back with Mina's dowery, you mistake black for white, and there's an end on't. I have said, in your hearing, ten thousand times, that no girl of mine should mate with a soldier. You might have borne the saying in mind when you refused your old father's offer of selling his orchard to the notary of Charleroi, and sending a man in your place. I know—I know!—You did not choose to bring ruin on your family. Right enough, perhaps ; but plain proof that you loved father, mother, and grandmother better than Mina there, who fancies she loves *you* so dearly. Understand, therefore, friend Bernhard, that my wench is not for your market ! Times, you see, are altered here ; and were she to give her ear to you in defiance of *my* authority, without more ado I would cut her off with a grosch, and settle my property on my wife's two grinning minxes there, Trüchen and Maria, whom I like none the better, I can tell them, for the triumph they are enjoying at my daughter's expense.’

“Madame Regenhart now interposed in defence of her children ; but my father's business was with Bernhard. ‘ Is it, then, a bargain, my lad ?’ said he. ‘ Do you consent to give up all notion of Mina ?’—

“‘ I do *not*,’ replied Bernhard, with firmness. ‘ You say that times are altered here. They are so ; for Mina has reached

woman's estate, and can judge for herself. Her home is not what it was; she may now wish to leave it even for a roof so poor as mine. Here, therefore, before your face, I offer her my hand and heart, and the tender welcome of my family. Had I aught else to give, she knows it would be hers.'

“‘You *dare*?’—exclaimed my father, with kindling eyes.

“‘I *dare*!’ replied Bernhard, calmly. ‘I have fought for my country. My wounds and my sufferings have given me the right to speak as a man, and as a man to claim an answer. But it must be from *her*. Mina!’ he continued, addressing me—‘for five long years I have dearly loved you. Will you be mine?’

“‘Not against my father's desire,’ I faltered, not daring to look him in the face.

“‘Desire?’—cried the old man, fiercely. ‘Is that your milk-and-water word?—I tell you, girl, that, if ever you wed this man, or any other wearing the same habit, my eternal malediction shall be upon you and upon your children's children for evermore.’

“I know not what ensued. I was lying on my bed with my father hanging over me, when I recovered my recollection. ‘Bernhard is gone,’ said he, in a hoarse voice, as he bade me adieu for the night. ‘Bernhard has quitted the house;—he will do well to quit the village,—for you must meet no more.’

“He did *not* quit the village, however; he had obtained two months' leave of absence, to visit his relations; and, for the sake of his aged parents, it behoved him to remain. My step-mother and her children contrived that my father should hear daily and hourly of his sojourn at Florennes; and the old man's wrath was soon stirred up against him by new offences; for Bernhard, like all the soldiers of the Emperor, leaned towards the dominion of the French, and desired, since Belgium was not to become an independent kingdom, that it might remain subjected to the laws under which it had so greatly prospered; while my father, who had thrown up his cap for joy at the first news of the Stadtholder's return to his dominions, could not restrain *his* ecstasy on learning that Flanders had been tacked by the great parliament of kings at Aix la Chapelle to the kingdom of Holland. In his delight at finding the Stadtholder become an anointed king, and my royal namesake a queen, he lost all thought of the dignity of his native country. This, of course, begat greater ill-will between him and Bernhard; and the whole place seemed to take part with one or the other. My step-mother harassed me by constant reproaches; her children allowed me no interval of peace. I was very *very* unhappy.

“In the midst of all this, my father determined, as if for vengeance sake, to marry me to the son of Klartsch, the blacksmith; whom, in other days, he would scarcely have judged worthy to enter my presence. The man was a sot, a ruffian, a profane swearer; one

of whom I never could bear the sight. Bernhard's leave was almost expired, when Madam Regenhart hit upon this method to drive me to desperation. I felt that, when *he* was gone, I should have no protector against the violence of my father,—that I should be sacrificed to the interests of Trüdchen and Maria; and, as I had now attained the age of independence, I accepted the generous proposals of Bernhard, when once more he offered me a loving heart and tranquil home. I quitted my father's roof,—already a place of torment to me. I quitted Florennes, my birth-place, the grave of my mother; and, with tears upon my face and terror in my heart, became the wife of my faithful Bernhard."

"In my own country," interrupted I, taking pity upon her distress, "such circumstances are by no means uncommon."

"They *are* in *ours*,—happily, they *are* in *ours*," she replied; "for, since I became a mother, I seem better to understand how heart-piercing must be the rebellion of a child. In *ours*, sir, filial piety is the first of duties. We are taught to reverence old age in all;—but in our parents, with fear, trembling, and submission. An undutiful child, sir, is an outcast *here*; and you see I *am* an outcast.—My father's curse pursues me,—pursues that babe!"—And again she sobbed aloud in profound affliction.

"Well, sir, I followed my husband to his regiment, and with his regiment. It was one of those which Napoleon had always named with honour as his '*braves Belges*;' and my Bernhard was noted among the bravest of them. I had a little fund that afforded us all the help we needed at starting; and he was quartered at a cheerful happy spot,—the town of Huy, on the Meuse, where a grand citadel was already in progress of construction. Poor Bernhard looked with an evil eye on every stone that was laid of it. 'T is a damned Dutch dike of demarcation,' said he, 'which the blue-breeches and the red-coats are building up, to separate us eternally from that vast and beautiful France, under whose banners we obtained at least glory and advancement.'

"I thought of my poor father's hatred against the French, and said nothing; and while we were thus meeting our destiny together, cheerfully, affectionately, and with full trust in the Almighty and each other, yonder boy was born.

"Till that time, I had taken less thought than perhaps I ought, of my father's alienation. But the moment I became a mother, I seemed to think as I had never thought before, of my parents and their rights. I dearly longed to show my babe to my father. I obtained my kind husband's permission to name it after my father. I dreamed of my father,—I prayed for him.—I yearned after him; and, at length, unable to repress my feelings, addressed a letter to him, saying that I was well and happy,—submissive, though not repentant,—and humbly praying for his forgiveness."

“And old Regenhart’s answer contained?”—

“A reiteration of his cruel malediction!”

“Then,” said I, “he must be a cruel unchristian man; and his animosity is not worth fretting for.”

“Ah, sir! it took fatal effect upon me and mine!—Misfortunes soon came upon me; and nothing that I could say or do would prevent Bernhard from speaking his mind in places where minds are not to be spoken, touching the ill luck of his native country, in falling to the lot of a Prince whom he would never designate otherwise than King of the Butter-Firkins, or Field-Marshal Scheidam.—All this was duly reported; and he was reprimanded and reprimanded, and all to no purpose. The more punishment given to increase his loyalty to the House of Orange, the less he liked the new king. And it was a strange thing, sir, in my husband,—for King William was a good man and merciful, and well-inclined to further the prosperity of his new kingdom. But the taxes and imposts were high; and, whenever a fresh one came to be talked about, Bernhard was giving his free opinion, and throwing up his police-cap in honour of Napoleon and Belgium!

“I did not live in barracks with my husband. During my mother’s lifetime, she had bestowed on me from time to time little sums in gold, earnings or savings of her own, which she had me treasure up and say nothing of to my father.

“‘Strange things happen,’ she used to say. ‘Tis no bad thing for even the happiest of wives to have a nest-egg against a day of trouble.’ And she was right; for, when I rashly quitted my father’s house, that sum—a large one for poor folks like Bernhard and me—became our sheet-anchor; and, even after my boy’s birth, I had nearly fifty ducats left, for future exigencies.

“One night, sir, it was very late, and I had sat up in my lodging expecting home Bernhard from the barracks: and, as the hour was past when the men were rung in, my mind misgave me that he had come to some mischief. I entertained little doubt that he had been at his politics again, and, perhaps, been clapped into the guard-house; but, behold! at midnight, just as I was putting down the baby into his cradle after having him up to nurse, I heard a well-known step on the stair, and in rushed Bernhard: his face flushed, but not with drinking,—it was easy to see *that*,—for his eyes neither sparkled nor were heavy with the effects of liquor.

“‘Mina,’ said he, instead of answering my question as to where he had been, ‘how long would it take you to pack up your traps, and such of the child’s as are movable, to quit this place?’

“‘Quit this place?’ I exclaimed. ‘Is the regiment under marching orders?’—

“ ‘No matter,’ replied my husband—‘answer my question.’

“ ‘You have reason to know,’ I replied, smiling, ‘that I am not very difficult to move. We owe nothing in the town but the last week’s rent for our lodgings; and in an hour and a half, I could clear all up, pack our few clothes, and be ready to start. But I hope there is no occasion to move the child at such an hour as this? Surely you will wait till to-morrow?’—

“ ‘Not an hour,—not a second!’—cried he. ‘Make what speed you can; all you hold dear on earth depends on your activity. If you love me, ask no questions. By this time to-morrow,—not soener,—all shall be explained.’

“ ‘I had promised Bernhard at the altar to love and obey him: how was I to resist his will in this thing?—Within the appointed time, sir, all *was* cleared up in our little lodging,—the amount of our rent deposited on the stone; and, at about two o’clock of a dull hazy autumn night, we crept out of the house; Bernhard almost sinking under a large bundle containing our necessaries, and I carrying a basket and the boy. We were quartered then, sir, at a small town only a few leagues from the frontier; but our lodgings were luckily in a suburb without the walls; and, on reaching a turning of the road, about a quarter of a league from the town, I was surprised to find a cart and horse, into which, without a word of explanation, Bernhard bundled us all. Away we went at a smart pace, which roused up the babe and set him crying piteously. The wind whistled, and drove eddies of decaying leaves into our faces from the high trees bordering the road. But Bernhard said not a word to comfort me or quiet the child. He seemed exhausted, mind and body, by a great effort; and, having laid my hand upon his sleeve, in climbing into the cart, I perceived that he no longer wore his uniform. The truth now flashed into my mind.—He had deserted, and we were making our way across the frontier!

“ Three fatal leagues of road still lay before us! He might be taken.—O Heaven! what would be the result of such a misfortune?—I dared not utter a syllable of inquiry to my husband.—He had requested me to forbear; and a request from *him* was the same as a promise from myself. I knew not even the exact distance which would set us free from danger of pursuit; and it was almost a surprise when at last the driver suddenly pulled up; and I learned, from a few words whispered between him and my husband, that we had now reached the spot where his agreement of conveyance ended; and that we were about to diverge on foot from the high road, to cross the frontier, at a point of the fields secure from military or excise inspection. The man, already paid for his services and apparently a friend to my husband, wished us well at parting; and the rattling of the cart was soon lost in the distance.

“ Heavy was the task to make our way through the mists of a chilly night across the country, ankle-deep in a miry clay, that rendered it all but impracticable, burdened as we were. But-terror pricks like a spur. To falter was to decree the death of Bernhard: and on I toiled, till, at length, after two hours’ labour, we stumbled, as if by chance, on a high embankment, over which my husband managed to lift me, babe and all; and no sooner did he find us safely lodged on the highroad that ran below, than he clasped us together in his arms; then, uncovering his head, breathed a thanksgiving to Heaven, which assured me that he was in safety.

“ A heavy weight was taken off my breast; and I sat down by the wayside, and wept till my heart seemed like to break. It was almost daylight before we set out again, rested and relieved; and, just at sunrise, we reached a hamlet, at the door of one of whose cottages my husband knocked gently, and, presenting a slip of a letter to the aged woman who lifted the latch, she smiled encouragingly in our faces, and bad us welcome as though we were expected guests.

“ I need not weary you, sir, with further details. That evening, we proceeded, by a public conveyance, about thirty leagues’ distance into France, to a retired village called Isigny, where Bernhard gave himself out as a Burgundian, and hired a small cottage, with a meadow and orchard, sloping to a beautiful brook. We were soon installed there. I saw it was his intention to take up his abode in a foreign land for the remainder of his days; and what mattered it to *me*?—Where *he* was, there was my home, my country; and, as to my father, what chance had I *now* of propitiating his pardon?”—

“ But what can have been the motive which instigated so good a soldier as Bernhard to”—I could not finish the sentence.

“ To *desert!*” added Wilhelmina, in a low emphatic tone. “ Yes, sir! that is the word—the grievous word. That it should ever be applied to a noble upright soul, such as my husband! But, verily, he had his excuse. On the day preceding that which ended so miserably, Bernhard obtained certain intelligence that, in order to rid the country of so factious a subject, he had been draughted into another regiment;—that his route was already made out for Rotterdam, where his new corps was under order of embarkation for Batavia.

“ ‘To remove my wife and babe to so pestilential a climate was a cruel thing,’ said Bernhard, when he recounted to me the history of his fall—‘to leave you both behind, poor and friendless, equally heart-rending. I thought it over, Mina, for four and twenty hours. For one whole night, I lay, shedding my silent tears by your side:

and in the morning, I felt that it could not be. What claim had this William of Orange upon *me*, who was born no subject of his, that I should go and rot away my life in his pestilential marshes, far from my wife and child, or see them perish under my eyes beside the fetid canals of Batavia? The Congress, which they say allotted us Belgians like a herd of dumb beasts to be the bondsmen of the House of Nassau, could not, in lawful justice, before God, condemn me to death for refusing to be banished into Asia for the gain of one who was no more to me by tie of inborn loyalty than an Inca of Peru.’”

“I am not over and above skilled in casuistries of this kind,” said I, interrupting her narration: but I own, it seemed to me, that poor Bernhard’s arguments, if not according to the law, were tolerably cogent according to the equity of the case. Whatever his Majesty the King of Belgium and Holland might be, I myself felt perfectly inclined to overlook his transgression. And poor Mina, discovering my favourable verdict, gained courage to proceed. It appeared that Bernhard, established under an assumed name in the retired hamlet where they first took refuge, fancied himself secure from pursuit.

“We were happy in ourselves,” continued his wife—“happy in our child, — happy in a life of prosperous labour. All around us throve,—all we undertook succeeded; and, fool that I was, I fancied that, whatever might be the error of Bernhard in the eyes of man, the eyes of God beheld us with a forgiving and favouring eye. It was a valley of green pastures where our dwelling lay, between shelving banks clothed with rich hanging woods. The air was a mild one: the flowers came earlier, and freer, and fresher there than at Florennes; and already the boy began to take note of them, and to smile at their beauty. But I will not dwell upon it all. It was a dream too bright to last; and the waking, sir, was very, very terrible!

“There came gendarmes into the country to search for a criminal who had escaped from prison at Mons; and, during the inquiries that arose, my husband was detected as a deserter by the *signalement* already forwarded by the authorities of Charleroi to the French police. He was seized, sir,—torn from me,—torn from his home; and I remained in a state of agony and suffering, rendering it impossible to follow him! For a whole week, a delirious fever confined me to my bed; during that time, my child fretted itself ill under the mismanagement of strangers; and, long ere my own strength was restored, I was hanging over the dying bed of my boy!—

“But God has been good to me in this. He has spared my babe—he has spared *me* to watch over him; yet if, as those who know best aver, Bernhard must be condemned, condemned to *death*,—may He be still more merciful,—and call us to himself!”—

“And you are on your way to rejoin your husband?” I inquired, deeply penetrated by her affliction.

“As soon as the health of my child permitted, sir, I fled from Isigny, the place where trouble had overtaken us. But I resolved, on my way to Namur, where Bernhard lies in prison awaiting his court-martial, to turn aside to Florennes, and throw myself, for the last time, at the feet of my father. It may be superstition, sir; but it seems to me, that if *his* curse were recalled, the wrath of the Almighty would be appeased! Of all my earthly possessions, I have retained as a token of my mother’s love, only that christening cloth which she fancied was to be the foundation of an abundant household-store for her child.—Wrapt in that sacred covering, I would fain have placed my child in his arms; and then he could not,—he would not have refused it his blessing. But the precarious state of my poor babe has frustrated my hopes; and, in six days, Bernhard will be called upon to take his trial!”—

“Six days?—you are sure that it is not for six days?”—

“On the 24th, sir—I have numbered the hours, the minutes; they may be the last my husband is fated to behold on earth!”

“Then there will be time!”—was my murmured ejaculation. And, without entering into explanation further than by affording to Mina the means of reaching Florennes by a public conveyance, I appointed her a rendezvous at Namur, recommended her to the care of mine host of the Golden Artichoke, and, before daylight, was recommending, once more, to poor Katchen, the utmost speed, to enable me to reach Spa without delay.

By old Coquerel’s usual breakfast hour, I had rendered up my accounts. Profiting by the good humour produced in my patron by the sight of my balance sheet, I told him my story, and implored him to exercise his well-known interest with the King, in behalf of Bernhard.

“Poor wife!—poor child!” murmured the good old man, when I had concluded my story. “And this,” continued he, examining the cloth of fine damask which Mina, at my earnest prayer, had deposited in my hands; “*this* is the counterpart, you say, of the linen spun for his Majesty, five and twenty years ago, by Regenhart’s wife?—’Tis well!—It may serve to bring the circumstance to his remembrance.—Memory is an instinct in kings. In my interviews with William, I have known him advert to trifles of earlier date and similar insignificance. I am about to address a memorial to him respecting a farther improvement in the machinery of his royal cannon-foundry at Namur. He has offered me choice of favours more often and more widely than I should care to have it generally known; and to beg the life of a fellow-creature, is to afford him a double occasion of conferring a benefit. You shall be the bearer of my memorial, and of a letter containing the par-

particulars you have just related. The Court is at Brussels. Lose no time; by to-morrow, you may obtain an audience.'—

Nothing more easy than access to the presence of William of Orange. But, even had it been otherwise, a letter from Coquerel the mechanist, — Coquerel, whose introduction of British machinery into Flanders, is a chief cause of its commercial prosperity,—Coquerel, the cherished of Napoleon,—the right hand of kings.—would have secured my admission. Nothing could be simpler than the manners and habits of the King of the Netherlands; nothing more straightforward, more intelligent, than his mode of interrogating me respecting the circumstances of the Regenhart family, after perusing the communication of my patron.

Kings are not fond of giving hopes—they leave that to their ministers. Unless there is certainty in the case, they are wise enough to hold their tongues. His Majesty, King William, sent me back to Namur with about as much insight into his intentions as if I had made a voyage to Guinea, and been conversing with the King of Dahomy; saying that he would signify his pleasure to the Sieur Coquerel as early as possible. On arriving at Namur, where my worthy master was to meet me, to receive an account of my embassy, an accident most unluckily occurred in one of the newly-invented furnaces, which, for the moment, engrossed his attention, and ought to have engrossed mine; nor was it till the fifth day after quitting The Golden Artichoke, that I was able to make my way to the obscure inn in the neighbourhood of the citadel, whither I had directed Mina.

To my utter consternation, I found, on reaching the place, that no person answering to my description had made her appearance. Either she had been detained near Battices by the debility of her child, or some accident had occurred to her on her way to Florennes! My next inquiries related to Bernhard; and an intelligent corporal of dragoons who frequented the house acquainted me that the garrison-court had been sitting for the last two days, and that the rigour displayed in the trials already decided before the tribunal, admitted of little hope that a deserter would find mercy. I was still speaking to him, when the feeble accents of a familiar voice interrupted my inquiries. The poor wife, so soon to become a widow, had that moment arrived. The child was no longer in her arms. I dared not ask for it; but my looks, I suppose, expressed the impression I had conceived.

“*Not dead*—no!—I trust in all-powerful Providence, not dead!”—she faltered in reply. “After you left me, every minute seemed likely to be its last. But the time is almost expired, and I could tarry no more. I have left my boy to the pity of strangers: to hasten to *him*.—Have you good news for me, sir?—You said

when we parted that you had formed projects for us,—that you had an opening in our favour.—What tidings?”—

“At present, none,” said I. “I have done my best; but nothing, alas! has been effected by my interference.”

“And to-morrow the court-martial sits!” cried Mina. “If nothing *has* been, nothing *will* be done. Ah! sir, why did you deceive me?—why raise hopes you had not the means to realize?”—

I forbore to remonstrate with her injustice. But, in her agony of mind, she had already forgotten her displeasure in an appeal for information to my friend the corporal; and I could not but admire with what delicacy the man who, but a moment before, had replied to *me* with the harsh coarseness of naked truth, evaded giving her pain, even while he evaded giving her hope. By *his* humane interference, too, she succeeded in obtaining immediate access to the Governor, and procuring a warrant of admission to the prisoner. I myself accompanied Mina as far as the wicket; promising to return and fetch her at the hour for closing for the night; and nothing could be more singular than the contrast between the feverish, excited, panting, half-frantic woman whom I saw rush through the wicket, to be conducted to the cell of her husband, and the inanimate form consigned to my arms by the turnkey on my return. Mina had proved unable to support the shock of what was probably their last parting,—*their last parting save one*.—She was still in a state of insensibility when, by the kindness of the innkeeper’s wife, I saw her laid on a comfortable bed; and all I learned at the citadel and in the barrack-yard of the probability of capital sentence upon the prisoner inclined me to wish that her senses might not immediately be restored. She could not remain too long unconscious of the horror of her situation.

On my return to my duties, a severe reprimand awaited me from both Coquerel and his foreman, for having absented myself at so critical a time. It was in vain that I represented to my master the cause of my absence. *His* interest in the fate of the young couple seemed wholly merged in the irritation produced by the recent catastrophe at the foundry. Nor could I blame him. For it had been attended by loss of life; and the distress he had recently witnessed in the families of the two workmen sacrificed to an experiment, seemed to have rendered him callous to every other appeal to his feelings.

On the morrow morning, I would have given worlds to proceed to the military court to see how matters stood; or, at the worst, to have imparted such comfort to Bernhard’s wife as the presence of a sympathising friend can afford. But this was impossible. The funeral of the two workmen was to take place at the cemetery without the walls; and Coquerel not only presided in

person over the melancholy ceremony, but insisted that his whole establishment should afford a token of respect to the memory of their deceased comrades. Such a solemnity, at such a moment, was not calculated to raise my spirits. My heart sickened as I saw the two coffins lowered into the grave; and felt that, perhaps, at that moment, sentence of death might be passing upon Bernhard.

Thanks, however, to one of those nice points of legal sophistry by which the judge-advocates can save the life of a man especially honoured by kingly protection, Mina's husband was pronounced "*acquitted!*" The fact of desertion was proved and admitted, but it was submitted as a point of law to the opinion of the court whether Bernhard, at the moment of deserting, had not been formally draughted *from* the corps, from whose head-quarters he had made his escape, without being regularly entered into the regiment sentenced to sail for Java. The court bowed and was convinced. He was dismissed with a severe reprimand; and when the poor fellow conveyed in person the glad tidings to his scarcely-conscious wife, an autograph letter from King William was placed in the hands of my old master, containing the usual flummery about allowing justice and the laws to take their course, and enclosing the brevet of a small pension, secured by Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands, to the daughter of Marjory Regenhardt of Florennes.

"The loyal zeal and industry of your mother have not escaped my recollection," said the second letter, addressed by Wilhelmina of Prussia to the favoured family. "The sight of the very curious specimen of damask, forwarded by the Sieur Coquerel of Namur, forcibly recalled to my mind the eventful moment (the birth of my son) when Madame Regenhardt's valuable gift reached the Hague."

Touched to the soul by tidings of the trials she had sustained, old Regenhardt opened his heart and house to his penitent daughter, her husband and child; and closed them upon the family of Madam Regenhardt the second, who was now gone to rejoin Hans the miller, to the infinite relief of her *Lousche d.*

Should you ever visit the Royal Palace at the Hague, inquire for the queen's private apartments, look into a glass cabinet of curiosities on the left-hand side of the fire-place, in the blue satin dressing-room; and you will see a somewhat discoloured, but exquisitely-wrought, damask napkin, which will enable you to prove to the groom of the chambers that you are wiser than himself, by acquainting him that this nameless relique was a gift hallowed to the church and by the church, to become a talisman to the child of Marjory Regenhardt, and a token of royal gratitude and clemency.—It is, in short, nothing less than the CHRISTENING CLOTH.

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