SELF.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "CECIL."

Put gall in thy ink, though thou write with a goose-quill."
SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
MDCCCXLV.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

CECIL CECILIZETH.

Could you but surmise, dear public, the grateful and devoted affection which your partiality has engendered in my heart, you would give me credit for the tears which at this moment obscure my eyes, while shaking hands with you after so long an absence! To *me* what a public have you been;—how bountiful,—how indulgent!—Your hand, again, old fellow!—I did not think to be so overpowered by my feelings.

The emotions I experience, and which I cannot doubt to be reciprocal, convince me, however,

that I have done amiss in attempting to amuse you by other adventures than my own. I feel that it is of your own Cecil you are wanting to hear, and that of *him* you could never hear too much; whereas, the critical machines that pretend, by their uncouth signals, to telegraph your opinions,—Examiners—Spectators—Athenæums—Atlases — John Bulls,—had succeeded in convincing me that you appreciate only what is set down with the dry circumstantiality of a coroner's inquest,—that you have denounced my naïveté as egotism,—and declared me unequal to the narration of a sustained story. By such calumnies,—invidious wretches!—did they betray me into the weakness of relating the history of one of my contemporaries; instead of delighting you with what Faulconbridge would call, "sweet poison for the tooth of age,"—namely, anecdotes of my simple self,—of whom, more hereafter.

You will admit, in the sequel, that I have

done you notable service. Every now and then the age, like

The snake, sheds its enamelled skin,

and it is only by carefully collecting and comparing these relics, that its growth and progress can be appreciated. In 1845, selfishness is a sufficiently prevailing vice. But my story will afford some comfort to the moralists, by proving that it was thirty times *more* flagrant, thirty years ago.

But though the dramatis personæ of the tale be new, and though I have endeavoured to vindicate your much-traduced Cecil from the charge of selfishness, by exhibiting the portrait of a *real* egotist,—the antithesis of *his* generous nature,—the style, the thoughts, the moral, the malice, are those of the object of your pristine affection. In these days of universal scribbledom when, as in those of Horace, *Scribimus indocti doctique*, your mind has been distracted by counterfeits.—But I flatter myself *my* powers of pen are unmistakeable.

You have often heard, dear public, of an Irish peer, privileged, like the grandees of Spain, to wear his hat before the king.—But do you know why?—Probably not!—for the cheap-edition-mongers have so vulgarized English history, by compressing into your brains and libraries the works of Hume complete in half-a-dozen penny numbers, that you are no longer able to distinguish between William IV. and William the Conqueror!

By the sagacity of the booksellers, however, the price of that inestimable work, the Peerage, is still kept up. Take, therefore, Burke's Peerage and open it at K for Kingsale,—where you will find set down how his lordship's ancestor, the gallant Earl of Ulster,—(the Cecil of his day,)—liberated by king John from captivity in the Tower of London, to take up the gauntlet flung down by Philip Augustus, when he proposed to decide by single combat the quarrel between England and France, bore such terrors in his name and as-

pect, that, at the last sounding of the trumpets, the French champion put spurs to his horse, and left him master of the lists!

Desirous, however, of witnessing some token of his far-famed strength, Philip caused a helmet of proof to be placed on a wooden block, (as we now occasionally place a judicial wig,) which the Earl of Ulster cleft asunder at a blow—leaving the sword embedded in the wood!

And *who* was to extricate the weapon?—The united chivalry of France,—king—courtiers—knights and squires,—all tugged at it, and tugged in vain.—When behold, at the powerful touch of its master, it glided forth as lightly as from a golden scabbard!—The old story, dear public, of Ulysses and his bow.

Need I suggest a deduction?—Surely your sagacity must discern that the weapon so long left sticking in the block of your favour, has been at length drawn forth by the only hand capable of striking it so deep, or redeeming it for new feats of valour.

Here I am again, sword in hand!—As the Roman says in the play, and Sir Robert in the house,—"Lend me your ears!" (they are long enough to spare some portion to a friend!)

Sit mihi fas audita loqui,

and in the following pages you shall find the pen of the Coxcomb flourished with all its original grace and spirit, by the unique and solely-competent hand of

THE AUTHOR OF CECIL.

SELF.

CHAPTER I

O sœclum insipiens et inficetum !

CATULLUS.

ALAS ! for the circulating libraries,—the day of the novelist is done !—Our locomotive age has outstripped his sedentary calling. Few have leisure to write,—few even leisure to read. Steam has realized the phrase of Corporal Trim, that—" we are here now and gone in a moment :"—and it is consequently as easy, and twice as edifying, to survey the romance of life with our simple optics, as through the reflecting glasses of the press.

Thanks, moreover, to the march of civilization, privacy has been exploded among us, and individuality effaced. People feel in thousands, and think in tens of thousands. No quiet nook of earth remaining, for the modern Cincinnatus to cultivate his own carrots and opinions;—where humour may expand into excrescence, or originality let grow its beard! Robinson Crusoe's island has been invaded by missionary societies, or colonization committees;—and, even in our scarcely less barbarous midland counties, railroads are cutting their way into the heart of Harlowe Place, and puffing their descecrations into ne venerable face of Grandison Hall. The word "tender" has acquired, in modern parlance, a sense that would have distracted the chivalrous author of the "Arcadia;" nor is there a vicarage in the land sufficiently remote from the shriek of the engine-driver, to foster the ingenuousness of a Dr. Primrose.

No matter!—Certain among us are old enough to remember those inartificial days of

slow coaches and turnpike-gates, when country families wore their own unsophisticated hearts and minds; instead of having their sentiments down from town, every morning, ready frizzed, by the early train; and what writer in his senses would exchange a whole shire traversed by a rail-road and its branches, for a homely parish, such as Edenbourne presented at the commencement of the present century; when its heavy wagon made a three days' journey from the metropolis, and even the great Don at the Castle was forced to sleep a night on the road.

Edenbourne, though on the borders of Wales, has been brought of late within eight hours' range of London; and receded more miles than Babbage could compute, from the kingdom of Heaven. But before all trace be obliterated of the simplicity of its good old times, come forth, thou gray goosequill, and let a few of thy random flourishes redeem its insignificance from oblivion!—

In those days when, by act of parliament and

the grace of royal birthdays, the London season commenced in January, and ended in June, the mere announcement at Edenbourne, every summer, that "the family had arrived at the castle," sufficed to certify to the anxious neighbours that Lord and Lady Askham were settled at headquarters for the six months ensuing;—prepared to inflict or undergo the *peine forte et dure* of formal dinner-parties. No flying about, as now, from the county of Devon to that of Durham, to dash for a day or two into the brilliant festivities of the Duke of this, or Marquis of the other. After the example of Windsor and Frogmore, every man's house was then his *home*,—the place appointed for him to live and die in,—a scene of sober-suited happiness, where punctuality to the bell announcing breakfast, dinner, and family prayers, constituted the chief duty of the day; and the arrival of a monthly-nurse, with caudle and christening cap, the grand event of the year.

It required, however, no great stretch of moderation on the part of the Askhams to con-

tent themselves with Eden Castle. The domain was extensive, the house stately and spacious. The neighbouring borough was of Lord Askham's way of thinking in politics, for he returned its member; the neighbouring parsonage of his own persuasion in religion, for he nominated its rector. His park boasted the finest breed of deer in the county, his rent-roll the most punctual race of tenants. A large family of children supplied a variety of domestic interests; and so engrossed was his lordship in giving the law absolute to his steward and bailiff, and her ladyship to the tutor, governess, and head-nurse, that they seldom found time to lament the badness of the roads, or thinness of the neighbourhood.

Throughout the autumn, indeed, large parties succeeded each other at the castle; but chiefly composed of family connexions; people of the same high caste and domestic habits as the Askhams, who found sufficient pastime at Edenbourne in making acquaintance with the

beauties of the place,—the children, plantations, and experimental farm.

Incapable of supplying a new emotion or idea to their noble kindred, they were not likely to suggest the moral deficiencies of the place!

Unluckily, Lord and Lady Askham were cousins; born of the same blood, bred with the same prejudices,—so that there was nothing in the nature of the one to counteract the errors of the other; and their virtues and weaknesses being identical, and consequently mutually imperceptible, no chance of amendment! The horizon that contented both was a narrow one; the sole object of their existence to escape blame in this world, and condemnation in the next;—a purpose they held to be accomplishable only by keeping under iron subjection those gentler instincts of the heart, which, over indulged, are apt to become elements of perdition.

Like the saints of old, they fortified their selfish sanctity in solitude. Eden Castle stood

isolated in its neighbourhood, like a hermitage in the desert. Satisfied that truth and justice in all their dealings insured its respect, the Askhams cared little for its affections; and as there was no family of their own rank in life within visiting distance with hereditary claims upon their sympathy, they took no more heed than the grand Turk of what was passing beyond their park palings.

Reserved and taciturn, Lord Askham attributed to philosophical moderation that total abstinence from political and courtly life, which was the result of constitutional shyness. Though as staunch a Tory as the terrorism of those revolutionary times could render a man of his property, he contented himself with demonstrating his attachment to church and state by a bis-annual appearance at the levee,—by holding his borough at the disposal of the "heaven-born minister," and paying down his taxes like a man,—ay, and a man of thirty thousand a year!

And thus, his lordship's dryness of nature

being unmitigated by the amenities of the courtier as well as unmoistened by the Great-British humanities of sportsmanship, his gravity of deportment increased with his years; doing far greater credit to the magistrates' bench, than to the hilarity of his dinner-table, or cheerfulness of his fire-side. Children ceased to be children in his presence. His grown-up sons addressed him in the tone of dependents; and the few families of the neighbourhood occasionally invited to the castle, had very much the air of being brought there by the constable.

The character of the Askhams, however, stood high in the county. Eden Chase, with its thousands of acres, and Eden Castle, with its hundreds of ancestral portraits, constituted the grand features of the district; and veneration for the place was extended to its owners. To have attributed a fault to either, would have passed for flat blasphemy; not only with Dr. Hacket, the rector of Edenbourne, and Simprems, the apothecary; but with Mrs.

Gwatkin, of Hexham Hall, and her quaint old brother, Sir Erasmus L'Estrange, who, though people of liberal fortune, had no higher ambition than to be invited once a year to the castle; to be frozen by the condescension of Lady Askham, and listen to his lordship's pompous protestations over his port, that he "would sacrifice the last guinea of his rent-roll to the support of the war, and the extermination of blood-thirsty France!"—

Cheered by his enlightened patriotism, they returned home convinced that if Old England had not the best of it against her "natural enemy," it would be no fault of Lord Askham; and that Chatsworth, Woburn, and Alnwick united, were unworthy to be placed in the scale against their own Eden Castle!

The first person who ventured to form a contrary opinion, was the heir-apparent to its honours. Like most spirited lads trammelled in leading-strings at home, Percy Askham had broken through all restraint the moment he reached Eton. At Oxford, he exceeded even

the privilege of an elder son to be troublesome and expensive, (which the example of the heir-apparent of the kingdom had rendered patent in the land!) and though Lord Askham reckoned confidently on the penitentiary system of his methodical home to reclaim his prodigal son, so soon as he came to settle at Eden Castle, Percy entertained projects of a very different nature.

"Farewell, thou dreary pile!"—groaned he, as the postchaise in which he was proceeding to Oxford for his last term, turned the well-known corner at Edenbourne which excluded the castle from sight: "farewell, a long farewell to all thy dulness!—As Juliet says in the play, 'Heaven knows when we may meet again!'"

"It is well my father and mother do not hear you," said his grave brother Philip, to whom, with Siddonian emphasis, the apostrophe was addressed.

"On the contrary, 'tis deuced unlucky! If my father and mother heard such home-truths oftener, my dear Phil, their house would not

be so much more boring than other peoples'. Between the toadying of their sycophantic neighbours, and the eternal laudations of our humdrum family chorus, they know no more of the world than if they lived in the Escurial!"

"And what should *we* gain by their being more worldly?" retorted Philip.

"A pleasanter home, in the first place! —Such slowness as that of Eden Castle is contagious as the plague; and in time, *we* shall become as moss-grown as our elders! In the second, my father and mother owe me some compensation for being one of ten children—a severe calamity, even under the most extenuating circumstances. But when made a pretext for converting the family seat into a boarding-school"—

"*I* never find the children in my way!" interrupted Philip, with some asperity.

"Nor I in *mine*.—I wish I did—poor things! What I complain of is, that the authors of our days have been listening for the last twenty years to the didactics of tutors and governesses,

till everything in the establishment has been Mrs. Trimmerized to suit their notions! Life at Eden Castle is revised for the use of schools!"

"Time stands so still with my father, that he is apt to forget its progress with ourselves," observed Philip, unwilling fully to confirm his brother's strictures.

"Why should we expect him to treat his sons better than he treats himself?"—cried Percy, ensconcing himself more snugly in the corner of the chaise. "Such a life as he chooses us to lead of it!—With such an income as his, a woman cook!—In such a county as ours, a subscription of five-and-twenty pounds to the hounds, instead of establishing the hunt at Eden Castle!—'Angels and ministers of grace defend us!'—Thirty thousand a year, and a pony to the fox-hounds!"—

"But since my father is not fond of hunting—"

"Spoken as becomes a younger brother!" cried Percy, slapping him on the shoulder;

"and to reward your filial piety, my boy, henceforward you shall enjoy without a rival the delights of your *dulce domum!*—Long, long may you survive to comfort your afflicted parents for the loss of their graceless elder son!"

"What on earth do you mean, Percy?" cried Philip Askham, with an air of consternation.

"To go into a deep decline, my dear fellow, and be ordered to a milder climate; as my sole chance of escape from the never-to-be-sufficiently-yawned-at halls of my ancestors!" was the cool reply of the elder brother. "Know, sir, that my father's intentions towards me are of the most malignant nature. As soon as I have taken my degree, he proposes to bring me into parliament for Edenbourne, and Tommy-Goodchild me for the rest of my days under his own roof, both in Mansfield-street and Eden Castle."

"And what can you desire more?"

"I desire a great deal *less!*—Sooner volunteer into a marching regiment, or become mate of an Indiaman!—I have 'a truant

disposition, good my lord;' and if condemned to fossilize at the castle, (as at present constituted,) will not answer for resisting my inclination to hire incendiaries, during some temporary absence of the family, and put an end to my sufferings!"

"A tour to a milder climate would certainly be a less *costly* alternative," said Philip, who had long ceased to argue with the extravagant flights of his brother.

"I may depend upon *you*, then, to attest a medical certificate of the weakness of my lungs?"

"Your own influence with my father will suffice,—the strength of which you have tried pretty severely!"

"I have done my best, certainly, to improve his lordship's education," said Percy, gravely; "but he does not get on as I could wish. *You*, my dear Phil, must complete his enlightenment. While I proceed to Lisbon or Madeira to take the chill off my constitution, you will naturally become all in all with Old Capulet and his lady."

Philip Askham shrugged his shoulders. He suspected that he was no great favourite with his parents.

"But that the property is so strictly entailed," resumed the wild heir-apparent, "I should be afraid of giving you so immense an advantage over me. Make the most of it, however; for I admit that you deserve compensation for submitting to the severe infliction of our domestic felicity."

An intimation such as this was of course regarded by Philip as the vapouring of an idle hour; and never was he more amazed than on learning from Lord Askham, soon after Percy quitted Christ Church, that he had received alarming hints from Simprems touching the health of his son.

"It seems that Percy's chest has been delicate ever since his last attack of influenza," said his lordship, in a tone of pique. "Vastly provoking, upon my word!—Just as I was on the point of bringing him into parliament!—He

was well enough, Heaven knows, all the time he was at Oxford."

Had Lord Askham's regrets been expressed in a more kindly tone, the task of confederacy might have sat heavy on the soul of Philip. As it was, he felt entitled to hold his peace.

"Your brother has taken it into his head that nothing will do for him but the Mediterranean," resumed the provoked father. "Mere prejudice—mere nonsense!—For my part, I have perfect faith in Devonshire. I have calculated the thing to a nicety; and it would cost me less to remove the whole family to Torquay for the winter, than run the risk of Percy's extravagance abroad. Torquay brought round old Lady Lenitive, when condemned by the whole faculty!—Why don't you answer, Philip? You *must* have heard the highest character of Torquay?"—

It had been useless to assure Lord Askham that, whatever the effect of the climate of Devonshire on Lady Lenitive, it would only serve

to aggravate the disorder of his refractory son; and Philip was beginning to remonstrate seriously with the pretended invalid on the indecency of treating their father like a *père de comédie*, when lo! his scruples were relieved by the intervention of a great political event.

The peace of Amiens put an end to the outpouring of christian blood, and the perplexities of Eden Castle!—

An immediate migration of callow lordlings followed the opening of the continent; and as, among the noble cubs destined to be bear-led through the grand tour, was Lady Askham's nephew, Lord Middlemore, a minor in the enjoyment of as many thousands a year as entitled him to the persecutions of a first-rate pedant, to the Rev. Dr. Dactyl was delegated the charge of both the cousins.

No possible plea for opposition! Percy Askham was taken in his own toils. His health and letters of credit were placed under the control of one with whom he saw it would be difficult to trifle; while, during his absence, as he

had himself sagaciously predicted, Philip, instead of entering the diplomatic career for which he had been intended, was promoted to fill his brother's place at Eden Castle.

CHAPTER II.

Cur alter fratrum cessare et ludere, et ungi,
Præferat Herodis palmetis pinguibus—

HOR. Ep. ii.

There is no flying hence or tarrying here.
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun!

MACBETH.

BEFORE six months had elapsed, though Mr. Askham's pathetic allusions, in his letters from the Continent, to the infirm state of his health, attested that his abhorrence of Eden Castle was undiminished, the prejudices of Philip in its favour had undergone considerable modification.

His disgusts, however, were not those of an elder son. He quarrelled neither with the

homeliness of the table, nor the want of a kennel. The respectabilities of the place were not too tough for his digestion; but he was harassed by the arbitrary temper of his parents, and mortified by their reserve.

Nothing in the atmosphere of such a house to foster the better impulses of his age! All was leather and prunella. The Askhams took pride rather than pleasure in their children:—to rear them so as to confer honour on themselves, constituting *their* notion of the parental mission. Their inclinations were always overlooked—their faults, never. Some small measure of kindness, indeed, was evinced towards the alpha and omega of the family,—the heir-apparent in his box-coat, and babe in its robes, (like the softening words of endearment which begin and end the harshest letter.) But with Philip commenced their system of discipline. While working him as hard as Caliban under the rod of Prospero, and rating him nearly as roundly, they protested that it was all from a sense of duty, lest he should be disqualified by

a life of ease for the struggles and hardships allotted to younger brothers by the utmost rigour of the law.

The truth was that, disappointed in their hopes of seeing their eldest son take that early part in public life which his father had been too shy or indolent to hazard, they could not forgive Philip for standing in Percy's boots; and chose to visit upon *him* the ill-health of his brother.

It seemed almost too great a stroke of fortune for a second son to fulfil the quotidian duty of reporting the state of the glass, for the edification of his father, and skimming the daily papers, for the information of his mother; and instead of requiting his filial zeal by the intimacies of domestic companionship, they seldom addressed him at all, except to find fault. His sisters were still condemned to hard labour and solitary confinement in the school-room,—his brothers pursuing at Eton their arduous course of study in cricket, football, and boating; so that, embarrassed by the unindulgent scrutiny

of his parents, the companionless young man moped about the place he had so gratuitously defended against the animadversions of Percy, till his youthful spirits subsided, and his affections shrunk within him like the shrinking of a collapsed balloon.

Before the end of a year, the silent system had done its worst on Philip!—

The Gwatkins, of Hexham Hall, (an old mansion which, commanding an oblique squint of Eden Castle from a distant hill, felt privileged to discuss its economy,) often whispered, half inquiringly, half confidentially, to Simprems the Edenbourne apothecary, that "it must be a great comfort to poor Lord Askham to find his second son so steady, during the absence of his eldest." But though rumours of the precarious state of the heir-apparent had considerably elevated Philip in the estimation of the neighbourhood as the presumptive representative of the family, neither the fifteen livings of which he was to be patron, nor the noble herd of deer whose haunches would lie at his disposal, gave

them courage to invite him to their houses, except on occasion of the solemn dinner-parties dedicated to Lord and Lady Askham. Mrs. Gwatkin, though the mother of several marriageable daughters impatiently waiting the advent of St. Valentine, stood far too much in awe of the heads of the family, to affront them by unwarrantable attentions to their son.

On the mere hint of some such civility, Lady Askham had been heard to say, in her severest tone, that "it was impossible for Mr. Philip Askham to leave his father;" plainly intimating the slavish footing on which he was established under their roof.

If a letter were to be written, Philip must be at hand; if a petitioner to be denied, Philip must undertake the ungracious task; nor was Lady Askham able to surmise the meaning of the Court Circular, or his lordship to decide how many points the wind had veered to the south, unless their son held his eyes, ears, and understanding at their absolute disposal.

Even when, in his second year of domestic

thraldom, his toils were lightened by the emancipation of his eldest sister from the school-room, to assist in answering notes and spelling newspapers, Lady Askham seemed afraid to let him off too easily.

"Philip is never in the house!"—she soon began to complain to Margaret, the new amanuensis. "He goes out an hour earlier than he used, and comes home an hour later. Nay, more than once, poor Lord Askham has had to worry himself to death, by writing excuses to County Meetings with his own hand! Most ungrateful and unaccountable conduct,—and I shall take care to let Philip see that his neglect does not pass unnoticed."

Home was accordingly made more uninviting than ever to the truant. The longer his absence, the longer, on his return, the accusing faces of his parents; till his sister, a kind-hearted but timid girl, beholding him an object of perpetual resentment, had scarcely courage to exchange a word with the delinquent.

"They care only for Percy!" muttered he,

after a family dinner, during which nothing had been audible but the gingle of the family plate and wheezings of the family butler. "With Percy, they had enough to talk about; but whether I come or go, is a matter of indifference.—Were I to break my neck to-morrow, even Margaret would not shed a tear!—It is excusable, perhaps, in those toadying people at Hexham, or poor Simprems, to make a distinction between my brother and myself; for to *them*, twenty years hence, Percy will be an important neighbour.—But that parents should recognize a difference between their children!—that Margaret, a mere girl, should be so worldly!"

Misgivings of this sordid nature act upon the mind as parasite-plants upon a tree, exhausting its better qualities. Jealousy, and still meaner envy, gradually corroded his heart, till the growth of his natural affections was stunted. Even the fairest offspring of the human breast,—first love,—was cheated of its due proportions;—and, as the child of a de-

formed mother inherits her distortion, the Cupid of Philip Askham was born a cripple!

For, as will have been inferred by the experienced reader, the two hours *per diem* abstracted from his duty towards his father, *were* devoted to a woman!

Some three miles from the castle, engirded by the river Eden as with a silver sash, stood the demure little town of Edenbourne; having little beyond its post-office to recommend it to the favour of the neighbourhood, but charming the eye of the traveller by pleasant sites, diversified by picturesque limestone cliffs advancing like a rampart upon the river; with shrubby rocks intervening, and here and there a sunny orchard basking in ruddy luxuriance on the bank.

The landscape was fair to look on, and the road leading to it from the castle, through Eden Chase, the best bridle-road in the county; so that none but the toll-keeper of the turnpike road was justified in expressing surprise that Mr. Philip Askham should prefer its verdant

solitudes for his daily exercise, to the king's highway. Nevertheless, the pertinacity of his visits to Edenbourne, *was* beginning to excite murmurs in the neighbourhood.

Among the lesser gentry, according to whose code the Askhams could do no wrong, (so completely had the rector of his lordship's nomination made it an article of religion with them to fear God, honour the king, and respect the Askhams!) much surprise was expressed that a young man having that noble domain at his disposal, and that stately roof over his head, should find *any* society preferable to his charming home circle.

Even those on visiting terms at Eden Castle, Mrs. Gwatkin, and her quizzical old brother, Sir Erasmus L'Estrange,—even *they* who *were* occasionally admitted within that circle's icy precincts, where they could not but notice that Philip was the chartered drudge of the house, were puzzled to conceive what attraction could draw him, morning after morning, to the gate of a certain small tenement, called Eastfield, situ-

ated in the pleasantest suburb of Edenbourne; from which he was seldom seen to emerge before set of sun.

Mrs. Gwatkin, indeed, who, as the mother of three pensive spinsters, (one of whom, in so thin a neighbourhood, was obviously entitled to be fallen in love with by Philip Askham,) was so anxious concerning his proceedings, that she did her utmost to engage Sir Erasmus in unravelling the mystery. But the old gentleman,—a spare, arnotto-coloured bachelor of sixty-five, whose thin face was as much overgrown by his whisker, as his obscure name by an alphabet of initials, indicating his fellowship with all the learned societies of Europe, — (having been knighted by George III. in honour of six quartos of travels as dry as himself, written apparently to prove that he had traversed the four quarters of the globe without finding anything worth mentioning.) The old gentleman was not to be moved by her inuendoes.—He had seen without emotion the Pyramids, and temple of Juggernaut; and

when assured that "Mr. Philip Askham—poor infatuated young man—was wasting his life and credit with a lady living at Eastfield,"—replied, in his favourite phrase, that "he saw nothing in it."

"*Nothing* in disgracing himself under the eyes of a family so respectable as his?"—cried Mrs. Gwatkin, with indignation.

"Why, what disgrace is there in visiting a lady who happens to live at Eastfield?" inquired Sir Erasmus, taking a third sniff out of his pinch of snuff.

"Cannot you imagine *the sort* of lady who must reside in such a place?"—exclaimed the swelling proprietress of a mansion making up sixteen best beds. "A cottage built by a retired tax-gatherer, on a bit of ground filched from the common!"—

"A vastly pretty bit of ground, and a neat cottage enough," observed the man who had not only "swam in a gondola," but hovelled in a bungalow.

"I grant you,—as lodge to a gentleman's

park!" retorted his sister. "But it is partly *your* fault; for when the place was in the market, two years ago, you should have bought it, and thrown it into your own grounds. I took you to see it on purpose."

"As I saw nothing in it, where was the use of throwing away four or five hundred pounds?"—

"To prevent our having a disreputable neighbour at our gates!—Perhaps, were you to visit Eastfield *now*, you *might* see something in it!"

"Improved, eh, by the new tenant?"

"I don't know what you call *improvement*," cried his sister, provoked by his obtuseness; "and as to the new tenant, who might pass for a school-girl, but that she is mother of two children ——"

"A widow, eh?" interrupted Sir Erasmus, who took most sublunary matters on their own showing.

"She certainly *calls* herself *Mrs. Saville*," replied his sister, without noticing his interruption. "But I dare say she has as much

right to the name of Howard or Percy! My mind misgave me, indeed, that all was not as it should be, when I saw the place doing up, previous to her arrival. A productive kitchen-garden turned upside down, to give place to flower-beds and a pretence at a lawn;—and pink curtains, forsooth, at the drawing-room windows!"

"What is there in all that?" observed Sir Erasmus composedly.

"Her predecessor, though well to do in the world, was contented with white dimity!" replied the irate lady.—"It was her duty, moreover, (dropping from the skies into a strange neighbourhood without an introduction, and under suspicious circumstances,) to avoid everything likely to compromise her in the opinion of her neighbours.—The consequence of the sort of equivocal gentility affected by Eastfield is, that no one has visited this Mrs. Saville!"

"And does Mrs. Saville *desire* to visit any one?" demanded the matter-of-fact old bachelor.

"Apparently; since she is so fond of morning visitors, as daily to admit young Askham."

"I see nothing in *that!*" retorted Sir Erasmus. "They were probably old acquaintance."

"Old? Mrs. Saville cannot be more than one-and-twenty, (about the age of *my* Fanny,") added Mrs. Gwatkin in a lower tone.

Perhaps then she may be a poor relation," persisted Sir Erasmus; better up in the pages of the Encyclopædia Britannica than those of Debrett."

"In that case," rejoined his sister, "baskets of game and fruit would find their way from Eden Castle to Eastfield, instead of the second son.—Take my word for it, Lord Askham never so much as heard her name.—The worst of it is, that the Askhams (though I respect them from the bottom of my heart) are such unneighbourly people, that it is impossible to give them a hint on the subject, such as one should feel it a duty to afford to other parents under similar circumstances."

"As to the circumstances, I see nothing in them," retorted Sir Erasmus; "and if the Askhams are uncivil, why trouble your head about their affairs?"

"Because, if some stop be not promptly put to Mr. Philip's proceedings, I foresee the most dreadful results!"

"Indeed?"—ejaculated her brother, *almost* excited by the solemnity of her tone.

"Unless his father and mother interfere, who knows but he may *marry* this Mrs. Saville?"

"And why not? I see nothing in it," replied the hardened tourist. "I have heard you assert that since his brother is so delicate, he *ought* to marry! You said so to himself, indeed, when we dined last year at Eden Castle."

"Because I thought him rather struck with Fanny, who is just the age for him!"

"So, you say, is Mrs. Saville."

"It is useless talking to you, brother, about such matters," cried Mrs. Gwatkin, rising angrily to depart; "of the world we live in, you

know no more than a child! A family like the Askhams is not to be judged like the outlandish beings you may have met in a jungle,—or the boors of Tobolsk,—or any other of the savages in fur or feathers, among whom you dawdled away your youth. However, some day or other, you will be sorry enough when, instead of your niece Fanny, you see this adventuress settled at Eden Castle!"

"I promise you I should see nothing in it," was the rejoinder of Sir Erasmus, as she quitted the room; "for you tell me she is a pretty young woman; whereas poor Fanny is—but *that* is no fault of her's."

It might be that the maternal irritabilities of Mrs. Gwatkin were roused by the inference; for the following day, much as she stood in awe of Lady Askham, she proceeded to the castle for a morning visit, with the apple of discord in her pocket.

There was some difficulty, however, in bringing her batteries into play. Lady Askham became unapproachable the moment she assumed

her airs of dignity; and on finding Mrs. Gwatkin of Hexham Hall, pretend to know more than herself concerning her son,—HER *son Philip*, —she added a cubit to her stature.

Still, with the praiseworthy zeal of her calling, the mischief-maker persevered; till, by the earnestness of her revelations, she brought conviction to the mind of the distressed mother.

"Philip,—passing his life in clandestine intimacy with a young widow?—The demure reserved Philip, a libertine?—The heir presumptive to their honours about to become the prey of an adventuress?"—A thunderbolt falling on the roof-tree of Eden Castle could not have produced greater consternation!

This was the first remarkable event in the parental life of the Askhams, and they could not make enough of it! So bitter, indeed, was their indignation, that their officious informant, terrified like the boy in the story book, by the sight of the devil she had raised, entreated them to make further inquiries, and exercise

their personal judgment, before they proceeded to open their vials of wrath on the head of their son.

But alas! further inquiries served only to certify their injuries! It was easy to ascertain that Philip's leisure hours were spent at Eastfield;—that the owner of that rustic retreat was young and lovely;—and, having at length deputed their trusty Simprems to cross-question the Edenbourne attorney by whom her lease had been drawn up, it came to light that she was the widow of an officer in the Guards; whose family, disapproving his marriage, had turned their backs on her and her children.

Philip, it appeared, had accidentally shared the mail with them, one dreary night, the preceding winter; when Mrs. Saville was on her road to Edenbourne, to take possession of the new home she had been tempted by an advertisement to hire in a county as remote as possible from the scene of her early afflictions; and having kindly lent his furred cloak to the benumbed children on their journey, had called for it at Eastfield the following day, *of course*

only to spare the bewildered stranger the inconvenience of despatching it to Eden Castle.

"And why did you never mention the circumstance to your mother or myself?" sternly demanded Lord Askham, after extorting this latter piece of information from the blanched lips of his son.

"Because you express a dislike to hearing any gossip about the people at Edenbourne," —stammered Philip; "nor did I think it likely that your lordship or my mother could feel much interest in—in—a person so humbly situated as Mrs. Saville."

"Not when she interests *you* so deeply, that you spend half your life in her company!"—cried the angry father. "Philip, Philip!—you are either an egregious dupe, or an abominable hypocrite! You are making a fool of this woman, or are made a fool of!—But let it go no further! So long as you abide under my roof, sir, I am answerable to the county for your moral conduct, —and will take care that it shall not disgrace us.—I desire that this dangerous intimacy may be broken off!"

CHAPTER III.

Quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit,
A Diis plura feret.

HOR.

Cel. For his verity in love, I do think him as concave as a covered goblet or a worm-eaten nut.

Ros. Not true in love?

Cel. Yes, when he *is* in; but I think he is *not* in!

SHAKSPEARE.

TILL the moment of this paternal explosion, Philip Askham had never looked steadily in the face the nature of his intimacy with Mrs. Saville;—perhaps because the subjection in which he was held, prevented his considering his soul (and its affections) his own;—perhaps because the multifarious avocations forced upon him left him little leisure for self-examination;—perhaps because the course of true friendship, which,

*un*like the course of a true love, *does* sometimes run smooth, had proved so soothing in its progress, as to lull him into temporary oblivion.

But, once roused by the thundering broadside of Lord Askham, no hope of further repose! He knew that the woman reviled by his father as seeking to entrap him, was as proud as she was poor,—and as poor as an income produced by the interest of five thousand pounds could make her;—and that, so far from having formed designs upon his heart, her own was buried in the grave of her husband.—Impossible to be more fondly devoted to the memory of the dead, than she to that of the young and gallant Edward Saville!

By a timely act of kindness to her children, Philip had recommended himself to her acquaintance; but so sincere was the young mother in her desire of seclusion, and so well aware that a life of retirement could alone secure a subsistence for her children out of her scanty fortune, that when her courteous fellow-traveller persisted in calling again and again at

Eastfield,—on pretence of the loan of a book or newspaper,—or plants for her garden, or counsel for her furnishing,—his visits were felt to be an intrusion.

Neither by word nor look, had she ever encouraged his assiduities. It was only because he devoted himself so affectionately to the children and lightened the dreariness of their little lives, that his company was tolerated by the mother.

Then what,—since such the footing of their friendship,—*what* went he to seek at Eastfield? Simply a happier home than he left behind! The deportment of Mrs. Saville was so conciliating, and the welcome of the loving children so kind, that it seemed as if, in winter, all the sunshine of the earth were concentrated by her warm fireside,—as in summer, upon her flowery lawn. At Eden Castle, not the vestige of a flower within half a mile of the house! At Eden Castle, not one cordial hand extended towards him! With the servants, he was "only Mr. Philip;" with his parents, only one of their

younger sons. Even his pretty cousin, Helen Middlemore, when on a visit at the house, was kept by her prudent mother out of the way of a cousin so unavailable. How cheering therefore, after all his humiliations, to be smiled upon by so sweet a face as that of the gentle Evelyn Saville!

For she *did* smile upon him. She even made an *effort* to smile when her spirits were at the lowest, in compassion to the depressed air of a visitor who came to her harassed by his go-cart routine of domestic toil; and, after helping to place the children in the swing,—assisting the young widow in her flower garden,—or witnessing the progress of a Skye terrier, whose education constituted the chief diversion of little Edward,—so refreshed were the feelings of the Paria by an atmosphere of kindliness and love, that if he did not return to the castle a wiser and a better man, he returned there twice as patient!

And now, after nearly a year's enjoyment of these alleviations, he was suddenly ordered to

renounce the society of one whose toleration had been an act of mercy!—But *how* was it to be done?—Though originally discouraged, he flattered himself his visits had now become habitual to *her*—indispensable to the children. If absent a day from Eastfield, he had to explain the reason. And how was he to make it apparent that, henceforward, he should return no more?

Never had the sunshiny pleasantness of the place assumed so powerful a charm, as in his solitary reveries during those first few tedious days he strove to stay away.—On attempting to turn his horse's head in the opposite direction on entering Eden Chase, even the horse seemed of opinion that the great business of its life was to call upon Mrs. Saville; and in spite of bit and bridle, contended the matter, not manfully, but horsefully, with its master.

Nor did Lord and Lady Askham diminish his predilection for his Paradise Lost, by the sullenness through which they endeavoured to

mark their deep sense of his misconduct. Never had the castle been more insupportable!—Even the neighbours, the Gwatkins and Sir Erasmus, Dr. Hackit and Simprems (a sort of Greek chorus to the family catastrophes, which supplied ohs! ahs! and alases! when any thing was amiss with the Askhams,) thought to recommend themselves to the great people, by coldness towards a son who was understood to be in disgrace.

By the end of a month, in short, Philip had pined and grumbled himself into a discovery that Eastfield was essential to his happiness.—But for the exile imposed upon him, he might never have ascertained it; but having boldly made the avowal to himself, one day, while vainly trying to induce his horse to saunter along a dusty lane leading to Hexham, instead of cantering over the smooth green turf towards Edenbourne, off they started together, as by a common impulse; and, reckless of father and mother, threats of future disinheritance or pre-

sent persecution,—Philip Askham abruptly made his re-appearance in the little drawing-room at Eastfield.

Perhaps, while ringing at the gate, he may have pictured to himself that his return was as important to the feelings of its mistress, as to his own; for he was grievously disappointed in the result. Though the children, climbing his knees, upbraided him with his long absence, not a tinge of emotion coloured the soft cheeks of their mother.

While with gentle courtesy she inquired what had kept him away, he watched her narrowly; his father's accusations half tempting him to fear —to hope—at all events to *believe*—that she might regard him with deeper interest than as a morning visitor.

But no! her mild grey eyes dwelt quietly on his own, her sweet voice remained undisturbed,—and the seam she was sewing exhibited the most pattern-like evenness of sempstressship. It was clear that his comings and goings possessed no stronger hold upon the heart of

that unimpressionable being than those of Simprems the apothecary!

Philip Askham scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry!—Within the last few days, while reflecting in his desultory rambles on the influence exercised over his mind by his intimacy at Eastfield, and his mechanical identification with the family, it had certainly glanced into his mind that to be an object of attachment to one so fair and gentle as that girlish widow, might be a more enchanting thing than was yet dreamed of in his philosophy; nay, he had detected himself in the weakness of exercising his arithmetic on the amount of their united incomes, as well as of the manifold virtues which enhanced her personal attractions.

But as, even *then*, he had admitted the folly of dwelling on the matter,—since, where she fifty times more graceful and amiable, she would remain an object of abhorrence at Eden Castle, — Philip had no excuse for the feeling of pique which mingled with his perception of her indifference.

So pre-occupied was his mind by his vexation at her *sangfroid*, that, for some minutes, he held Selina on his knee in silence, and allowed the playful endearments of her little brother to pass unnoticed.

"Are you ill, dear Mr. Askham, or angry with us?" inquired the children, surprised by his unusual absence of mind; on which hint, their mother raised her eyes from her work towards the handsome face of her visitor; and finding it exhibit its usual hue of health, dropped them again in silence, and quietly resumed her occupation.

As she sat there, like a statue of snow, the pang of discovering that his father was mistaken, and that he was still alone in the world, was almost too much for Philip!—

Instead of replying to the interrogations of Selina, or attempting to account for his previous absence, he suddenly, almost ferociously, announced to Mrs. Saville, that he should not see her again for some time to come; having a round of county engagements to fulfil with Lord

and Lady Askham, which would keep them away from Eden Castle till the commencement of the London season.

"Go away, and not come back again till next summer?"—cried Selina, while tears began to moisten her long eyelashes. "No, no! you *must* not go away. We shall be so unhappy without you! *Who* will come and see us when you are gone, and *who* will put us in the swing?"

"It seems a long time to look forward to next summer," interposed her mother, as if to put an end to her prattle. "But look back to last spring, Selina, and see how quickly the time has passed!"

"Yes, because dear Mr. Askham came to see us every day, and paid us such long visits!"

"The best thing you can do, then," said her mother, slightly colouring, "is to make the time seem short by being very good and very attentive to your lessons, and on his return, surprise him by your improvement."

Philip's impatience was brought to a climax by the composure of these maternal admoni-

tions. Scarcely more than a child herself, it was absurd to hear her thus sermonizing the children!—

"You are most kind," said he, with sarcastic bitterness, to "limit my absence to six months; I am afraid I shall afford a somewhat longer trial of Selina's application. My brother Percy is on his return home (recalled by my father), and *his* instalment at Eden Castle will give the signal for my release. I shall immediately enter upon my diplomatic career."

"But even then, the castle must always be your home? You will, at some future time, return to Edenbourne?"—pleaded the imperturbable Mrs. Saville.

"There is little in this neighbourhood to attract those who have freedom of choice!" — was the savage reply of Philip, who seemed to have visited Eastfield only to be ungracious. Nay, so obstinate was his moroseness, that, on finding the grief of poor Selina at the prospect of losing him increase to a degree that threatened to disarm his anger, he heart-

lessly disentwined her little fingers from his hand; and, pleading a commission to execute for Lady Askham, took a hasty leave, and was out of sight in a moment.

"My father was right!"—muttered Philip, in a choking voice, as he reached the green confines of the Chase.—"It was time there should be an end of this!"—

Some days after this catastrophe in the family at Eden Castle, one of very different moment occurred in the history of the world.

England and France,—those two great countries predestined never to be one, since their union, like that of many other couples, is productive of fighting and scratching, kissing and making it up again, only to recommence their squabbles,—had hit upon fresh grounds of national dissension. On the present occasion, indeed, the new government, which asserted new claims and pretensions in behalf of *la grande nation*, adopted also modes of hostility new in the history of nations.

On the sudden proclamation of war, the En-

glish travellers in France were detained as prisoners !—

As it was then the fashion to describe the soldier of fortune who controlled its destinies, (for the *premier consul* like

Le premier roi, fût un soldat heureux,)

as a species of archfiend engendered by the fiery foam of Phlegethon, the country-gentlemen instantly decided that the unfortunate *detenus* would be poisoned in cold blood, like the sick at Jaffa, or murdered in the Temple, like Captain Wright; unless reserved for a more terrible fate by some new process of scientific torture. The *Institut* might possibly offer a premium for the invention of instruments for the better excruciation of English prisoners; or Berthollet dedicate his crucibles and retorts to their readier extermination.

Now Lord Askham was a country gentleman ! And who could blame him, on the present occasion, for using to the utmost his privilege of prejudice and credulity;—since his eldest son—

his heir apparent—his pride—his Percy—was included among the ill-fortuned *detenus!*

On receiving the mandate of recall to England issued by his father in consequence of certain revelations made by the travelling tutor, Percy had thought proper to extend his homeward journey by a tour in the Pyrenees. Though the season of the year was unpropitious alike to the picturesque and the pastimes of Barèges, he chose to make them a pretext for prolonging his release from Eden Castle; and lo! just as he reached the city of Troubadours, the mandate of arrest went forth!—

"Why, in the name of Heaven, could he not return to England with Middlemore and Dr. Dactyl?" exclaimed this distracted father, on learning the grievous intelligence;—adding (much in the tone of the "*que diable allait il faire dans cette galère?*" of Géronte,) "and what on earth took him round by Toulouse!"—

"My brother was on his way home," pleaded Philip. "It was his nearest way to England."

"He had much better have come with Mid-

dlemore. He ought to have been here six weeks ago —What could possibly take him round by Toulouse !" reiterated Lord Askham, in despair.

" When Percy wrote to you, my lord, from Barèges, he mentioned that he was to visit St. Sauveur, and said——"

" I remember, I remember!—But I desired him in my answer to lose no time on the road. I told him he was wanted at home !—What, what on earth took him round by Toulouse?"

" Would it not be better," argued Philip, " if you ascertained immediately at Coutts's, the safest mode of making remittances to my brother?—In his present painful situation, his resources must not be allowed to fail."

" Certainly,—of course !—I will write directly,—or better still, will speak to Coutts himself. — Old Coutts knows more of what is going on in Europe, than they know in Downing Street or the Horse Guards; and your brother's name can scarcely fail to be mentioned in any dispatches that arrive from France. The eldest son of Lord Askham of Eden Castle, must

be an object of some consequence in the eyes of this Corsican blackguard; and poor Percy would doubtless be among the first selected for persecution. Philip! my blood runs cold when I think of it!—What on earth took him round by Toulouse!"

As time passed on, and the mind of England worked itself clear upon this painful subject, not even the tenderest of parents,—not even the most hysterical of hypochondriacs,—saw cause to apprehend that one of the greatest statesmen of modern times would commit so great a blunder, or one of the greatest warriors so cowardly an act, as injure a hair of the heads of those guiltless prisoners:—and Lord Askham alone chose to persevere in painting the First Consul in the attitude of the ogre preparing his captives for table, and "smelling the blood of an Englishman." His lordship seemed to think that the punctuality of his tax-paying, and notoriety of his antigallicism, would bring down a double measure of vengeance on his son!

Already, he lamented over him like the Duke

of Ormond over his dead Ossory. Hushed were those bitter revilings which, only a few weeks before, had upbraided Percy as a prodigal—a profligate—a parricide,—bent on effecting the ruin of the house of Askham, by converting the hundreds allowed him into thousands; and, instead of fortifying his feeble lungs by a milk diet and Iceland moss, astounding Rome with his carnival antics, or, in his box at the Scala, talking down the united chorus of contrabassi and big drums!

All that Lord Middlemore had boasted of the feats of his cousin,—all that the Rev. Dr. Dactyl had entrusted to the aggrieved ear of his parents,—was now buried in oblivion. Lord Askham persisted in describing him as the comfort of his gray hairs—the hope of an honourable house—the most attached of sons—the most patriotic of John Bulls,—till he almost believed what he advanced!

"To be compelled to reside in a foreign country," said his lordship, with a degree of mournful gravity worthy the countenance of a mute, "to

eat the bitter bread of banishment from Eden Castle,—from his beloved home,—will be death to this high-spirited young man !"

By his family misfortune, the usually taciturn lord felt that he had acquired claims to universal commiseration—a right to be listened to a right to be read ; and memorably did he abuse the privilege ! As if to repay himself for half a century of insignificance, the memorials with which he beset King, Lords, Commons,—the Treasury Bench and Privy Council,—were such, both in length, breadth, and *thickness*, as must have expended in transcription the patience of any private secretary less abjectly submitted to his will, than his unfortunate son.

Though sincerely touched by an event so vital to the future interests of the captive, Philip, indeed, interpreted somewhat nearer the truth the state of Percy's feelings, and the nature of his situation. But while admitting to himself, in secret, that certain family fetters might be almost as heavy to bear as the *parole* exacted by Napoleon, and that in Percy's place *he* too

should have gone round by Toulouse, he devoted himself to watch with redoubled interest the signs of the times, as indications of his brother's chances of liberation.

He now took interest in those leading articles, heretofore so loathingly rehearsed; and became a nightly attendant in the gallery of the House of Commons, to examine the portents of debate. No great sacrifice!—There were giants on the earth in those nights, and gigantic cause of strife to animate their mighty energies.—Old England in its buff waistcoat, legislating for the rights of nations, had a somewhat better claim to be listened to, than Young England in its white, drivelling with boarding-school elocution over the Pharisaical dissidence of the Puseyites, or the perplexities of the Spanish succession!—

The re-rivetting of his own chains by the captivity of his brother, had perhaps some share in creating this profound sympathy. Still, Philip had discernment enough to fear that a nature like that of Percy, might degenerate during a long sojourn in France, where all his faults would

pass for virtues; and that Verdun must prove a fatal school to the future lord of Eden Castle.

Trusting, however, with the many, that the enlargement of the *détenus* would be negociated between the two governments; or rather, trusting to the eloquence of those sonorous implements of destruction (whereon Louis XIV. wisely caused to be inscribed "*Ratio ultima regum*," —the logic of Kings,) he devoted himself anew, as in filial duty bound, to the toil and trouble of his home department. It was his business to submit without a murmur. No Canon short of the fifth commandment could inspire patience to listen to the question, a million times a day repeated, of—"But what took him round by Toulouse?"—

If the whole truth must be told, he was beginning to contemplate without much disgust, the prospect of a return to Eden Castle, whence he had departed in such dudgeon. The summer was come again. June had reappeared in the fields, with her brocaded robe of blossoms; and amid the suffocation of fashionable assem-

blies, and dusty monotony of Rotton Row, *who* could forbear to sigh after the cool greenery of Eden Chase, with its dotted thorns, doing penance in their white sheets, and its silvery birches bathing their drooping branch-tips in the brook?

While passing in review, as he pursued his meditative way along Pall Mall, those groupings of sylvan landscape, *some* trace perhaps of a certain cottage in Edenbourne might be remotely discernible in the distance; for though never weary of congratulating himself on having escaped the danger of falling in love with Mrs. Saville, he recurred far oftener to Eastfield and the Eastfieldians than was consonant with his professions of indifference.

Comparison with the restless, world-worn belles of a London season, had been decidedly favourable to the young widow. Her purity of complexion, her purity of nature, her softness of eye, her gentleness of speech, could not but gain by the contrast; and since her manifest indifference towards himself entitled him to cul-

tivate her acquaintance *quoad* acquaintance, so long as it could be done without offence to his family, he was perhaps excusable in anticipating with rapture the welcome of the children and the domestic peace of her house, as the best consolations awaiting him on his return to the country. Lord and Lady Askham being just then too full of Percy and Toulouse to keep a vigilant watch on his movements, he flattered himself his way was clear.

But as the birthday drew nigh, (the glorious 4th of June, at that time as propitious to those "licensed to let posthorses," as now the Derby or the Oaks,) it appeared that he had reckoned without his host, *i. e.* his host of Eden Castle!

Lord Askham was not only too full of his son Percy to play the spy on his son Philip, but too full of him to return at present to that ancestral hall, where oxen had been roasted whole, for his birth as an heir-apparent, and his attainment of years of discretion. The tender father felt that the sight of a borough there was no Percy to represent, would be

wormwood to his soul; nor could the petty sympathy of the rector and apothecary, the old tourist and his dowdy sister, content a man who had laid his sorrows at the foot of the throne, and elegiacised the ear of the administration.—

On the eve of their annual migration, therefore, when the family wagon rumbled its way to town to fetch home the properties of the house of Askham, the household was suddenly apprized that the *living* moveables were booked for another destination.

"Margaret was looking delicate; the children," Lady Askham thought, "would be the better for the sea."

For reasons best known to the heads of the well-disciplined family, they were to spend the autumn at Weymouth.

CHAPTER IV.

Let still the woman take
An elder than herself. So wears she to him;
So sways the level in her husband's heart.

SHAKSPEARE.

Omnes ut tecum meritis pro talibus annos
Exigat, et pulchra faciat te prole parentem.

VIRGIL.

Quand la raison a raison, c'est que le hasard y met de la méchanceté.

BALZAC.

NOTHING wonderful in such a movement on the part of any family less methodical and stay-at-home than the Askhams. For English people when bored, as for dogs when rabid, a dip in the sea passes as an infallible specific; and as the popularity of the Prince of Wales was already extending itself to that frightful

little fishing village on the coast of Sussex, now converted by the decree of royal caprice into a flourishing town such as in America would call itself a city,—no wonder that the loyal devotion of Lord and Lady Askham

(Heu pietas!—heu prisca fides!)

should direct *their* marine propensities towards the coast of Dorset.

His lordship might perhaps have discovered in the sequel, that a bathing-place enlivened by the presence of royalty, the galloping of dragoons, the glittering of aide-de-camps, the braying of trumpets and braying of courtiers, is a somewhat different thing from a bathing-place mourning in sackcloth and ashes, over the absence of the same; but that a second family-event was impending, calculated to reconcile him to all sublunary evils,—even to the name of Toulouse!—

Providence, which had visited him severely in his sons, was rewarding him in his daughters. Margaret Askham, the meek fellow-sufferer of

the honorary secretary, was about to receive her crown of martyrdom, in the shape of a coronet: the agitation consequent on the delicate dilemmas of courtship, being in fact the origin of that paleness which had excited the uneasiness of her parents, and transported the family to the coast.

All, however, was now adjusted. Miss Askham's complexion was restored to its pristine bloom; and her alliance with the most noble the Marquis of Uppingham, had not only been announced in the papers, but elicited the congratulations of royalty.

The world, with its usual envious spirit on such occasions, wondered mightily at the match;—some people unable to conjecture how the Askhams could allow a lovely girl of nineteen to throw herself away on a man three times her age,—some, to imagine how so superior a man as Lord Uppingham could condemn himself to the society of an unformed, unmeaning miss. —For it was the great match of the season;—unique in point of settlements, diamonds, equi-

page, all that imparts lustre to the fleckering coruscations of Hymen's torch;—and the malcontents had an immense majority.

The truth was that, though Miss Askham, a sensible but submissive girl, had accepted the Marquis's proposals as in obedience to the commands of her parents, persons as well acquainted as her brother Philip with the dreariness of her loveless home, were tempted to surmise that reminiscences of Eden Castle imparted considerable charm to her anticipations of Uppingham Manor; while the Marquis, a man of great merit but arbitrary temper, was solely induced to offer his hand to the daughter of Lord and Lady Askham, because he wanted the best wife that could be had—for money!

Arrived at a time of life, when the gout and a winter-fireside in perspective, render domestic companionship indispensable, even to the most popular of men and ablest of ministers, he had looked about him for a patient helpmate, of his own condition in life; and if the spirit-breaking roof of Eden Castle did not produce

Griseldas, what virtue in boiled mutton and backboards?

As Marino Faliero would have said in his place,—

> He trusted to the blood of Lady Askham,
> Pure in her veins;—he trusted to the soul
> God gave her,—to the truths her Bible taught her,—
> To her belief in heaven,—to her mild nature,—
> To her bright faith and honour for his own!—

Attraction in a ball-room, or skill in a concert, were nothing to the purpose. For to a man of his lordship's age and predominance, such accomplishments as entrechats and bravuras appear an impertinence; and he had literally fallen in love with Margaret Askham, from the smiling serenity with which he saw her devote a whole summer's afternoon to sorting a box of entangled silks for her mother!—

On the first announcement of the engagement, her brother Philip was among those who saw in it only the disproportion of years. He could not bear that the bright youth of a girl

like Margaret should pass at once into the shade; and, attributing the match to worldliness and ambition, accused the pernicious system of his parents of having dried up all natural impulses in her soul.

He even remonstrated in plain English with his sister; and, braving the indignation of Lord and Lady Askham, in case Margaret should turn traitress and reveal his interference, adjured her to deliberate on the solemn nature of matrimonial obligations,—to forget that her *trousseau* was in the hands of Macfarlane, and the Uppingham diamonds in those of Rundell and Bridge,—and interrogate her conscience concerning her motives for swearing to *love*, as well as honour and obey, a man some years older than her father.

The prophet Balaam could scarcely have listened in greater wonderment to the reproof of the inspired quadruped, than Margaret to the rebuke of her usually uncommunicative brother. But her answerwas as prompt as consoling.

" Make yonrself, easy, dear Philip," said she,

—after thankiug him for this unexpected evidence of affection. "My choice is free,—my purposes are far other than you suppose. The kindness with which I was distinguished by Lord Uppingham from the moment of my appearance in society, (I, whom so few distinguish!) may have had some share in opening my eyes to his merits. But to me, there is more charm in the high breeding of such a man,—in his influence over the minds of others —in his command over his own,—than in the showy attractions of the ball-room partners you seem to consider more suitable as partners for life."

Philip Askham listened in silence. "Can this be a girl of nineteen?" thought he; "no, five-and-thirty, if she be a day!—Reason herself could not argue more frigidly. The Marquis is right;—their ages are perfectly assorted."

"Lord Uppingham never utters a word but brings conviction to my mind," pursued Miss Askham, as if interpreting her brother's thoughts; "I never saw him out of temper, I

never knew him unjust.—Are *these* no merits in the man with whom one is to pass the remainder of one's days?"—

"*The greatest!*" replied Philip. "Still, there requires sympathy of tastes and habits, to complete the happiness of married life."

"Between *us* there *will* be similarity of tastes and habits," argued Miss Askham, more earnestly, "for I shall instinctively adopt his own."

"You have at present seen so little of the world!" pleaded her brother. "Recollect, I entreat you, that should you meet hereafter some companion better suited to your years and feelings——"

"I have never yet seen the person I prefer to him," interrupted his sister, with warmth. Henceforward, "there is no danger. I shall re-enter society with the eyes and heart of a wife."

The axiom of a popular French moralist occurred at that moment to Philip, that "many would pass through life ignorant of the pas-

sion of love, if they had never happened to hear the name," as fully confirmed.—Here was a girl who had never read a novel,—never perused a line of poetry save the chaste didactics of Thomson and Cowper,—never trilled or cadenced on the fatal words "*mio bene*," —never traced with pen or pencil the too instructive allegories of mythological lore; and, who, pure as Eve at the fountain, surmised no charm in married life beyond the companionship of a man frosted with the snows of nearly sixty winters, and, instead of the wings of Cupid, adorned with the paraphernalia of a K. G.!

"I see you regard me with pity!" said she, addressing her brother with a smile. "You are wondering at my stupidity, in not preferring to a man older than my father, some gay captain in the Guards!—Thank *yourself*, dear Philip, for my enlightenment!—It was *your* example that taught me the value of a young man's love!"

"What can you possibly mean?" cried Philip,

apparently less skilled in the interpretation of physiognomy than his sister.—

"For two whole months, last year," returned Miss Askham, "I heard nothing day after day, at Eden Castle, but complaints of your mad passion for the lady at Eastfield,—that beautiful Mrs. Saville."

"You have seen her, then?"—interrupted Philip, in an altered voice.

"Often, when driving through Edenbourne; and constantly, at church. I never beheld a sweeter countenance, I never saw a more graceful figure: and, like the rest of the family, when I heard of your spending week after week in her company, I concluded it must end in her becoming your wife. Admit that you were desperately in love with her?—Your absent manners,—your peevishness with *me*,—your impatience of all and everything at home,—satisfy me that, for a time, your whole heart was at Eastfield!"

"And what then?"—faltered Philip, equally

surprised and embarrassed by the frankness of her accusations.

"Simply that, when required by my father to renounce the object of your attachment, you became suddenly enlightened to the folly of a love match;—and farewell, poor Mrs. Saville!"—

For an instant, Philip was half tempted to avow the *real* cause of his estrangement. But self-love prevailed. Even to his sister, a man has not courage to admit that his affection is unreturned.

"So much," resumed Miss Askham, in a more cheerful voice, "so much for the stability of Love!—And when I reflect on *your* unsteadiness of purpose,—on Percy's flightiness,—or the coarseness of our cousin Middlemore, (without an idea beyond the stable and barouche-box,) I own I congratulate myself on the prospect of passing my life with one whose affection is likely to be permanent; and for whom my own is founded on unbounded confidence and respect."

"After all," mused Philip, on parting from his sister, "the severities of Eden Castle may have overshot the mark with Percy and myself; but it is a capital school for wives!—I have always heard Lord Uppingham cited as one of the ablest men in the kingdom. He has made proof of his sagacity (where the cleverest men usually shew it least) in his choice of a wife!"

And thus agreeably relieved from his scruples concerning the motives and future prospects of his sister, Philip allowed himself to fraternize *a little* more cordially with his future brother-in-law; against whom, as the most stiff-necked of Tories and Strafford-like of ministers, he entertained a certain mistrust. The wedding was to be solemnized in London. Nothing short of the metropolis would content the vast ambitions of Lord and Lady Askham, on an occasion so honourable to their family annals; and though the mature bridegroom and sensible bride pleaded for the tranquillity of Edenbourne, and the modest surplice of Doctor

Hacket,—a special license, an archbishop, and the attendance of all the "thrones, majesties, dominions, princedoms, powers," of both their houses, were indispensable to the vain-glorious cravings of parents, who evidently accepted the marriage of their daughter as a tribute to their personal merit.

In all this, Philip could not sufficiently admire the deference testified by the Marquis towards a father-in-law, several years his inferior in age, and a thousand degrees in understanding. The urbanity with which he supported the tediousness of a family circle, dull and hollow as the lugubrious music of a muffled drum,—the patience with which he listened to Lord Askham's chapter of Lamentations over his son Percy's refusal to spend the winter at Torquay, and rebellion in going round by Toulouse,—were proofs of self-command and good-breeding which Philip admitted to be of better augury for the happiness of his wife, than the pomps of Uppingham Manor, or the promised dignities of a Lady of the Bedchamber.

Meanwhile, the wedding, stately as it was, was still a wedding; and exercised the charm inseparable from such inspiriting events, even in the best-regulated families. The tutor and governess lapsed into secondary authorities; and Emma and Susan Askham, who were to officiate as bridesmaids, ventured to surmise, under the excitement of white satin and swans-down, wedding-cake and wedding favours, that grammars and dictionaries, solfeggi and sonatas, might not alway prevail. The grave old servants relaxed into smiles, like gnarled and rusty fruit trees putting forth their white blossoms in the spring time; and even Philip felt cheered by the momentary hilarity of the house.

It was not till the Marquis and Marchioness departed after the ceremony for Uppingham Manor, amid the cheers of the populace and smiles of the most triumphant of parents, that the memory of his old grievances re-enveloped him as in a leaden winding sheet!—Alas! and woe was *him!*—He was about to become once more sole auditor of his father's Jere-

miads!—In Margaret, he had lost a pitying companion; and there would be no one now to share with him the burthen of the grand family dinners,—the stuffy dowager assemblies, and solemn oratorios, which constituted the Mansfield Street *beau idéal* of the pleasures of the season!

To his great surprise, however, Philip discovered that the entrance of a man of the world into his humdrum circle, had already enlarged its perceptions. The experience of Lord Uppingham had doubtless suggested that, during the absence of the future head of the house, *something* of the name of Askham ought to be seen in the gay circles of the *beau monde;* for the parrot-like tone in which Lord Askham repeated—"We owe it to poor Percy not to suffer our connexions wholly to decay,"—convinced him that the politic Marquis was not only the origin of the flattering invitations he received, but of the sanction which enabled him to accept them.

Lord Askham had every encouragement to

slacken the chains of paternal authority in the moderate eagerness evinced by Philip "to take the goods the gods (and the Uppinghams) provided." The young man's spirit was broken by the sense of dependence. If, in some ball-room, the partner for whose hand he applied happened to be engaged, he instantly fancied himself scouted as a younger brother.

"She would have danced with Percy!" thought he, when his cousin Helen Middlemore pleaded fatigue as an excuse for not undertaking the *travaux forcés* of one of those country-dances of forty couples, which, at that time, rendered an invitation to a ball equivalent to a sentence of hard labour in a house of correction. For Philip had been made too painfully conscious, at Eden Castle, of the nonentityism of his position, ever to feel at ease. His habits of subjection clung to him, even in the world.

"Is Philip's health as delicate as that of your elder brother, my dear Margaret?" inquired Lord Uppingham of his bride, after a

stately family dinner in Mansfield Street, given on their return to town: and Margaret, who had gathered from her cousin, Lord Middlemore, the real state of the case as regarded Percy's consumptive tendencies, hesitated to answer.

"Philip is not out of *health*," said she, "only out of spirits.—My brother leads so secluded a life at Eden Castle!"

"But what business *has* he at Eden Castle? At *his* age, he should be working in some profession,"—replied the active public man.

"He was to have entered the *corps diplomatique*, I believe, but for Percy's detention in France."

"And is the misfortune of one brother, my dear child, to produce the ruin of the other?" inquired the Marquis, with a smile. "Strange policy, methinks!—Lord Askham's estates being entailed, he will be able to do little for his younger children."

"But Philip is able to do a great deal for

him!" interrupted Lady Uppingham. "My father could not get on at all, without Philip!"

"I could find Lord Askham three hundred better secretaries at a salary of four-score pounds a year!" observed her husband, with difficulty suppressing his disgust at the miscalculating selfishness of his father-in-law.

"But even a private secretary could not altogether replace Philip," pleaded Margaret. "Our neighbourhood is a bad one; and in the winter evenings, he is wanted for chess with my father, or backgammon with mamma."

"Sport to *them*, but death to *him!*"—rejoined the Marquis. "*Poor* Philip!—I no longer wonder at his long face, or the compassionate tone in which you pronounce his name! But we must see to this, my little wife.—*One* prisoner is enough in the family. Poor Philip, as you call him, must be set at liberty."

With a deep blush, Lady Uppingham endeavoured to insinuate, as clearly as might be without attributing blame to her parents, the

impossibility of change in the cast-iron arrange ments of Eden Castle.

"Slaves and despots are a reciprocal creation, my dear Margaret," observed Lord Uppingham, in a more sententious tone. "The feeble son is father to the arbitrary father! Philip owes all possible duty to his parents, except such as is incompatible with self-respect."

"If my father and mother could only hear you preach the virtue of filial insubordination!" —said Lady Uppingham, taking his hand.

"To their sons—only to their sons"—replied her husband, not a little amused by her air of dismay. "In their daughters, my good little wife, I fully recognize the virtue of passive obedience. But we must lend a helping hand to poor Philip! Though the French proverb proclaims the danger of interposing a finger betwixt the tree and the bark, I must venture mine for your brother."

Cheered rather than dispirited by the authoritative tone of one on whose superiority of intellect she had implicit reliance, the young wife

offered no further remonstrance. She trusted, perhaps, the season being at its close, that immediate occasion would not present itself for the rash attempt. Lady Askham was remaining in town only for the triumph of witnessing the first public appearance, at the birthday, of the daughter in whom her pride delighted; after which, the family was to resume its clockwork routine at Eden Castle.

"But why should Philip leave London before the end of the season?"—inquired the Marquis, when these arrangements were discussed by the Askhams in his presence.—"Leave him with *us*, my dear lord.—Though your establishment in Mansfield Street is broken up, we have plenty of room for him at Uppingham House; and Margaret will be thankful for such an escort to the parties and operas to which I so often find it difficult to accompany her. —What say you, Philip?—Will you give us the pleasure of your company in Privy Gardens till parliament is up?"

Accustomed to regard his children as part of

his property—and an available part,—Lord Askham felt almost too much injured for words by this insult to his flag.

"Is your lordship aware," said he, ere his son gathered courage to reply, "that I am about to preside over our County Agricultural Meeting?"

"Ay, on the 17th, I think,"—was the cool rejoinder of the Marquis, "and a full meeting I suspect you will have!—But *that* need not take Philip out of town.—*He*, I suppose, has no great genius for bone-mills and patent ploughs?"—

"I shall require my son's assistance on the occasion!" replied Lord Askham, coldly,—for once overcoming his deference towards a son-in-law whose political position invested him with peculiar dignity in the eyes of an Irish (non-representative) peer.

"If you require his *assistance*, I have not another word to say," said Lord Uppingham with a smile. "I forgot, my dear lord, that you would have a speech to get up, and—"

"I do not allude to assistance of *that* nature," eagerly interrupted Lord Askham. "But during the unfortunate absence from England of my son Percy, it is right and proper that I should be supported on public occasions by the presence of his next brother."

"At the public dinner, you mean? Certainly, certainly! At our time of life, that sort of toast-and-sentiment work is no joke.—But, three weeks are wanting to the 17th; and till then, *we* will take care of him. We have some hard debating in prospect. Pitt is to speak on the Alien Bill,—a better school for your son than all the clodhopping County Meetings in the world!"—

Lord Askham opened his lips as if for rejoinder;—but feelings of some sort or other,—certainly not pleasant ones,—impeded his utterance.

"For I conclude you mean shortly to bring him into parliament!" continued the straightforward Lord Uppingham, who, since none but the family were present, saw no need to set a

watch over his lips. "Government affords us so little hope of an exchange of prisoners, that of course you will no longer reserve Edenbourne for Percy?"—

A ferocious glance from Lord Askham towards his son plainly intimated a suspicion that with *him* originated these preposterous hints! Philip felt his situation to be critical. Immediate self-vindication was indispensable. It was only by a decided negative to the friendly overtures of his brother-in-law he could hope for indulgence.

With more clearness, therefore, than might have been anticipated, he expressed his gratitude for Lord Uppingham's kindness, and a decided objection to remaining in town.

"I fear, my dearest Margaret, my interference comes too late!—I am sadly afraid Philip has been made, and will remain, a poor creature!"—said Lord Uppingham, when subsequently talking over the matter with his wife. "He wanted courage, you saw, to back me.

He had not spirit to use the arguments put into his mouth."

"Because," pleaded Margaret, whose heart yearned towards her former fellow-bondsman, "I am persuaded Philip has *really* no desire to remain in town. From words he occasionally lets fall, I fear, poor fellow, he has not half got over his attachment for Mrs. Saville!"

"The Edenbourne widow you once mentioned to me?—A woman without fortune or connexion!" cried Lord Uppingham, in horror-struck consternation.—"By Jove, *that* would be worse than all the rest!—*That* must be immediately looked to!"—

And with the promptitude of a man whom the activities of public life have rendered fertile in expedients, and who is therefore little accustomed to take things as he finds them, he began to deliberate in earnest on the prospects and capabilities of his brother-in-law. His own happiness was now too intimately linked with the welfare of the Askham family, to admit

of his allowing the smallest of them to be thrown away.

While Philip Askham, therefore, accompanied his family unresistingly into the country, fortified against fate by his usual philosophy,

> Durum, sed levius fit patientia
> Quicquid corrigere est nefas,—

a master-hand was busy with his destinies;—a hand rendered sufficiently puissant by long exercise of authority, to enable its *protégés* to dispense with further patience.

CHAPTER V.

Peace! I have sought it where it should be found;
And in its stead, a heaviness of heart,
A weakness of the spirit,—listless days,
And nights inexorable to sweet sleep,
Have come upon me.

BYRON.

Ἐν ἐλπίσιν χρὴ τὸν σοφὸν ἔχειν βιον.

EURIPIDES.

To return to Eden Castle after an absence trebling that of their ordinary residence in London,—an absence during which their eldest son had been led into captivity, and their eldest daughter promoted to a marquisate,—was a mighty event to the Askhams. Prepared to greet the expectant neighbourhood with unwonted affability, they anticipated a considerable overflow of sympathy in return.

But alas! they had gained little by allowing Edenbourne to discover that its prosperity was unabated, though, for eighteen months, no flag had been flying at the castle!—The little borough felt somewhat aggrieved that the marriage of Miss Askham had not been solemnized in its parish church; and was secretly wounded in its feelings at being still represented in parliament by a dumby, a treasury hack, a mere warming pan for the Honourable Percy Askham; who, being a prisoner at Verdun, ought at least to be replaced by the Honourable Philip.—With an able-bodied and able-minded son at their service, Lord Askham had no right to demand their allegiance for a man of straw!

The borough knew better, however, than to grumble audibly; and no sooner had it transpired on what day the family coach would make its appearance, than orders were issued by Dr. Hacket for a rattling peal of bells as it passed through the town;—while, at the toll-bar, an attempt was made at a triumphal arch, somewhat resembling a May-day Jack-in-the-Green.—All the laurels in the town were

laid under contribution: and poor Simprems' garden was shorn to the quick.

But if the whole truth must be told, Edenbourne and its environs felt not only a little sullen, but a little nervous. They scarcely knew how they should venture to look Lady Askham in the face!

"I wish my first visit to the castle was over. It will be vastly awkward!"—observed Mrs. Gwatkin to Sir Erasmus L'Estrange.

"What! to get the carriage and horses through the triumphal arch?" inquired the gallant knight, who had grown a year younger for every month's absence of the Askhams.

"Why, how is it to be explained about Mrs. Saville?—Lady Askham will think it *so* extraordinary, considering the suspicions entertained concerning her at Eden Castle, that we should all visit her, the moment her ladyship's back was turned!"

"After ascertaining that there was nothing in them, it was your duty, as it was *my* pleasure, to make the *amende honorable*."

"Still, I am convinced Lady Askham will

take it amiss.—Out of the question, you know, for *her ladyship* to visit at Eastfield !"—

"Considering the wry faces she makes about visiting at Hexham, perhaps it *may*,"—rejoined Sir Erasmus. "But she may go further and fare worse.—We have derived more gratification from Mrs. Savilie's society in the last six months, than from Eden Castle in all the years of our lives."—

"I must say, however," persisted Mrs. Gwatkin, "that I wish the explanation was over; more especially as Mr. Philip has accompanied the family."

"Afraid, eh, that the fair widow will stand in poor Fanny's light?—Make yourself easy, my dear sister. After eighteen months butterflying in the world of fashion, depend on't a young Honourable will see little enough in either of them !—So cheer up !—I dare say your friend Lady Askham will let you off with a slight reprimand !"

Secure, meanwhile, in inordinate self-esteem against suspicion of the mingled feelings their arrival was creating, the Askhams ap-

proached Edenbourne with unabated confidence in the loyalty of their subjects.

"Poor people! our return to the castle is a *great* event to *them!*"—cried Lord Askham, with a philanthropic smile of landed-proprietorship, as the train of carriages rattled across the market-place amid the clamour of the populace, the ringing of bells, and barking of curs. "I wish Uppingham had been with us!" added his lordship, blandly addressing Philip, as they came within view of the arch of evergreens.—"I should have been glad to have *him* an eye-witness of the respect and attachment of the neighbourhood!"

At that moment, Philip Askham's eyes were peering so admiringly from the carriage window, that his father was justified in concluding them to be fixed on the calico flags, adorned with appropriate devices, streaming from the summit of the arch; and if Philip allowed them to stray a *little* beyond that loyal trophy, so as to catch a glimpse of the shrubbery-belt enclosing the lawn of Eastfield, the more shame to his duplicity! At all events, he vouchsafed no

answer to the paternal vaunt; probably because lost in delightful anticipations of the moment when, escaping from the pomp and prosifications of home, he should make his way once more to the hermitage of the young recluse; entertaining as little doubt of finding her the pensive mourner he had left behind, as his father and mother of the unaltered devotion of their country neighbours!—

Never had Eden Castle worn so pleasant an aspect to his eyes, as on that day;—not because the school-children were planted on the lawn, like a little shrubbery of charity plants, to chant a doleful stave of welcome to their noble patrons;—not because the old people at the almshouse doors curtseyed or uncovered their shaking heads to their benefactors;— not because the bronzed face of the out-door servants, shone "celestial rosy red" with a double allowance of home-brewed. But in the confusion of the moment, the house was unhinged. Chaos was come again. The school-books were not unpacked, and the tutor and governess wandered up and down, like our first parents after the

fall, forlorn and purposeless. The children might actually be heard laughing aloud, as they ran through the shrubberies towards their little play-gardens, so long sighed for among the sooty bushes of Cavendish Square.

A shudder came over him, however, when he reflected that, though the days were at their longest, they did not last for ever; and that a morrow was at hand when Order, which, according to Pope, is "Heaven's first law," would also legislate once more at Eden Castle. The approaching Agricultural Meeting, too, was in store for him with its elocutionary labours.—Lord Askham who, since compelled to fight hand to hand with government on the question of his son's exchange, had peeled off his habits of reserve, would doubtless follow up his new vocation by wreaking on an unoffending county, the eloquence bottled up, like the old October, ever since the day of addressing his assembled tenantry in honour of the birth of his son and heir; and for such a speech, his lordship must be crammed, like one of his prize-oxen. Philip foresaw reams of rough draughts, perplexed by

emendations upon emendations, likely to pass through his hands.

On this point, however, he was mistaken. Suspicions of an understanding between his son and son-in-law, had insinuated themselves into Lord Askham's mind; and so tenacious was he of his consequence in the eyes of the noble President of the Council, that he would not for the world have allowed a t to be crossed, or an i to be dotted, by his scribe of all work, in the discourse which his mind's eye already beheld in the columns of the County Chronicle, duly dispatched per mail for the edification of Uppingham Manor.

In order, indeed, to mark to the neighbourhood that he required no assistance at the hands of his son, he enfranchised Philip for a time, by pointedly excluding him from his agricultural survey of the Eden Castle estate; in all quarters of which, after so long an absence, a complication of rural interests claimed his attention.

What, therefore, more easy than for Philip to escape from the portals which stood thus in-

vitingly open?—Common civility required him to make inquiries after the health of his country neighbours; and nearest of them all, as well as dearest, abided Mrs. Saville!—Already, as he took his way along the Chase, his fancy depicted that snug, cozy little drawing-room, shaded by the curtains so opprobriated by Mrs. Gwatkin; —where the fondest of mothers devoted herself to the happiness of the fairest of children; where no music was heard but their prattle, the kettle singing on the fire, or the cat purring on the hearth,—where no finer engravings were seen than the cuts in little Edward's Robinson Crusoe,—where periodicals reached not and reviews were unknown; yet where, in Philip Askham's opinion, there prevailed a charm of elegance and refinement beyond reach of the luxuries of Eden Castle or grandiosities of Uppingham Manor.

He was almost angry with himself, however, for the excess of emotion that caused his life-blood to ebb and flow, as he placed his hand once more on the well-known garden latch;—and though there was none but himself to be de-

ceived by the assertion, he insinuated that it must be the intense fragrance of the flower beds on the lawn, which rendered him so heartsick. Eden Castle had not accustomed him to flowers; and the favoured nook of earth sheltered among the limestone cliffs, was variegated as by the blossoms of Paradise.

Another moment, and the bold comparison was doubly justified. Scarcely had Philip Askham replied to the gentle greeting of Mrs. Saville, and the half-shy half-friendly recognition of the children, when he perceived Sir Erasmus L'Estrange, in his well-remembered nankeen gaiters, seated with smiling and familiar self-complacency in his accustomed chair.—The old serpent had made its way into the garden of Eden!—

Philip's heart sank within him. He saw that his pleasant mornings of yore,—his harmless happy *tête-à-têtes* of daily occurrence,—were never more to be renewed. All comfort in Eastfield was at an end.

Another fatal fact was equally incontestible,—

that never had its fair proprietress looked so lovely! Her weeds were laid aside,—her wavy hair was, for the first time, fully uncovered; and amended health and spirits had perfected into womanhood the development of her girlish beauty. Philip was positively dazzled as he raised his eyes to a face, pure as one of the brightest creations of Giorgione. It was only a certain chaste sobriety of dress, (without being actually mourning, the nearest possible approach to it,) which satisfied him that her nature was unchanged; and that, though domesticated under her roof, the withered Sinbad before him was not about to convert those matronly robes into bridal attire.

It was irritating enough, however, to find himself accosted by both, in the self-same friendly tone. They seemed actuated by a common feeling of courtesy; and *any* feeling in common between a lovely young woman of two-and-twenty and a rich and grim old bachelor of sixty-four, *must* be offensive. Though in the case of the Uppinghams, Philip had been readily reconciled to the same disparity, on

the present occasion, his bosom heaved with disgust!

It is true that little Edward Saville did his utmost to increase his abhorrence. To children, eighteen months constitute an eternity; and in reply to Philip's questions about their former pursuits,—the swing, the terrier, the fishing-tackle,—he heard of nothing but "Sir Erasmus!"

"Sir Erasmus puts us in the swing every morning," lisped the little fellow; "and Skye is gone to live at his house; because there is a stable-yard, you know, at the Lodge; and terriers are only fit, mamma says, for a stable-yard.—As soon as I am able to ride, Sir Erasmus is going to get a Shetland pony for me," added the child, warming in praise of his friend.—"Mamma took away the little fishing-rod *you* gave me, because when I went out with it alone, I nearly fell into the river."

Philip lent but a divided attention to the child's long explanations; as a punishment for which, he had further to learn that this un-

toward accident was the origin of the acquaintance between Eastfield and Edenbourne Lodge. As extremes meet, the venerable naturalist of sixty-four, while groping in the water-meadows after specimens for his herbary, had come to the aid of the little naturalist of four, minus the sixty; and the terrified mother, thankful that such a Triton should have been at hand among the minnows by which her darling had been betrayed into danger, could no longer close her gates.

Presented by her new acquaintance to his sister's family, the barrier which divided Mrs. Saville from the neighbourhood was soon overthrown;—the Gwatkins, defrauded just then of the social succours of Eden Castle, being so cordial in their overtures, that Timon himself could not have resisted their advances.

Philip Askham could scarcely blame her. The whole thing was the result of accident: and at *her* age, why condemn herself to perpetual isolation? The faithful devotion which had blinded her to the strength of his attachment, did not render it a crime to dine occasion-

ally at Hexham Hall, or drink tea at Edenbourne Rectory,—though the loss occasioned to *him* by such a change, was indeed irreparable!

It was perhaps because reflections of this nature imparted a saddened expression to his countenance, that Mrs. Saville's little girl,—who, throughout his prolonged absence, had adhered to her declarations that "Sir Erasmus, however kind, could never replace their own dear Philip, who had lent them his cloak on their cold journey to Edenbourne,"—drew closer towards his knee; and, during the interrogations of her brother, placed her little hand affectionately within his own.

"We missed you *so* much when you went away!"—whispered Selina, when her mother's attention was engrossed by the elder visitor. "We used to talk of you every day. But mamma told us you would never come back, and that you had quite forgotten Eastfield!"

Soothed by the endearing tone in which these simple words were uttered, Philip replied by imprinting a silent kiss on Selina's ivory fore-

head; attempting to conceal his emotions by smoothing down her auburn curls.

"But now you are come back again," resumed the child, encouraged by his notice, "you will come and see us every day again, won't you?—and put us into the swing as you used, instead of Sir Erasmus?"—

Apprehensive that the revelations of Selina might become of a too personal nature, Mrs. Saville attempted to make the conversation general. Unluckily, she also made it disagreeable. Her adoption of the first person plural was not to be borne!—

"We have not yet congratulated you," said she, "on the happy event in your family. Yet believe me we did full honour at Edenbourne to Miss Askham's marriage. The bonfires on Eden Down must have been visible half across the county!"

"I never remember to have seen a finer blaze," added Sir Erasmus, (looking, in his nankin gaiters and camlet suit as dry and yellow as a Zweiback biscuit,) "except on occasion of a Suttee which I had the good fortune to

witness, of a Malabar Begum in the neighbourhood of Trincomalee."

"A somewhat inauspicious comparison, sir, for wedding rejoicings!" retorted Philip, angrily. "But perhaps you are of my opinion, that a match where the bridegroom has forty years the advantage of the bride, is little better than a funeral pile?"—

"Pardon me,—I see nothing of the kind in it!" replied the prim old gentleman. "There are many worse disparities in married life than difference of age; and Heaven knows poor Miss Askham had little chance, hereabouts, of a more suitable alliance. As my sister Gwatkin often observes, there is not a young man worth speaking of in this part of the county!"—

"You perceive, Mr. Askham, that your long absence has caused *your* name to be excluded from our list," said Mrs. Saville, in a conciliatory tone, as if shocked by the mutual ungraciousness of her visitors.

"I have indeed become a stranger here" was the bitter retort of Philip; and though, during the remainder of the visit, his gentle

hostess devoted herself to the task of soothing his evidently ruffled spirit, and though woman, like the viper, possesses in her own nature, an antidote for every wound of her infliction, on the present occasion the venom had spread too widely. Philip Askham eventually took his departure from the cottage, writhing under as absurd a sense of ill-usage, as though the fair Evelyn had violated an engagement to preserve their acquaintanceship immaculate as the vows of affianced love!

On his way homeward through Eden Chase, he gave vent to his long-repressed irritation of feeling.

"She is quite right to despise me!" cried he. "How can I wonder that even yonder withered old mummy should be more important in her eyes than myself;—a poor, beggarly, helpless wretch of a younger brother,—of no more account, even in my own family, than one of the upper servants!—*Any* woman of sense and feeling would spurn the fool who submitted to such subjection. How much more, one who has been happy in the affection of a man of spirit,

like Saville! In becoming better acquainted with the neighbourhood, she has learned to estimate my position. Nothing can be more marked than her change of manner. Even the children—even that darling little Selina,—seemed to view me as an object of commiseration! But I cannot stand this much longer! If my father *must* have a hanger-on among his sons, Henry is on the eve of leaving Cambridge:—let him victimize Henry! Lord Uppingham, an impartial judge, understood my situation at a glance. *Strenua nos exercet inertia.* I am losing my faculties,—I am becoming weary of my life! As soon as this confounded Agricultural Meeting leaves my father at leisure, I will compel him to an explanation!"

His lordship was certainly in no mood, just then, to give ear to filial remonstrances! As in the case of all absentees, abuses had crept during his absence into the administration of his affairs. His farms had been neglected,—his preserves injured,—his park trespassed upon,—his woodlands exposed to depredation. For in

an establishment so methodical, the smallest relaxation of discipline becomes fatal.

All, therefore, was confusion in what was by courtesy called his mind. Wrongs to be redressed, tenants to be ejected, bailiffs to be discharged, were intermingled *sens dessus dessous* with the elements of his wonderful speech: —drill husbandry, the pacification of Europe, the repeal of the malt tax, fiorine grass, and the barbarous infringement of the rights of nations in the person of the Honourable Philip Askham!—Every blotting-book in the house contained scraps and shreds of eloquence, of no good omen to the ears of the Agricultural Meeting; and such a world of mysterious meanings was hieroglyphicized in his usually blank physiognomy, that any one meeting his lordship, without warning, in the lobbies or shrubberies of Eden Castle, might have supposed him intent on the perpetration of some heinous crime.

What, therefore, was the astonishment of Philip, on his return home after his disappointment at Eastfield, to behold his father sud-

denly advance towards him, with a radiant visage and outstretched hand, overflowing with milk and honey!

"I congratulate you, Philip!" said he; "I sincerely congratulate you. Your prospects in life (which for years have been a subject of the most serious concern to your mother and myself) are satisfactorily adjusted. In consideration of my well-known attachment to the throne and staunch support of government, and perhaps in some measure on account of the impossibility of meeting my wishes with respect to the enlargement of your brother, his Majesty hath been pleased to appoint you to a post in the Audit Office, to which the education you are known to have received, and the duties you have fulfilled in this house, satisfy him you will do ample justice."

"An appointment in the Audit Office?" —said Philip, breathless with delight.

"With a salary of eight hundred a year!" said Lord Askham, with emphasis: "a place that might have literally been offered to your eldest brother—"

Overcome with gratitude and joy, Philip began to reproach himself with his former injustice towards his father. While accusing Lord Askham of selfishness and oppression, that misjudged parent had been not only exercising his influence to obtain him a government appointment, but endeavouring to qualify him for the discharge of its duties.

"You must hasten instantly to town," resumed his lordship! "Next week parliament will be up, and the ministry dispersed. Not a moment is to be lost. It will doubtless be a disappointment to you, Philip, to forego the Agricultural Meeting; but your interests in life are at stake, and *I* will take care that a county paper, containing an accurate report of the proceedings, shall reach you in London. You may even, if you think proper, transmit it to the editor of some daily paper. They are glad, at this time of year, to secure authentic provincial intelligence."

Philip could scarcely believe his senses. His father, putting a case to him in the optative, or in any other than the imperative mood!

His father, desiring him to do as "he thought proper," in even so trifling a matter as the reprinting of his speech !—

"I shall find Margaret and Lord Uppingham still in town," said he, after respectful expressions of gratitude, both for the appointment procured, and county paper promised. "How pleased and surprised they will be to learn what you have done for me!"

"Yes,—your sister seems vastly pleased. The letter announcing your appointment came from Margaret," observed Lord Askham, his brow suddenly contracting. "For of course you must be aware, Philip, that though the place is given in consideration of the family claims I have specified, the application for it to government came from the Marquis of Uppingham."

"I might have guessed it!" was Philip's mental rejoinder. "How could I for a moment suppose that my emancipation proceeded from my father !"—

It was an additional satisfaction, however, in leaving home, that his joy was undisturbed by compunctious visitings.—He had

nothing and no one to regret there,—absolutely no one and nothing !—

The woman to whom he had madly dreamed of devoting himself, had opened his eyes to the slightness of her friendship. In his own family, he was an unconsidered younger son ; and, on reaching the corner of the London road excluding Eden Castle from sight, he exclaimed in bitterness of soul, as Percy had done five years before in joyousness of spirit, —" Farewell, thou dreary pile !—heaven knows when we shall meet again !"

CHAPTER VI.

Men, like butterflies,
Show not their meally wings but to the summer.

SHAKSPEARE.

Τῶν ἑιτοχέντων κάνοες ἐιοι ονγτενῆις.

EURIPIDES.

SUCH were the antecedents of a young place-man, who, in the year 1805, assumed with general approbation the envied privileges of "a man of wit and pleasure about town."

Touched by the Promethean torch of independence, Philip Askham started forth a new creature. No longer the dispirited denizen of a dull house in Mansfield Street,—no longer compelled to render a daily account to his task-masters of the use of his five senses,—the enfranchised bachelor of St. James's Place trod

the earth with a firmer step, and encountered the eyes of his fellow-creatures with an uplifted countenance. Good-humour produced good looks: and now that he was his own master, every body was his most obedient humble servant. Friends, nay, relations, rose up like myrmidons from the earth, to welcome him into his new world.

"By Jove, Phil! Percy won't know you when he sees you again!"—vociferated his coaching cousin, Lord Middlemore, a disciple of the Lade school, then in the zenith of its flagrancy. "Percy used to swear that you would be flannel-petticoated for life at Eden Castle. But gad! now you've thrown over the old folks, you're throwing off in style.—Wish you joy, my boy, of having cut your wisdom teeth!"—

Lord Middlemore's sister, too, his handsome cousin Helen, whose near-sightedness had often disabled her for discerning an obscure younger brother across the Hanover Square Rooms, at the Ancient Music, when in moping attendance on his family, was *now* lynx-eyed in her recognition. One of her mother's opera-tickets was

placed at Philip's disposal; and to her ladyship's table in Brook Street, he had a general invitation.

"It would have been an idle compliment, my dear nephew," said the dowager, "so long as you resided with your family. But an official man, always on the pavé, gets sadly tired of dining every day at his club, before the regular dinner-parties of the season commence."

Such a pretext for occasionally escaping in former times, the La Trappish dinners in Mansfield Street, might, however, have been more acceptable than the loss of one of the pleasant house-dinners at White's, the merits of which were *caviar* to Lady Middlemore. But even towards her meanness, even towards the worldliness of the Lady Helen, he was indulgent. The King of France forgave the injuries perpetrated against the Duke of Orleans; and the new official whom Lord Uppingham's patronage had snatched into a seventh heaven from the Slough of Despond, was in charity with all mankind.

Nothing perfect, however, in this world of imperfection! Better for Philip had his promotion occurred earlier in the parliamentary session, so as to secure him the counsel of one so much a master of the arts of life, as his brother-in-law, the Marquis. For, notwithstanding Lord Uppingham's aptitude in giving advice, all he had been able to effect in Philip's favour previous to his departure for the north, was to present him to the heads of his department, and propose him at the best club; and ere they met again the following winter, Philip was likely to be as fixed in his habits of life, as though his liberty were of six years', instead of six months', enjoyment.

In those hard-fighting times, the great vessel of the state was always in commission. No holiday—no intermission!—If the Red Book and the country were encumbered with sinecure places to the amount of hundreds of thousands, the places which were *no* sinecure admitted of little trifling. Those who *did* work, worked hard enough for the rest; and an autumn in town was consequently a less dreary affair than ni these piping times of peace, when most of

the public offices prorogue themselves simultaneously with the prorogation of parliament. But even had the town been thinner, and its fogs thicker, gay and sociable would it have appeared to Philip Askham, by comparison with the moral opacities of Eden Castle.

One only charge was given him at parting by Lord Uppingham. "Lose no opportunity," said he, "of manifesting your intention to take a decided line in politics. It will not commit you, for your place (luckily for *you*) is permanent; and in these times, a novice in public life must be a party-man, or nothing! Your father, however, seems to hark back about bringing you into parliament; hinting, in his last letter, that since I have taken your fortunes in hand, it may be as well to reserve Edenbourne for Henry; who having obtained honours at Cambridge, seems the predestined man of genius of the family."

Philip was just then too much in sorts with fortune to quarrel with any one; or on this hint, his younger brother might have succeeded to the jealous grudge formerly enter-

tained against Percy.—He rejoiced, however, that his exclusion from parliament suspended the necessity for those precipitate political manifestations suggested by his party-ridden brother-in-law.—For, regarding things in general with different eyes from both patron and parent, he did not care to add political antagonism to their many causes of mutual discontent.

As it was, the only method for an ex-parliamentary man to avouch his politics, was by the depth and strength of his potations, and the toasts that served to season them. Pamphlets were not in fashion, as speaking-trumpets for sucking politicians;—Wilkes and Junius having established so alcoholic a standard of party writing, that anything short of treason or sedition, passed for milk-and-water. Port and claret formed a pleasanter alternative: and all that Philip permitted himself, in compliance with the "invariable principles" of his family and usages of that convivial epoch, was to drink occasionally to the health of William Pitt; which William Pitt's *more* than occasional

drinking, had, sooth to say, somewhat impaired.

Nor was pretext for wassail deficient. The glorious victory of Trafalgar had set all the patriotic pulses of England throbbing; and even for the alarmists of the day, a terrible arch of promise was created by the shining of the sun of Hope through its gory shower. People like Lord Askham, who hailed the metamorphosis of the "Corsican blackguard" into an emperor recognized by the powers of Europe, as a personal affront,—"the fiend's arch mock" expressly devised for their mortification,—scarcely knew how to keep their exultation within the bounds of decency on that memorable occasion. If the French had the best of it by land, the sea (God bless her!) was true to her allegiance; and scarcely had the blood-seeking Tories grace to turn aside and weep for Nelson, so exorbitant was their joy in this new naval triumph of the hereditary Ruler of the waves!

It was, perhaps, because accustomed from his boyhood to behold the battles of the war-

party fought o'er again at his father's table by partizans resembling those Chinese warriors in calico petticoats and wooden shoes, whose utmost heroism is visible to the bystanders, that the sympathies of Philip were waywardly enlisted under the opposite banner. *Who* could believe in the infallibility of such a pope as Lord Askham! *Who* accept the faith of such a college of cardinals as his pottering uncles! And now that his liberal tendencies had space to expand in the rarefied atmosphere of a more intelligent society,—now that he found wit and beauty (at five-and-twenty a sufficient substitute for wisdom,) engaged on his favourite side, it was somewhat difficult to bear in mind that he was indebted for his present happiness to a man who voted with the Tories!

By degrees, his cheers for the pilot who was weathering the storm, and conveying into harbour only a shattered hulk, subsided into silence; till at length, the silence was involuntarily broken by cheers for his great antagonist. The Marquis had insisted on his taking a decided line in politics; and there was nothing

in their relative position by which Philip felt deprived of his full liberty of conscience in deciding *which* line it should be.

Among his colleagues in his new office, was an old Eton chum, the son of a man of some influence in the Whig party; by the grace of whose hospitalities he enjoyed a capital opportunity of studying in the inner sanctuary of private life, some of the greatest illustrations of an illustrious epoch;—and Philip, the slender structure of whose Toryism had crumbled into dust, in the senate, before the eloquence of Fox,—

> Lampo nel fiammeggiar,—nel romor tuono,—
> Fulmini nel ferir,—

found his proselytism completed, in society, by the sallies of the fascinating Sheridan. Like a visitor to the Gobelins' manufactory, he was equally charmed by the imposing beauty of the tapestry, and the ingenuity displayed in its reverse.

His new friend took especial delight in confirming the conversion of the political novice. His

father, Sir James Hardynge, who had occupied a high legal post under the Whigs, now occupied nothing but a charming villa at Wandsworth, one of the favourite resorts of the liberals of the day. Unembarrassed by the dignified responsibilities of Chiswick or Dropmore, Eske Hill presented in its highly flavoured *macédoine* of wits and politicians, one of those brilliant banquets where prussic acid is imbibed under the name of noyeau;—a *bureau d'esprit*, where the gravest interests of life are disposed of by a pun or an epigram. As the pyrotechnists pretend to exhibit in fireworks the Fate of Orpheus and Eurydice, or the Siege of Troy, the feats and the defeats of the administration were commemorated in the political arsenal of Eske Hill, by a series of squibs and crackers.

The flashy brilliancy of such a coterie was the very thing to subjugate a mind blinking out of the muzzy atmosphere of Eden Castle!—The keen unsparing wit which, like a highly-tempered blade, cut to the bone ere the victim felt himself wounded, imposed conviction on his startled senses; and like a lark, he was taken in a

springe baited with glitter. Even with older heads than Philip Askham, however, the best table, the best wines, and the best small talk, are apt to pass for the best side of the argument.

The literature of the country was just then at a discount. Prophets had appeared, indeed, but they prophesied in the wilderness. Those great writers, whose names are now inscribed on corner-stones of the temple of fame,—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey,—were damned by an epithet; while Moore, like a frisky lord in a police office, was fain to shelter his irregularities under an assumed name. The uproar of war's alarms had somewhat deafened the ear of the public to the music of Apollo's flute!—

The fashionable world, accordingly, restricted its literary enjoyments to laughing at the waggeries of the Anti-Jacobin, or shrieking at the diabolisms of Monk Lewis;—dim foreshowings of the Romantic school, on the eve of its creation by Scott,—or gurglings of the vitriolic Hippocrene about to start from the earth on the stamping of the Pegasus of Byron. The belles ettres, which, for two centuries past, have re-

ceived their impulsion from France, had undergone a staggering blow at the revolution, under the effects of which they still languished; and, behold, as in the case of other extenuated patients, hysteria supervened.

Of such a state of things, irony is the natural offspring,—the false spirits arising from a disorganized constitution. "*A chaque époque donnée,*" says Hegel, "*il y a toujours correspondance parfaite entre l'état du monde à cette epoque, et la philosophie qui en est la conscience et la pensée;*"—and as in France, melodrama with her matted locks and reeking poniard had sprung out of the excesses of the revolution, (like one of the crime-engendered monsters described by Ariosto,) in England, the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews were attempting to banter into a sense of its deficiencies, that sullen public which refused to listen to the charming of a wiser charmer.

The pleasant society collected round Sir James Hardynge, whose notions had been rendered somewhat more elastic than those of his neighbours by a winter passed in Paris in the

Consular court, was on the whole a favourable specimen of the new school. At Eske Hill, Philip Askham perceived, for the first time, the enhancement conferred on convivial pleasures by "flashes of merriment" kindled by the sparkle of wit.—The erudition of the Hardynge set was luckily not beyond the digestive powers weakened at Eden Castle by a prolonged diet of pap; and he accordingly suffered himself to be led captive by the brilliant Brinsley and his associates,—a coterie just then let loose upon society by the pecuniary and domestic embarrassments of the Prince of Wales. The resplendent constellation of Carlton House being broken up, its component parts were scattered, like falling stars, to become the luminaries of a lower sphere.

To the recluse of Edenbourne, their lustre might have been almost oppressive, but that its intensity was modified by the presence of Lady Hardynge; a mild pleasing woman devoid of offence or pretence, whose feminine pursuits and friendships introduced a softer medium into the conversation, and prevented

the great wits from clashing,—like the bran or sawdust used in packing hardware. Bob Hardynge, the only son and spoiled child of the house,—a wild enthusiast for the fine arts,—profited by his influence over his mother, and the lessons he had imbibed in Paris, to complete her circle of guests by the most distinguished painters, musicians, and actors of the time; and, as on collar days at court every knight appears in his badge of chivalry, every man of them assumed his laurel, and every muse struck her golden lyre, to diversify the enjoyments of hospitable Eske Hill.

Philip Askham was content to adopt, without much scrutiny, the dogmas so pleasantly expounded under its roof. As on the stillest mill-pond, the reflection of circumjacent objects becomes vivid as reality, the torpor to which his mind had been reduced at home, rendered it peculiarly susceptible of new impressions.

The only drawback on his comfort, was the prospect of his family's return to town. Though resolved to make a sturdy stand against molestation, he foresaw a disagreeable struggle. But

his fears were premature. Other objects engaged their attention. The approaching confinement of the Marchioness of Uppingham, and impending presentation at court of her second daughter, absorbed the meagre sympathies of Lady Askham; while those of his lordship were distracted between the increasing extravagance of his eldest son, and the rebellion of one of the younger ones; who, Trafalgar-bitten at ten years old, had tormented even his tutor into admitting that he was fit for nothing but the navy!

Lord Askham, however, was ingenious enough to invent a new species of torture for his *échappé des bagnes*.—Like Nero, he chose to convert his freedman into a friend! Instead of pretending to renew his tyrannies over Philip, he sought to make him the confederate of his tyranny over others; and so far from rebuking the luxuriousness of the bachelor den in St. James's Place, had nothing to complain of but the profligacy of Percy, and refractoriness of Claude. Philip, with his hands full of government business, and

pockets full of government money, had become an object of respect!

If anything could have more amazed him than this unnatural deference, it was Lord Askham's manifesto of the present state of things at Edenbourne.

"We have had an unusually gay autumn," said he. "The flattering manner in which I was supported by the neighbourhood, indeed, I may say, by the whole county, at the Agricultural Meeting, rendered it indispensable to offer some civility in return."

Philip, finding himself appealed to, replied by an assenting bow.

"A ball is the most comprehensive compliment on such occasions," resumed his lordship, in an argumentative tone: "and on a ball I decided. Your sister Emma, who (though not presented) made her first appearance on the occasion, was the belle of the evening;—though some people by-the-bye, Philip, assigned the palm to Mrs. Saville."

"To Mrs. Saville?" faltered Philip, unable to conceal his surprise at hearing *viva voce* from

his father, a name which, even in the depths of his heart, he seldom permitted himself to pronounce.

"We have seen a good deal of her lately," resumed his lordship, as unconcernedly as if talking of Simprems or Sir Erasmus L'Estrange. "A very deserving young woman, I find.—You should have explained to us, Philip, when I objected to the acquaintance, that her husband was the son of Sir Herbert Saville of Bayhurst, and she herself, one of the Monsons of Kent. Her social position was completely misunderstood at Edenbourne."

"Of Mrs. Saville's social position, my lord, I know nothing—of herself very little," retorted Philip, with some bitterness: convinced that nothing but certainty of the young widow's indifference towards himself, would have obtained indulgence for her from his father.

"We met her at dinner at Hexham, and Emma persuaded me to invite her to the ball," added Lord Askham, in explanation.

"When *I* had the honour of her acquaintance," observed Philip, with growing indignation, "she

professed a determination to live in complete retirement."

"The very circumstance that rendered her an object of suspicion!"—cried his father. "However, she was wise enough to perceive her error; and if accidentally compelled to submit to the visits of the Gwatkins, and that grotesque old man at Edenbourne Lodge, the honour of admittance to the circle at Eden Castle has afforded some compensation."

Philip dared not give vent to his feelings in reply. But in the depths of his heart, he murmured a quotation, more classical than kind, touching the mutability of the sex,—paraphrased in the venomous Richard of Gloucester's apostrophe to the inconsistency of "shallow changing woman!"

But while Lord Askham's dispositions towards him underwent this miraculous mollification, those of his brother-in-law were beginning to wax somewhat hard. Conscious of having transgressed against Lord Uppingham's intentions, and schooled by the former oppressions of Eden Castle to assist all indication of undue

authority, — Philip resolved to place himself on his guard against the reprehensions of the Marquis, by the assumption of a dignified reserve.—It was not difficult !—For twenty years had he lived with a model of such accomplishments before his eyes,—it was only, however, to his idolized wife, Lord Uppingham allowed himself to express his dissatisfaction.

"I cannot exactly make out Philip," said he to the Marchioness,—as they were enjoying together an airing in the King's Road, one sunshiny December day. "He has lost that subdued manner I thought so pleasing.—He has been living lately, I find, with an equivocal set of people."

"*Equivocal ?*"—repeated Lady Uppingham, who had noticed in her brother only a favourable change in health and spirits.

"I scarcely know how to describe them,—half castes, as regards society,—in political life, adventurers ;—authors, artists, actors,—the scum of the effervescence of Carlton House !"—replied the Marquis, between whose solid nobility and

the wind, an *olla podrida* like that of Eske Hill had never a chance of interposing.

"My aunt Middlemore and Helen were telling me last night, in Mansfield Street, that he was quite the rage," observed Lady Uppingham.

"The *rage!*" reiterated the Marquis, shrugging his shoulders; "the very phrase for a flashy girl like Helen, as indicating the madness prevalent 'when the dog star rages.' But rage or not, I fear poor Philip is deficient in the self-possession and steadiness of purpose indispensable to all success in life."

"*Your* steadiness of purpose, my dear husband, has bespoken his success!" replied Lady Uppingham, feelingly.—"Thanks to *you*, Philip's fortune is made.—What can he want more than your kindness has procured?"

"A position of his own creation,—if he have the spirit of a mouse!" cried her lord. "The superstructure of our fortunes, Margaret, should be in proportion to the foundation afforded us.—Beginning life as Philip has begun it, he might work his way to eminence."

"And you think him too indolent for the attempt?"

"I think his way already missed! He has flung himself, without rhyme or reason, out of our sphere; or rather, in running after rhyme, has lost sight of reason! — Philip hovers like a bat, between the two parties; and like other amphibious animals, creates enemies in either element.—By the Tories, his connexions will cause him to be mistrusted; by the Whigs, his conduct. But don't look so much alarmed, dearest Margaret,"—added he, on seeing her change colour,—"I make the most of his delinquencies, that you may use your influence with your brother, (and *your* influence, who could withstand!) to induce him to assume a more explicit position."

"He is probably enjoying the passing hour, without regard to the future or the past," observed Lady Uppingham, in a gentle tone of deprecation.

"The very thing I complain of!—That airy nothing called the present, is the subtle essence of human existence,—the thing that creates our

reputation, and decides our fortunes.—The frescoes of some grand Italian cupola, viewed face to face, present a confusion of blurs and blotches; yet at a distance, resolve themselves into a majestic design. So should the daily trivialities of life be studiously adjusted;—whereas such desultory habits as Philip's, remain unmeaning blotches, contemplated from whatever point of view."

"I will speak to him.—Let us hear what he has to say for himself!" said Lady Uppingham. —"Like other creatures tamed by long confinement, he may have been puzzled, on emerging from his cage, to determine what road to take."

She *did* accordingly speak to Philip. But he who answered her, was no longer the humbled Philip of Eden Castle! The bird had lost its natural notes, and could at present repeat only imperfect snatches of airs learned from its bird-organ. Like the bewildered Sacristan in the Monastery after his interview with the White Lady, he replied to his sister's admonitions by incoherent echoes of the incantations of Eske Hill!

"O ye Edenbournians!"—said he, "how hard do I labour to obtain your applause!—And that it should be labour lost after all!—A year ago, Margaret, I was abused among you for my apathy;—pointed at as a hypochondriac,—scouted as a sneak.—Now, because I have profited by my independence—to form friendships and opinions of my own, you hint that I shall come to the gallows!"—

"I have hinted nothing of the kind, my dear brother, that I am aware of," replied Lady Uppingham, confused by his tone of levity. "I only entreat you to remember the fate of Percy! See to what a destiny *his* flightiness has betrayed him!"

"And what better, pray, could your ladyship expect of your brothers?"—said Philip, rising to settle his cravat in the glass, with an affectation of affectation. "We do but follow the example of our excellent parents. 'As crows the old cock, so crows the young;' and Lord Askham is, without exception, the most inconsistent man of my acquaintance.—Like the Hottentots, he carves unto himself idols of

wood ; and when the skies don't rain to his liking, chastises his divinities by trailing them in the dust.—If you could only hear him talk of Percy !"

"I am afraid my brother's conduct is such as to cause him some uneasiness," said Margaret, gravely.

"Had Percy's home been made pleasanter to him, he would not have gone round by Toulouse!"—retorted Philip: "As it is, his debts and Catholic widow, will have to be brought before the House of Commons, one of these days, like those of other heirs-apparent!—But considering all my father used to say of my incapacity, I see no reason why he should take up hours a day of my time, (which is the public's,) in consultations about his family affairs; ay, and without booking up his six and eight-pence per item for my excellent advice!"—

"He concludes, probably, that in your present responsible situation, you have acquired habits of business," observed Lady Uppingham. "What inconsistency in that?"

"Know then this truth, my dear Margaret,

(enough for man, or woman, to know,)" said Philip, attempting to conceal his embarrassment by taking admiringly from her hands the tiny cap she was embroidering;—" after forcing me to break off my intimacy with—with—the lady at Eastfield,—of whom last year you spoke so kindly,—my father has actually invited her to Eden Castle, and taken her to his heart of hearts!"—

"I heard from Emma they found in Mrs. Saville a charming acquaintance.—But is *such* your ground of complaint against my father? and can you really treat so lightly a circumstance that ought to be highly gratifying to your feelings?"

"Would you have me fool enough to cry for joy, when I am able to laugh?"—retorted her brother; "mirth being, in *my* opinion, the highest exercise of our intellectual powers. Man is the only laughing animal in creation; for the laugh of the hyæna is a vulgar error, expunged from all modern editions of Buffon. — Sir Erasmus L'Estrange will attest that he spent some time in the desert, among those much

misrepresented quadrupeds, without extracting from them more than a broad grin."

"How can you be so childish!"—exclaimed his sister,—discerning the hollowness of his spirits in all this rodomontade.

"How, rather, can I be otherwise?" rejoined Philip. "When I was a child, I was forced to put away childish things; and having been made at five years old grave as a judge, at five-and-twenty let me enjoy the privilege of which I was defrauded."

To argue with him seriously in his present mood, Lady Uppingham saw would be useless. It was pleasanter therefore to discuss those family interests which provoked no dissension.

"Eden Castle seems to have grown more sociable since *our* time," said she.—"Emma has better spirits than I; and Henry exercises a certain influence over my father."

"Like the Roman knight who gave up the best of the argument to Cæsar, not caring to dispute with a man having fifty legions at his command, *I* knew better than to

attempt opposition!"—rejoined Philip. "As to Henry, contention is his cue!—A fight with my father is good professional practice for him. Henry, you know, is for the bar; and about to be brought into parliament over my head. My father swears by his eloquence!"

"You were never at the trouble of exerting yours. Even in the case of Mrs. Saville, you scarcely raised your voice."

"*A quoi bon?* Did you never hear of the man, who, when Charles the First was king, was whipped by order of the Star-Chamber for calling the crest on his master's carriage a goose instead of a swan?—*I* should have undergone similar fustigation at Eden Castle, for persisting that my geese were swans!—But between ourselves, my dear sister," continued he, in deprecation of her wrath, "I attribute the recent gaiety of Eden Castle to less ostensible causes than the influence of Henry or Emma. Percy's demands from Verdun are becoming heavier than is compatible with an entailed estate; and, retrenchment being the order of the day, my father's pride chooses to put a good

face upon the matter. His ball purported only to divert attention. The old story!—The tail of Alcibiades' dog."

"You really think my father embarrassed in his circumstances?" said Lady Uppingham, in a tone of deep regret. "Perhaps so; for his family is indeed a large one, and the demands upon him considerable.—How fortunate, Philip, that we two are provided for!"

Afraid perhaps of a more direct reference to his obligations towards her husband, Philip instantly looked at his watch, and rose to take leave.

"Any commands for Saint James's Street?" said he. "I fear I must be off to Brookes's!"

"To Brookes's?—I thought my father had got you into Boodle's?"—said the simple-hearted Margaret.

"Heaven preserve me from his lordship's club!—I should as soon think of employing his tailor!" said Philip, about to quit the room. "But by the time my little nephew in expectation is old enough to profit by my example, I promise you, my dear good sister, to

twaddle down to the level of Boodle's. By that time I shall have become a model man!—As poet Pye said or sang to us the other night,—

——————— Fired with a sacred flame
For Albion's cause, and Freedom's glorious name,
Firm in the House of Commons will I stand,
Petitions from constituents in my hand;—
Hurl bolts of vengeance on Oppression's head,
While living honoured, and revered when dead!"

CHAPTER VII.

Debout sur des débris, l'orgueilleuse Angleterre,
La menace à la bouche, et la gloire à la main,
Reclame encore la guerre et veut du sang humain.
Elle, dont le tridênt, asservissant les ondes,
Usurpa les trésors et les droits des deux mondes.

M. J. Chenier.

Nodigan que es menester
Mucho tiempo para amar,
Que el amor que ha de motar
De un golpe ha de ser.

Marques des la Navas.

Luckily, perhaps, for the Marquis of Uppingham, his mind was just then diverted from the aspect of public affairs, by the absorbing interests of home.—For it was a black moment for the Pittites!—Lord Askham, in the virulence of his Anti-Gallicism, was forced to retire daily into his lair, to brood in gloomy silence over the victories and conquests attributed by even the most passive of papers

to the valour of France, and blunders of Austria:—the newly-fledged eagles of the Brummagem Emperor being everywhere triumphant over

L'aquila grifagna
Che per più divorar, duoi rostri porta!

As in the reign of Julian, the prodigious consumption of white bulls for sacrifice, compelled the priests to shave the black spots from speckled ones, in order to supply appropriate victims for the altar, the choristers of Nôtre Dame were said to be hoarse as ravens, from the perpetual chanting of "Te Deum!"—

At length, came the unkindest cut of all;—that fatal battle of Austerlitz,—the Pavia of Francis II.,—the Mantes of William the Conquered! Just as Lord Uppingham was rendering thanks to heaven for the birth of a son and heir and the safety of his young Marchioness, his exultation was painfully modified by the loss of his venerated friend.

The death of Pitt was followed by a change of administration. The Marquis was bereaved not only of his friend, but his place:—nor did

he repine at a privation which left him at liberty to retire into private life, for the cultivation of his newly-acquired domestic joys. But he was too good a patriot, or too strenuous a party-man, not to survey with intense interest the struggle that ensued.

For the politicians of Europe were playing a desperate game,—knee-deep in blood, with human hearts for counters; and the measures of such a moment are somewhat more exciting than maundering debates upon a new rate of postage, or old tax on leather. Millions of men and millions of money, lay at the mercy of a division; and the scales wherein fluctuated the destinies of Europe, were balanced in the parliament of Great Britain.

Infatuated by party-spirit, aggravated in the present instance by the recent loss of his friend, Lord Uppingham was goaded out of his usual statesman-like moderation, by the triumphant attitude of the Whigs; and it was fortunate, perhaps, that the straw still spread before the gates of Uppingham House, and the consequent exclusion of company, secured him against col-

lision with his brother-in-law. Philip, a member of Brookes's,—Philip, fresh from the prompting of Bob Hardynge, and stimulated by the nine-times-nine of Eske Hill,—would have been insupportable!—Already Sir James Hardynge had been restored to his office by the new administration, and the patent of his peerage was in progress; while Robert wrote himself down M.P. under favour of a government borough.

Philip himself might have regarded with a jealous eye this sudden advancement of his colleague, had it been easy to entertain injurious sentiments towards Bob. But he was such a frank, off-hand fellow, that enmity was out of the question! Idolized by his parents, he could not conceive himself an object of displeasure to any living mortal; and so peremptory were his demands on the sympathy of his friends, that denial was impossible.—His bright eyes seemed to kindle brightness in the eyes they looked on: his warm heart to create warmth in those with whom he consorted.—While Philip Askham remained "Philip" with everybody but his

coaching cousin, Robert was "Bob Hardynge" with all the world. Those who abhorred the liberalism of Sir James, and dreaded his latitudinarianism, had a corner in their hearts for Bob!

Though Philip had abstained from requiting the hospitalities of Eske Hill, by presenting his young colleague to his family in return, it was less because afraid that his free and easy manners, and saucy Gallomania might offend the pragmaticality of Lord and Lady Askham, than from reluctance to expose to his quizzing the tedious inanity of the house. By comparison with the cultivated brilliancy of the Hardynge set, *his* home was an owl's nest!

One day, however, as they were driving together in Hardynge's phaeton towards the House of Commons, a glimpse of the family coach of all the Askhams, stopping before the gates of Uppingham House, reminded Philip to make formal inquiries after his sister and the little Earl, to whom his lady-mother appeared to be paying a visit.

"And who was that lovely girl in the corner

of the carriage?" demanded Bob, starting his horses with renewed spirit, as soon as Philip had obtained at the carriage-window more particular "particulars" than the stereotyped "As well as can be expected" of the porter.

"One of my sisters."

"You have other sisters, then, than the Marchioness of Uppingham?"

"Two!—nay, by Jove, *three!*—Emma, whom you saw me speaking to just now, was presented at the last drawing-room."

"Strange that I should not have noticed her! —I never saw a more piquant countenance!"

"One seldom notices the countenances of one's sisters," replied Philip, coldly.

"Does not one?— I ask for information, being an only child. It strikes me, however, as difficult to overlook that of Miss Askham!"

"Emma's?" repeated his companion, in an absent manner,—his thoughts still engrossed by Uppingham House.

"By your leave, *Miss Askham's!*"—persisted Hardynge, with a smile; "though proud to be called 'Bob' by any member of your august

family, as the moon said to the sun, 'Sir! I know my distance!'"

He knew it *so* well, apparently, as to be determined on its diminution. Reminiscences of the fair face he had discerned in Lady Askham's carriage so haunted his mind, that an irresistible attraction seemed to place Uppingham House in the direct road to every place he had to visit. Whatever Philip's engagements, Bob and his phaeton were always at his disposal; till at length, one afternoon, as they were traversing the dreary wilds of Portland Place, Hardynge reminded his friend, as if *à l'improviste*, of a long-standing promise to take him to Mansfield Street for the sight of a fine Cuyp, which Philip had cited as the companion to a landscape by the same master, adorning the dining-room at Eske Hill.

Impossible to refuse! Thanks to the spirit of Hardynge's horses, in a moment, they were at the door; and a great relief was it to Philip, to learn from the solemn butler, that my lord was gone to Downing Street, and my lady to Uppingham House.

"The pictures, however, must be at home!" cried Bob, who flattered himself he could discern the outline of a slender form behind the muslin curtains of the drawing-room; a suspicion agreeably justified when, having followed Philip up stairs, they were welcomed by a tall graceful girl, whom he recognized as his angel of the family coach, even previous to the slight introduction vouchsafed by his friend of, "Miss Askham—Mr. Hardynge."

To his great surprise, however, her formal curtsey in acknowledgment of her new acquaintance was followed by an equally formal request that he would introduce his companion.

"His name may be Askham," as you assure me," said she, with affected gravity; "but believe me, he is a total stranger in this house!"

"I am sorry my visits make so little impression!" retorted Philip, in the same spirit. "It strikes me I have dined here occasionally since your return to town."

"I hope you do not mean to impose the deaf and dumb gentleman who sat by papa at dinner on Thursday last, as the charming Mr.

Askham, of whom I have heard such wonders lately, from my cousin Helen—*and others!*" added she, in a significant tone.

Philip cared little for the praise of his cousin Helen. The mysterious supplement piqued his curiosity. But he was not allowed to pursue his inquiries. Bob Hardynge was scarcely the man to be defrauded of his share of attention.

By way of attracting towards himself one of the beaming looks at present monopolised by her brother, he expressed a hope that Lady Askham's visit to Uppingham House was not occasioned by an unfavourable change in the state of the Marchioness.

"Do I look as though my sister were in danger?"—said Emma, with precisely the sort of smile he hoped to elicit.—"No! mamma is only gone to hold a cabinet council with Margaret and the head nurse, concerning the number of yards of Valenciennes indispensable to bring a baby's cap to the dimensions of a bishop's wig. I, of course, am not on the matronly committee. By the way, gentleman in the blue and buff, whom I cannot call brother of mine!—are you

aware that Margaret is trying to decoy Lord Uppingham from town, to spend the spring at the Manor?"

"That she may not make her *début* in the *beau monde* in the dowdy character of a nurse?"

"When did you ever know Margaret influenced by selfish motives?" cried Miss Askham. "Her object is simply to secure her husband from the mortification of witnessing the defeat of his party. She is distracted, poor soul, between her dread lest he should stay in London, and expire under the slow fever of parliamentary debate; or the country be lost for want of his omnipotent protection!"

"And she applies to *my mother* for advice in such a dilemma?"—demanded Philip, with a sarcastic smile.

"No!—for comfort in her afflictions!" was Miss Askham's reproving rejoinder. "No balm so healing to a woman's wounds as mother-love; nor are *we* grown too fine to be fond of each other, dear Philip, like certain great men

of our acquaintance. The humdrum hearts of Edenbourne are still 'open as day to melting charity!' And, by the way," continued she, warned by his overclouded face to change the conversation, "I have a present for you, which I had not courage to offer to the supercilious gentleman who dined here on Thursday last."

"A *present?*" repeated her brother, immediately adding an assurance of the pleasure he should feel in receiving any token of her affection.

"*My* affection!" cried Miss Askham, "*mine?* The poor, stupid little Emma, on whom you used to cast such contemptuous glances at Eden Castle, when in disgrace six days in the week, with Miss Harrison, for not knowing her tables? No, Philip! the promised *cadeau* is from one far dearer to you. So, at least, I presume, or she would not talk of you with an earnestness of enthusiasm more than rivalling that of my cousin Helen."

With all his apathy, inherent and acquired, Philip could not listen to all this without emo-

tion. He made no answer, however, unwilling to risk the steadiness of his voice in pronouncing the name of Mrs. Saville.

"Askham is a lucky fellow," observed Hardynge, a little puzzled by the discomposure of his friend. "Offerings are laid upon his shrine in all parts of the kingdom at once! Like the sun, his smiles exercise their influence over a thousand dials! Had you seen him, Miss Askham, last night at Lady Grandison's drum, even *you*, who do not appear a *very* partial judge, would have pronounced him the most favoured of his sex"

"He *was* at Lady Grandison's, then?"—cried Emma, with a heightened colour. "The question was discussed at breakfast, between mamma and papa; who, in the teeth of that most authentic organ of fashion, the 'Morning Post,, denied the possibility that a son of theirs should have caused the family name to be announced in the head-quarters of the enemy."

"But your present, Emma!" interrupted her brother, anxious lest she should betray to his companion the narrow bigotry of his pa-

rents.—" Have a little mercy, child, on my patience."

Miss Askham, who had already opened a little ebony desk standing on the table beside her, now carefully drew forth a small packet, enveloped in silver paper.

" If you could only have seen her blush, when she entrusted it to my hands,"—said she, placing it in those of her brother. And while Philip, with pretended unconcern, proceeded to open the mysterious packet, he could scarcely breathe, under the agitation of finding himself laid open at such a crisis to the cross-fire of his companions. Emma was not to be pardoned for her indiscretion in thus exposing his weakness.

A moment afterwards, he was still further provoked by a peal of girlish laughter from his giddy sister, produced by the air of consternation with which he surveyed his prize—a clumsy pocket-book of straw-work, evidently the first effort of a child.

" Selina's own performance !" cried Miss Askham, in explanation; " dear, darling, little Selina !"—

"Darling and dear, if you will, but certainly not *adroite comme une fée!*" interposed Hardynge, repressing his merriment when he saw an angry spark kindle in the eyes of Philip.

"Whatever the blemishes of Selina's handiwork," observed the latter, struggling to recover his composure,

'Look in her face, and you forget them all!'

Selina is the prettiest little creature in the world!"

"And the truest-hearted!" added his sister, with enthusiasm. "An unflinching advocate of yours, Philip!—No one ever ventures to attack you in presence of Selina!"—

"I am sorry any one should have attempted it, in presence of my sister!" was the bitter retort.

"Would you have me do battle in your behalf against a whole county?"—cried Emma, unmoved by his indignation. "However unbounded your popularity just now in London, be assured you are no favourite at Edenbourne!"—

Philip shrugged his shoulders, with an air of contemptuous resignation.

"It is painful to betray his failings before a friend, Mr. Hardynge," resumed the gay girl; "but, alas! my brother has left behind him at Eden Castle, a reputation far from chivalrous! Our neighbourhood contains but three young ladies,—not much sillier or more tiresome than young ladies in general; yet it is on record that Mr. Philip Askham was never known to address to either, one civil word! As to his mental accomplishments, we have a be-knighted author, —a tourist of many quartos,—who accuses him of being so to seek in his geography as to fancy that Monte Video was——But what answer am I to send to Selina?"—said she, abruptly interrupting herself, on perceiving that angry clouds were gathering on the brow of Philip.

"The eloquence of a box of sugar-plums would surely be the most acceptable reply," interposed Hardynge, perceiving that his friend was in no mood to be gracious; on which, Philip, apprehensive, perhaps, that Lady Askham might return, and wax wroth on find-

ing a stranger of Bob Hardynge's appearance so familiarly installed in the company of her unchaperoned daughter, suddenly alluded to the purport of their visit, which he proceeded to explain to his sister.

"Since Mr. Hardynge is fond of pictures," said she, as they were going down stairs to visit the Cuyp, "why not show him, first, the Claude in the back drawing-room?"—

"Because it is not an original."

"I will not try to convict you by my father's favourite argument, that it '*must* be an original because my uncle gave two thousand pounds for it at Sir James Thornhill's sale.' But original or not, it is a noble painting."

Prepared at all risks to coincide in her opinion, Hardynge followed her light footsteps into an adjoining room, containing several admirable works of art, dimly perceptible by the misty light of a dreary February day, in a narrow London street.

"Claude, for a ducat!"—cried Hardynge, affecting to examine with the eye of an artist the picture she pointed out, (and he would pro-

bably have said the same of some group of animals by Snyders or Hondekæter.) "There cannot be a doubt of its originality!"

> "De las cosas mas seguras,
> Lo mas segura es dudar!"

sang Emma, with sprightly grace,—not a little amused by the *air capable* with which her visitor delivered his verdict.

"In this confounded light, what matters the utmost merit of a picture?" cried Philip. "My father ought to remove these things to Eden Castle!"

"As if any one had a right to bury the *chef-d'œuvres* of the ancient masters in his country-seat!"—retorted his sister. "No, no! Papa cannot do better than immure the grim visages of his ancestors, or sullen faces of his children. But paintings like these should remain within reach of the public!"

"*That* sentiment was never conned out of the Pandects of the house of Askham!"—observed her brother, amused in his turn by her venturing to have opinions of her own.—"But come

along, Bob! your phaeton horses, not being *cognoscenti* like yourself, appear to be getting fidgetty."

As they passed through the hall, Robert Hardynge took care not to remind his companion, (who, since the production of the pocket-book, had remained, like Pantagruel, *perplex et esbahi*,) that the object of his visit was still unaccomplished,—that they had seen nothing of the Cuyp; hoping, perhaps, to insure a pretext for a second visit to the family mansion, containing among its valuable works of art a child of nature so much *more* valuable, as the gay and gracious Emma.

"Lucky dog that you are, Philip," cried he, as they drove from the door, "to possess such sisters and such pictures, yet afford to make no boast of them!—In your place, I should climb the old bronze horse at Charing Cross, and proclaim my good fortune by sound of trumpet! What beauty—what animation,—and what an exquisite Claude!"—added he, as if afraid of betraying the whole measure of his enthusiam.

"Emma seems to have grown up a lively

girl!" was the *nonchalant* reply of his companion. "Her disposition resembles Percy's, rather than mine. So much the worse for her. A will o' the wisp is not a more dangerous guide to a traveller, than high spirits to a woman! Emma appears thoughtless enough to say more in an hour, than in a year she would find leisure to repent.—Emma is just the girl to create a host of enemies."

"And troops of friends!"—added Bob Hardynge, with spirit: "open-hearted, — clear-headed,—what can you want more?"

"The feminine serenity of my elder sister! Margaret is so sedate, so gentle, so attaching!" said Philip, his thoughts reverting to another person,—no sister of his,—who was also gentle, attaching, and sedate.

"You have seen more of Lady Uppingham, as nearer your own age," pleaded Bob, resolved not to be seduced from the cause of the hazel-eyed beauty, which he had instinctively adopted. "But you often allude to the high spirits of your brother Percy; and at Eton, he certainly left the reputation of being the merri-

est dog in the upper school. Yet the fragments you read me from his letters, abound in doleful dumps."

"Percy's accounts of himself are not always to be trusted," replied Philip. "To suit his convenience, he goes into deep despair or a deep decline, without scruple or ceremony. When required to live in England, nothing agreed with him but France. Now that France is his home, English air has become vital to his health."

"Askham's letters are framed, perhaps, to meet the *surveillance* of the French police."

"More likely to meet the *surveillance* of Eden Castle. I would give much for a little unrestrained intercourse with him," added Philip, with a sigh. "All I hear from other quarters of his pursuits, is far from satisfactory. Verdun is a terrible school; and Percy is said to be equally a victim to the allurements of *rouge et noir*, and red and white."

"Why does not Lord Uppingham interfere to effect his exchange?"—inquired Hardynge, more gravely.

"When in power, his efforts were unavailing; what possible chance *now?*"

"But *you*, Philip, —you have friends high in the confidence of the present administration;—and a word from Mr. Fox to the Emperor would surely suffice?"—

"Of course it would; but who could ask it of him, for my father's son?"—

"Your friend's father to be sure!" was the prompt rejoinder of Hardynge. "I will mention it to him directly; and the first time you come to Eske Hill, you can talk it over together."

Philip made suitable acknowledgments:—though without much expectation of a favourable result. For some time past, his assiduity at Eske Hill had insensibly relaxed. The place was not what it had been. Since Sir James's accession to office, he had resided in town—in the *Pays Latin*, or rather *pays perdu* of the lawyers,—the isthmus of Bloomsbury, uniting the great continents of court and city; a rusty grappling iron between business and plea-

sure.—It was only on Saturdays he now visited his *rus in urbe*, to luxuriate in the two days' holiday of the official week.

The spell of continuity was consequently broken. The establishment was disorganized; and worse than the establishment, the society itself was out of joint.

No greater mistake than to attribute a double charm to the recreations snatched in the intervals of a busy life. A school-boy alone is young enough to enjoy his vacation with a vague conviction that it is morrowless. On the mind of Sir James, the weighty duties of a responsible post cast their shadows before, even while presiding over his convivial board:—nay, the board itself had become *less* convivial. Topics once freely discussed there, would have been out of place in presence of the law advisers of the Crown; and diatribes regarded as an excellent joke by members of the opposition, had become sad earnest, to government men. Often, when some literary guest, over whom the change of administration had exercised no positive influ-

ence, hazarded a fling at *la chose publique*, such as aforetime would have set the table in a roar, silence and consternation ensued.

Even Bob Hardynge was conscious of the change. Some weeks after his memorable visit to Mansfield Street, having persuaded Philip to accompany him to Eske Hill to enjoy the first outburst of spring in the form of violets and jonquils, he could not repress his murmurs on their way back, on the Monday morning, to town.

"We are getting deadly lively here," said he, as they quitted his father's gate; "dull and donkeyfied as other great people!—No fun going on among us *now*. Nothing but after-dinner debates, drowsy enough to drive even the House of Commons to its night cap. Instead of squibs and crackers, we fire off only four-and-twenty pounders,—solemn as the minute guns at a royal funeral!—My father, so brilliant a few months ago, proses, as if eternally on the bench;—colons and semi-colons, by Jove, in every sentence!—I am beginning

to believe, Philip, that no public man obtains a bronze statue from posterity, unless, in his lifetime, he become a statue of lead!"

Philip Askham's unadvised rejoinder was not flattering.

"Sir James is not at ease in his new habiliments," said he; "the armholes are still tight,—the buckram of office is stiff."

"Not stiffer for *him* than for his colleagues." "The transition from private to public life, is greater, perhaps, to a lawyer."

"Why, what more public than a life spent in court?"—cried Hardynge, eagerly.

"A life spent *at* court!"—was the cool rejoinder of Philip. "What difference, for instance, does it make to my brother-in-law, whether in or out of office?—From his cradle to his coffin, *his* life must be a life of representation!"

In spite of himself, Bob Hardynge felt exceedingly nettled. A few weeks before, and he would have retorted with playful frankness, "Is it because we are *parvenus*, then, that we are all bores?"—But now, convinced that his admiration of Emma had not escaped the notice of

her brother, he fancied that the disparity of condition between them was purposely pointed out. Else, why this gratuitous allusion to "my brother-in-law?"

A moment afterwards, his suspicions received further confirmation.

"Emma has written to bespeak my influence with my father and mother," said he, "to obtain leave for her to accompany the Uppinghams to the North."

"To Uppingham Manor?—At *this* season of the year?"—

"Absurd—is it not?—I suspect she wants to get out of the way of Middlemore; who has taken it into his empty head that, next to his team and black retriever, Emma is the finest thing in creation!"

"The brute!"—

"My cousin-german—be pleased to remember; and one day, perhaps, to be my brother-in-law."

"You surely do not think Miss Askham would accept him!"—cried Hardynge in dismay.

"What girl of eighteen has strength of mind

to refuse Hurstwood Castle and fifty thousand a-year? Besides, Middlemore, though no Solon, is the best-natured creature breathing. Emma might do what she liked with him. More than might be the case with others, in *essentials* far his inferior."

Again did Bob Hardinge wince,—fancying himself talked at.

"What do you mean by 'essentials?'"—said he, looking straight between the ears of his off horse.

"Rank—fortune—a fitness of things and compatibility of condition between them. In short, she has *my* consent to marry him, if she can obtain her own; and I shall, therefore, strongly oppose her desire to leave town with the Uppinghams."

"With all his professions of liberality, Askham is as much encrusted with aristocratic *morgue* as the rest of his caste!"—exclaimed Bob, when, half an hour afterwards, he quitted his companion; and, with tingling ears, proceeded to the discharge of his official duties. "The indelible sign of the beast!" continued

he, with a gesture of impatience, on recalling to mind the unwarrantable caprice recently exhibited by the Askhams towards his father, in the matter of Percy's exchange.

For the services of Sir James had not only been rejected, but under circumstances to compromise his own character for consistency. Connected with Mr. Fox by the silken ties, of private life as well as by the chain-cable of political confraternity, on learning the negotiations for the exchange of the Earl of Yarmouth and other *detenus* of consideration, Sir James had not hesitated to request the insertion in the ministerial list of the name of the Honourable Percy Askham; and having been the companion of Fox's visit to Paris, on the peace of Amiens, and shared his introduction to the First Consul, by whom both were received with signal distinction, the recommendation of Sir James Hardynge had been especially appended to the request.

All was in auspicious progress; and Philip had the satisfaction of conveying the welcome

news to his father, and receiving the acknowledgments of Lord Askham in return; when, by the gossiping of Lord Askham's lady, the intelligence was unluckily conveyed to Uppingham House.

The Marquis, just then at the crisis of his party fever,—confounding Napoleon, Fox, and Sir James Hardynge in a common detestation,—treated the whole transaction as a political intrigue.

"A snare, my dear lord," cried he to his father-in-law,—"a palpable snare! In this age of coalitions, a shrewd fellow, like your republicanized special pleader, thinks to entrap you by an obligation.—All he wants is to secure the future member for Edenbourne."

"If I thought so, I would instantly decline his interposition," cried Lord Askham, whose sullen mind was ever prompt to adopt suggestions of mistrust.

"The whole thing is a cunning cabal," persisted Lord Uppingham. "These people have got hold of Philip, and hope to get hold of *you!*

Believe me, you would stand grievously committed with our party, by trafficking with the Whigs."

"It is not too late! Nothing has yet been done,"—cried Lord Askham, staggered and confused. "Philip must acquaint his friends that I wish matters to stand as they are. He can put it upon the state of Percy's health, —or upon—no matter what! Since such the object of this Whig lawyer's interested officiousness, I care little whether he be affronted or not!"

By Philip, accordingly, the ungracious task of refusal was reluctantly performed; and though Sir James, an experienced public man, had little difficulty in assigning the impertinent caprice of Lord Askham to the dictation of his arbitrary son-in-law, Robert, inspired by the susceptibility of a dawning passion, chose to infer that the Askhams could not make up their minds to accept a favour from a family whose alliance and origin they despised.

"If a son or brother of mine were a *detenu* in the hands of the enemy," murmured he, with

growing bitterness, "methinks I should accept his liberation at the claws of Belzebub himself! But from Belzebub, people of the Askham class would *rather* accept it, than from a man like my father,—*le fils de ses œuvres*—and unconnected with their self-seeking order."

The antipathies inseparable from ignoble birth had been fostered by his visit to the French metropolis; where a glimpse of consular fame in all her glory, had enamoured the heart of young Hardynge of her republican institutions. Dazzled by the showy surface of the Mosaic, he had no time to detect that its brilliancy was produced by well-adjusted particles of coloured glass; and neither his schoolboy friendship with Philip Askham and other Etonian items of nobility, nor even his dawning passion for Emma, availed to obliterate from his nature the democratic tendencies of the *parvenu.*

Little did Bob surmise, however, that at the very moment he was indulging in his philippic, his noble colleague was giving utterance to invectives nearly as vehement, against the folly

and ingratitude of his family, in having declined the friendly interposition of Sir James, which would have preserved them from new misfortunes.

The first thing that met Philip Askham's eye on repairing to his office, was a letter in Percy's handwriting; and inferring from the unusual circumstance of its being addressed to Somerset House that it might contain matters too confidential to be intrusted to the rest of the family, he tore it open with warmer interest than he had latterly bestowed on anything bearing the postmark of Verdun.

But though the sequel confirmed his conjectures, he would far rather have found himself in the wrong. Percy had not only confidences to make, but services to demand; appealing to the aid of his brother, as to that of a good Samaritan;—for he also "had fallen among thieves."

Not a syllable of those flippant allusions to the dulness of home and denseness of his family circle, anticipated by Philip.—No romancing—no rodomontade!—For once, Percy was in ear-

nest; For once, Percy wrote to the point:—for his *interests* were staked on his sincerity!

"Adopt the best mode that circumstances and your experience suggest," wrote he, "of breaking to my father what, smooth it over as you will, must be a startling blow.—I need not tell you, my dear Phil, that, in this accursed place, play is our sole resource against the heaviness of time.—It is no fault of ours!—Our lives are a very burthen to us; and the excitement of cards has preserved more than one of my unfortunate fellow-prisoners from cutting his throat. Let my father inquire of Lord Yarmouth, (who, having been so fortunate as to procure his exchange, will shortly be among you,) whether we are not forced to have recourse to some such pungent interest, to lose sight of our wretched situation!

"In short, my dear fellow, my usual ill-fortune has attended me; and, as the devil would have it, I am *in* for no less a sum than £16,000! for more than half of which, I have been compelled to give bills at sight, and for the remainder, three months' acceptances. For these,

my father must instantly provide. Not alone is my own credit at stake, but that of my country. Were I in England, instead of exposing Lord Askham to inconvenience, and myself to his Jeremiads, Jews and post-obits would be the mark!—Here, accommodation to such an amount, is out of the question; and I have, therefore, no means of suspending the domestic storm, the explosion of which I do not envy you!

"Say what you can, and promise what you will for me to the old gentleman. Tell him I will join in mortgages to double the amount, which would cover all he has paid for me during the last three years.

"Above all, Phil, lose not a moment! Write to me, if possible, by return of post; and see that the first eight thousand is paid *instanter* through Coutts's house to my credit at Perrégeaux's, or all is up with

"Your affectionate brother

P. A."

"Confound his cool selfishness!"—was the first ejaculation of Philip, after perusing the letter.

"And trebly confound the obstinacy of Lord Uppingham in rejecting Sir James Hardynge's interference!" the second. To waste time, however, in fruitless recrimination, was weakness equal to their own.—Something must be instantly attempted.

But how—and where—and when? Philip admitted the limitation of his father's resources. The hardness of the times had curtailed a third of Lord Askham's income. Ill-paid rents and well-paid taxes left as small a floating capital at his disposal, as usually graces the banker's book of a peer of the realm, whose family is large and cerebral development, moderate. There would probably be as much difficulty in producing at a moment's notice the alarming sum squandered by Philip, as in negociating an Austrian loan!—

"How unlucky that the Uppinghams should have left town," cried he. "The Marquis might have given me useful advice; and Margaret's good sense and good feeling would have assisted me to place the matter before my

father, in the manner least irritating to his feelings."

A moment later, and he congratulated himself that the Uppinghams were out of the way. It would have annoyed him to expose the frantic rage of his father to a man so much the master of his temper, as his brother-in-law; nor could he be certain that, when weary of abusing Percy's extravagance, Lord Askham might not turn upon *him* by whose injudicious advice he had been tempted to perpetuate the injurious exile of his son.

"Not a soul in my own family to whom I can turn for counsel!" cried he; after passing in review, like files of leaden soldiers, the heavy brigade of his noble relations.—"Not a human being in whom I can confide!"

Then, seizing his hat and gloves, in a fit of desperation, he left the business of the country to take care of itself; and hoping to find Lord Askham before he went out for the day, proceeded in blind haste to Mansfield Street.

CHAPTER VI II.

Hic vivimus ambitiosa
Paupertate omnes.

JUVENAL.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a' lord,
Wha struts and stares and a that,
Though hundreds worship at his word
He's but a coof for a' that.

BURNS.

PRECISELY as Philip had prognosticated from the regular habits of the family, before his father's door stood a ponderous family coach, bearing on all its panels the pompous emblazonments of the house of Askham; its pair of broad-backed bean-fed horses, strong and heavy in proportion, dozed over by a portly body-coachman, whose gravity would have be-

come the woolsack equally with his bullioned hammercloth.

On the opposite side of the street, was stationed, what was then considered, "a clever turn out,"—a light barouche with four greys, whose heads, the box being vacant, were held by natty grooms in the Middlemore livery; towards whom glances were ever and anon directed from under the bushy eyebrows of the body-coachman, conveying as strong an impression of disgust as was compatible with a frame as fleshy as Falstaff's, and a nature as jovial.

Lord Middlemore was evidently paying his daily visit to his cousin Emma, wooing her, as Desdemona was courted by the Moor, with accounts of his hair-breadth 'scapes, in racing to Bedfont or Staines with his co-mates of the barouche club,—his bets at the Fives' Court, or milling-bouts with Molyneux or Cribb.

For such fooling, Philip had just then nor bent nor patience; but the urgency of the case determined him at all events to enter the house; and, if unable to obtain a private audience of

Lord Askham, communicate his painful intelligence by a letter, which he could indite in his lordship's study.

The first object, however, that struck him on entering the sanctum sanctorum, was his father in proper person; deeply ensconced in his library chair, with a French dictionary in one hand, and in the other a copy of the Emperor's recent speech to the Legislative body; trying to make out, as well as his preparatory-school proficiency in the language of the "Corsican blackguard" would allow, the exact temperature of his imperial majesty's intentions towards Great Britain, as by Charles Maurice de Talleyrand expounded.

On the entrance of Philip, he attempted to explain what he had been vainly trying to understand; for between his desire for a Whig peace, that his son might be rescued from the hands of the Philistines, and his delight in the Tory war of extermination, by which Europe might be rescued from the clutches of Napoleon, he was completely puzzled!

To wait for the lucidation of his lordship's intellects, was, at a crisis like the present, impossible. In a few words, therefore, Philip explained the painful purport of his visit,—satisfied that words, on his lordship's part, would not be wanting.

Still, he was not prepared for the torrents of indignation that burst forth, after learning the onerous misdoings of his son.

Lord Askham protested, with frantic violence, that, already embarrassed by Percy's extravagance, this new demand was a fiat of ruin to the family; and, not content with announcing it to Philip, rushed up to the drawing-room into the midst of his assembled family, and repeated in hoarse and struggling accents all he had learnt and all he had been saying.

Regardless of young Middlemore's presence, he denounced Percy as lost to all sense of decency and honour,—as a scoundrel, a spendthrift, a gambler!—"Percy was bringing his family to the workhouse,—Percy was taking the bread out of the mouths of his brothers and sisters. Percy had obtained leave to go abroad

by an ungentlemanly imposture; and, when summoned back to England by his parents, had chosen to go round by Toulouse!"

Scared by his uncle's vituperations, Lord Middlemore slunk sheepishly away. But even when left alone again with Philip, the exasperated man could not be persuaded to turn his thoughts to remedial measures. On this occasion, he would *not* speak to old Coutts;—he would *not* consult his man of business, he would *not* ascertain what funds were at his disposal. Satisfied that Percy's vicious propensities would reduce him sooner or later to beggary, he chose to fancy himself ruined at once.—"He had no longer a guinea in the world.—They were all paupers!"

In his total ignorance of the state of the family affairs, Philip began to fear that his father's denunciations might be only too well-founded. When he talked of timber, Lord Askham made it clear that with thousands of acres of woodlands, he had not a tree to cut down; and when he spoke of mortgages, it was explained that Percy's co-operation could not be afforded un-

less on the spot. As a last resource, he suggested the name of his wealthy brother-in-law.

"Rather than that Percy should be thrown into prison, might not temporary aid be obtained from the Marquis, on security valid between peer and peer, or father and son, though insufficient for bankers and usurers?"

It needed but this hint to renew the paroxysms of Lord Askham! The name of Lord Uppingham suggested that but for *him*, Percy might be now at liberty! But for his evil counsel, instead of hazard and rouge et noir, lansquenet, and roulette, Percy might have been enjoying his domestic pool of commerce in Mansfield Street, and the *dolce far niente* of representing the borough of Edenbourne!—Next to Percy therefore, the greatest enemy Lord Askham possessed at that moment was the most noble the Marquis of Uppingham.

To bring him to listen to reason was like preaching moderation to "the vexed Bermoothes!" So profusely and publicly had Lord

Askham attributed to his absent son every christian grace and manly virtue likely to make a martyr of the young *detenu* in the eyes of the king and his ministers, that it seemed a relief to his conscience, as well as to his temper, to proclaim the tardy truth; and Philip was beginning to apprehend that, in default of other auditors, the old butler and housekeeper might be rung for to learn the *real* character of the heir of their master's house, when Emma, who had quitted the room half an hour before with her mother, to commune over the family misfortune in their chamber, suddenly reappeared on the threshold, holding an open letter in her hand.

The sight of open letters was becoming sickening to Philip!—But with the one in question, it would have been hypercritical to find fault, though the writing was bad, the spelling worse, and the style more than indifferent.

"A noble fellow!—a most generous offer!" cried he, after running over the contents.

Then, perceiving that Lord Askham was unequal to the task of decipherment, he explained

in terms somewhat more succinct than those of the letter, that Lord Middlemore had enclosed an order upon Baring for the sum in demand; entreating that Emma would "persuade her father to make use of the balance lying idle in his banker's hands."

It was as natural for Philip to hope, as for Emma to fear, that the offer would be thankfully accepted, and all immediate difficulty at an end. But they were mistaken. Lord Askham was not going to be cheated in that way out of his privilege of being the most unfortunate man and ill-used father in the universe. After profiting by his nephew's assistance, what right would he have to weary his family by perpetual murmurs, to harass them by his economies, to revile the interference of Lord Uppingham, or Percy's predilection for Toulouse?—No!—he chose to be a victim to his heart's content. Like Jaffier, "he was in love, and pleased with ruin!"—

Emma was requested therefore to inform Lord Middlemore that her father intended "to trust to his own resources;" and in the

overflowing of her joy at not being forced to incur so great an obligation towards one she liked as a kinsman, but as a companion for life must have despised, she prepared herself to clothe the intelligence in somewhat more gracious terms than were dictated by Lord Askham. Her warm heart was *really* touched by the good-nature and generosity with which her coaching cousin had hurried off to place his fortune at her disposal.

"*In nocte consilium*!" thought Philip. "To-morrow may bring forward better fruit. Communicate with my brother by this day's post, I cannot; and the suspense will afford him a useful lesson. But by the morning, my father will have stormed himself into a calm, and be prepared for rational expostulation."

The morrow, however, brought only a transition from rage to sullenness.

"All was over for him," Lord Askham said, "in this world. His lawyers assured him nothing could be done towards raising money by mortgage, in the absence of the heir in tail; and his balance at his banker's did not amount to

a quarter of the sum demanded with such cool audacity by Percy."

"My brother must prepare, then, for the worst," muttered Philip, after a dismal pause, wondering in what words to convey this fatal fiat to the *detenu*. "There is nothing further to be done."

"*Who* told you there was nothing more to be done?"—cried Lord Askham, with rekindling anger. "Of course there is something to be done,—however humiliating,—however vexatious. We must discharge the greater portion of our establishment,—we must resign the luxuries, not to say comforts, of life!—We must live, in short, like beggars, in order that this ungrateful profligate may be supported in his career of vice!"

"But even all these sacrifices, my lord, painful as well as gratuitous as they may be," pleaded Philip, "will require time for their fructification; and before you are able to lay by the sum indispensable to the security of my brother——"

"*Well*, sir?" interrupted Lord Askham,

wondering to what further insult was about to be exposed the most injured parent since the days of Lear.

"I observed, my lord, that before you could provide the money, or one half of it, some years must elapse."

"You suppose me, then, utterly devoid of friends or resources?"—exclaimed Lord Askham, livid with rage. "No, sir, the first moiety of the enormous sum squandered by your unprincipled brother has already been remitted to Messieurs Perrégaux. I am just come from the Strand. I have made an arrangement with Coutts. On my note of hand, the money was instantly advanced."

Philip was unable to repress a cry of exultation. He soon found he had done amiss.

"What are you so glad of?—Is it a matter, pray, for rejoicing, that I am to be driven out of town at this season of the year; at a time, too, so momentous to the interests of the country, and the prospects of your sister?"

"Surely it would be as easy to effect such reductions in your establishment as you consider

indispensable, in London as in the country?" remonstrated Philip, in a respectful tone.

"No, sir; it is neither so easy nor so palatable," retorted his father. "Do not deny me the poor comfort of burying the disgraces of my family in a spot where I am entitled to sympathy. At Eden Castle, I may at least seclude myself from the slights of the world."

Philip offered no further opposition. In Lord Askham's present frame of feeling, he was capable, if detained in town, of haranguing Boodle's, day after day, on the misdemeanours of his son and disorder of his finances; or even memorializing the treasury, or petitioning parliament, concerning the demoralization of loyal British subjects, by the contagion and example imbibed during their detention in France. Better, certainly, that he should proceed to Eden Castle.

All was speedily arranged. The family might quit town as for the Easter holidays, and forbear to return. No surprise would be excited. Lord Askham had no public part to play in politics, and his private position was too insig-

nificant to render his comings or goings of much importance.

"As regards my nephew Middlemore," observed Lady Askham, confidentially to her son, on the eve of the journey, "as one of the family, *he* of course can visit Edenbourne, as easily as Mansfield Street; and I have invited my sister and Helen to spend Easter-week with us, to give a colouring to his visit. Depend on it, Philip, we shall soon have him at Eden Castle."

As this expectation afforded balm to her maternal wounds, Philip refrained from intreating she would *depend* upon the contrary. For already Emma had deputed him, as plenipotentiary and intermediary general of the family, to explain to her cousin the impossibility of requiting his generous services by other than cousinly regard; nor had Philip's remonstrances availed more against her determination to refuse his hand, than they had done against Margaret's acceptance of Lord Uppingham's. It was clear he was not intended by providence to become conscience-keeper to his sisters.

"Since you are so bent on having Hurstwood Castle in the family," said Emma, after listening patiently to the reproaches which he called arguments,—"persuade my cousin to wait a year or two for Susan. Susan will be just the wife for him. Susan has the same tastes, the same warm-hearted, blunder-headed generosity. Susan outrides and outruns the bravest of her brothers; and whenever Miss Harrison can be got out of the way at Eden Castle, will catch the wildest of the foals loose in the park, and witch the deer and the nursery-maids by her noble ponyship. At some future time, Susan will mount the box with poor Middlemore, and be thankful."

"And Emma might, even now, bring him down from it, and be happy!" retorted Philip.

"On the contrary, were I fated to become his wife, (which not the worst possible behaviour of all my brothers united shall effect!) I would have him nailed to his barouche-seat for the remainder of his days. Never should I wish to see him otherwise than with the reins in his hands."

"In short, Miss Emma Askham, like Miss Lydia Languish, pleads guilty to the soft impeachment of choosing to marry for love!"

"Why not add (as your friend, Mr. Hardynge, did the other day) that first love is the convulsion incident on our second teething?—Why not invent something pungent on the indelicacy of selecting a husband by the heart, rather than the head?—Can you devise no striking epigram on the childishness of preferring a crust of bread and liberty, to Hurstwood and the society of a man as companionable as the mastiff in his court-yard?"

"I perceive, my dear Emma," said her brother, gravely, "that Miss Harrison *has* been got out of the way lately, oftener than when I was a state-prisoner with you at Eden Castle. —Margaret looked upon these things with other eyes than yours."

"We see according to the instincts God has given us!"—replied Emma; "and the spectacles affixed to my eyes by Miss Harrison, have not rendered me short-sighted. *My* inclinations are not as Margaret's! If I did not

love my husband—love him very differently, too, from her regard for her dictatorial Marquis, —I will not answer for myself, Philip, that,— one day or other I might not——"

She paused, and fixed her eyes portentously on her brother.

"Might not—*what?*" persisted Philip, somewhat alarmed.

"*Poison him!*"—replied Emma, in a hoarse voice, distorting her pretty face by a melo-dramatic grimace; "particularly," added she, laughing heartily at the sudden recoil of Philip, "particularly if addicted to coaching,—boxing, —rat hunting,—gin-punch,—and the other ennobling predilections of my cousin Middle more!"

"And pray, my little Emma," resumed her brother,—amused in spite of himself by her petulance,—"to whom are you indebted for this prodigious insight into the mysteries of the human heart?—Whom have you had lately at Eden Castle, to lecture you on a branch of the fine arts in *my* time so scrupulously interdicted, that we used to read out a family Shakspeare,

—a family Homer,—a family Milton;—nay, if I remember, even Hannah More and Miss Edgworth were Bowdlerized out of all allusion to the tender passion, ere they were suffered to enter the school-room!—Have the Miss Gwatkins been showing you their Valentines or has Sir Erasmus L'Estrange turned Romeo in his old age?"—

"Sir Erasmus *has* turned Romeo, though not to find a Juliet in *me*,"—cried Emma. "But I must be as dense as poor Middlemore himself, if, on such a subject, I applied for instruction to raw girls and boys, like the old Gwatkins, or our trusty knight of Edenbourne Lodge.—No, dearest Philip, if you must needs know the origin of my proficiency, learn that I am indebted for it to Mrs. Saville!"—

"I ascribed better taste to her," rejoined Philip, drily, "than to indulge in conversation of such a nature, with a girl of your age."

"Of *such* a nature!—of *what* nature? Do you imagine, my good brother, that on accompanying mamma to call at Eastfield, or when

Mrs. Saville dined at the castle, I addressed her in the tone of Miss Harrison, and the style of Joyce's Scientific Dialogues, with, "You informed me at our last meeting that first love was a combination of the neutral salt, youth, with oxymuriate of idleness. Let me hear what you have to say about interested marriages!"

Irresistible was Emma Askham's mimicry of the shrill voice and pinched air of the governess; yet Philip was angry with himself for laughing.

"Give me credit, dear brother," she resumed, "for cleverer management. To come at the result of Mrs. Saville's married experience, I talked to her of the beauty of her children,—the sacrifices she was making for their sake,—and, above all, of the duty of encouraging the devotion of her superanuated swain, Sir Erasmus (for Edenbourne Lodge, you know, is Hurstwood to the tenant of Eastfield)! Thus it was I drew from her the confessions I wanted. She owned that, amid all her troubles, she had never repented her imprudent match;—that

her married life had been a day of unclouded happiness;—and that not all the treasures of this world would induce her to give to Edward Saville's orphans, a father unworthy to supply his place! From the intensity of love with which she talked of *them*, Philip, I was able to surmise the warmth of her attachment to her husband!"

Miss Askham paused; but *this* time her brother made no rejoinder. It was perhaps in pity to his confusion that Emma resumed her explanations.

"I could never love poor Middlemore with that sort of devotion!" said she. "For *him* I could not submit to bury myself in faithful widowhood at Eastfield: and it is consequently out of my power, to become Emma, Lady Middlemore."

Philip Askham *seemed* to think so too; though in truth he was thinking of something else. In a hurried absent manner, he promised to deliver her message to her cousin, and keep his rejection a secret from her parents (so as to spare her their fruitless remonstrances;) and

away he went, to indite his letter of congratulation to Percy, and ponder over the life and opinions of Evelyn Saville.

Less lax of counsel than his friend Hardynge, he judged it unnecessary to apprize *him* of all that had occurred.—Verdun was a topic he scrupulously avoided at Eske Hill; and there was nothing more extraordinary to be accounted for in the untimely visit of Lord and Lady Askham to Eden Castle, than in the previous departure of the Uppinghams for the Manor.

Still, the consciousness of disingenuousness imparted a suspicious degree of embarrassment to his air, when announcing that they had left town.

"Leave town in March?—Leave town before Easter?—Leave town, with a hundred pleasant fêtes in prospect?"—was all the disappointed lover found to utter in reply; and when Philip, instead of meeting the question with frankness, changed colour and looked uncomfortable, the young Lovelace of the *Pays Latin* felt as convinced that his passion was evident to

all the world, and that Lord Askham had withdrawn his family from London to secure himself against the annoyance of an impertinent proposal, as Philip that the letter of advice (advice not *commercially* speaking) which he had that morning despatched to his brother, would be laid aside unread till a more convenient season; or, like other vexatious questions, adjourned *sine die.*

Thenceforward, there were two despairing Thyrsises, instead of one, to deface the government blotting-paper with initials, in his Majesty's public offices of Somerset House; and as it was just then the fate of Robert Hardynge to flesh the maiden sword of his eloquence in the debate on the Order in Council for the detention of the Prussian ships, it is more than probable that the waspish tone of his speech, (which elicited the compliment of an ironical cheer from Canning,) was indebted for some portion of its gall to abhorrence of Tory noblemen, thrown into the system. It was not to his Eton chum, he could express *all* he felt towards Eden Castle.

Meanwhile the progress of the family into the country, was much as if following a hearse escutcheoned with their hereditary emblazonments. His lordship sat "nursing his wrath to keep it warm;" his lady, who was in the habit of taking her tribulations cold, or at least with the chill off, remained silent as a mute; and between her father's bursts of exasperation, and her mother's frigid taciturnity, Emma had a pleasant time of it! Already, like her brother Philip before her, she was looking forward to the kindly warmth of Eastfield, as the solace of her cares!

Edenbourne, on the other hand, was more puzzled than ever what sort of a face to put on, in welcoming its lawful authorities! However cautiously great people may seal their letters or close their doors, their secrets are sure to transpire; and the losses at play of Mr. Askham, magnified of course from fifteen thousand pounds to thirty, forty, and in remote parishes to fifty,—engrossed the attention of the neighbourhood. The family were said to be ruined,

—the borough was whispered to be in the market.—Lady Askham was about to lay down her carriage,—and his lordship to apply for the poor nobleman's pension.

Still, as the intelligence was at present marked private and confidential, (no one being prepared to assert that it had been authenticated by the family,) it was decided in committee by the Gwatkins, Hackets, and Simprems, that no allusion should be hazarded to the subject, till it pleased Eden Castle to open its mouth and solicit their sympathy.

Any one in the secret, must have been amused to watch the eagerness with which, while pretending to impart the news of the parish and accept such items of fashionable small-talk as Lady Askham condescended to let fall in return, they examined the countenances of their noble hosts, for encouragement to put on a doleful face, and own that they knew the worst!

When Lord Askham, who, so far from intending to keep his sorrows to himself, was

prepared to exhibit his wounds in the market-place,—like Coriolanus

> Show them the unaching scars which he should hide,—

and psalmodify his woes, as if proud of them, like some beggar of his blindness,—proclaimed his parental disappointments, and gave the signal to the Edenbourne orchestra for an overture in a minor key and five flats, the change of countenance of his auditors was instantaneous!

They had waited only his sanction to expand into their former chorus of ohs! and alases! ("the original powerful cast;") and right welcome was it to the fractious old man, to find people who had still patience to make the responses in the proper places to his chapter of lamentations respecting Torquay and Toulouse; and to whom Lord Yarmouth and Sir James Hardynge were new *dramatis personæ* in the Askham tragedy. So comforted was he, in fact, by the polite attention of his auditory, that the families accustomed to dine once a year

at the castle, during its palmy days, were thenceforward bidden once a week, to its Lenten entertainments.

Among those who expressed least on the occasion, perhaps because of all the neighbourhood alone really interested in the welfare of the family, was Mrs. Saville. *Her* ladylike nature would have recoiled from vociferous condolences, like those of Mrs. Gwatkin or Simprems. But she shuddered at the idea of parents arrived at the age of the Askhams, being reduced to personal privations by the misconduct of one of their children; and was equally shocked that persons of their rank and education, had not the decency to keep it to themselves.

That her charming young friend at the castle should have been curtailed of her London pleasures, was also a subject of regret. But the worst grievance of all,—the only *real* grievance to Mrs. Saville,—was the fact announced by Emma at their first meeting, that Philip was now an established man-about-town; wholly disconnected from his family,—

immersed in other friendships, acquaintanceships, and neighbourships,—devoted to opposite politics, and pretending to a line of frivolous distinction exclusively his own.

"Philip has brought himself to consider Eden Castle a *chateau en Espagne*,—'the baseless fabric of a vision' he never wishes to find realized!" said the gay girl. "I shall be surprised if we see him here again, within the next ten years!—Indeed, I doubt whether his *proneuse*, Lady Grandison, allows him to extend his absences from London further than Fulham!"

Pleasant intelligence this, for a woman to whom the prospect of his return had been as a far-off beacon, enabling her to traverse with courage a dreary morass!

For, though long blind to the nature of her sentiments towards Philip, and enlightened at last only by the void created in her heart by the loss of his society, after the first shock of discovery she never attempted to deceive herself again.

Few struggles, perhaps, are more painful to the

human heart, than the first perception of its inconstancy to the memory of the dead. When faithless to the living, excuses are usually to be found, in their own conduct, or some moral or physical change. We are always entitled to say, (as the song does,) concerning those to whom we have "plighted an eternal vow,"

> So altered are thy face and mind
> 'Twere perjury to love thee now!

But there is no such pretext as regards those holy memories consecrated by the stillness of the tomb. The sweet face we beheld enshrouded for the grave, cannot *since* have frowned upon us; the manly hand that wrung our own in its parting agony, cannot *since* have pressed the hand of another. The change is in our infirmity of nature. We have violated a solemn pledge. We have transferred to flesh and blood, the tenderness sacred to a shade!

Such were the compunctions of Evelyn Saville, on first ascertaining that the young man whose visits she had fancied herself bearing with, for the sake of diversion to her children,

had become an object of affection scarcely secondary to themselves!

Had Philip remained by her side, uncertainty as to the nature of his sentiments would have enabled her to combat the feeling. But as he was gone,—gone for an indefinite period,—gone perhaps never to return,—she did not refuse herself the solace of reverie, that most fatal among the many intoxications of the human heart!

The momentary interview which united them on his flying visit to Edenbourne previous to inauguration in office, had completed at a blow the mischief slowly proceeding during eighteen months. For his emotion on that occasion was not lost upon her; and she had almost flattered herself it might arise from reciprocation of those feelings which had become the dearest companions of her solitude. But on the morrow, Philip quitted the castle without so much as a word of farewell; and the fairy palace created by a moment of enchantment, in another moment wholly disappeared!

Such was the motive of her acceptance of the olive-branch soon afterwards extended by the Askhams. As the only means of obtaining news of the family, she had submitted to the intrusion of the Gwatkins and Sir Erasmus during the sojourn of Lord and Lady Askham at Weymouth; and now, satisfied that she had seen the last of him who was beginning to occupy every thought of her mind, she fancied it would comfort her to visit the scenes where his cheerless youth had worn away; and become acquainted with the brothers and sisters, among whom, perhaps, some feature or turn of expression, might serve to wake into more vivid reality the image imprinted on her heart.

There was possibly some portrait of Philip at Eden Castle,—some childish sketch, still serving to recall his altered looks. Or he might have left behind him a favourite dog; or, at all events, there was the room he had inhabited, (the elder-son apartment inherited from Percy,) containing his books, his gun, his inkstand. He had too often described it to her during the

eight months of their intimacy, to leave her ignorant of a single detail.

The result gratified her expectations. In Emma Askham, she found a joyous, open-hearted girl, eager to forestal her inquiries; and even Lord and Lady Askham, to whose acquaintance she had looked with dread as the arbiters of Philip's destinies, by whose asperities his early life was made so cheerless, had too much tact not to discern the distinction of Mrs. Saville's air, and welcome so agreeable an acquaintance to their circle with a degree of courtesy that made her feel herself at home.

No reason to repent the reluctance she had overcome!—No cause to repent her introduction at Eden Castle!—And yet, in securing the means of satisfying herself concerning the health and happiness of Philip, she had completed the destruction of her own!

From the unguarded pleasantries of a girl like Emma, it was easy to ascertain the misconceptions to which her mysterious seclusion

had given rise. The strangeness of Philip's deportment towards her under the interdictions imposed by his father, was now explained. But from the elucidation, arose a dilemma, more perplexing than all the rest. Had the attachment imputed to him by his family *really* existed; and was his present estrangement the result of the peremptory prohibitions of Lord Askham?

Oh! troubled, troubled dreams, that emanated from that tormenting uncertainty!—Oh! reveries more and more enthralling, which thenceforward wrapt in Elysium her bewildered soul!—From the moment of her first ramble with Emma Askham in the shrubberies of Eden Castle, poor Evelyn became, like Othello, a victim to the

> Damned moments counted o'er by one
> Who doats, yet doubts,—suspects, yet strongly loves!

Even Sir Erasmus L'Estrange, the most patient of earth's tourists, who had submitted without repining to have his skin peeled off by the fervid suns of Congo, and a toe frozen from his foot by the icy grasp of Nova Zembla, — was beginning to perceive that the

temperate zone of Eastfield was far less equable than of yore.

He did not tell it in Gath,—that is, he did not whisper it at Hexham Hall,—but he was sadly afraid some miasmatic influence had distempered the angelic frame of his dear Mrs. Saville!

CHAPTER IX.

Be curst and brief, no matter how witty, so it be eloquent and full of invention.

SHAKSPEARE.

Does any here know me? This is not Lear! Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes? Either his notions weaken, or his discernings are lethargied.

SHAKSPEARE.

AMONG the mental delusions of our self-sufficient little island,—untirable in hymning pæans in its national honour as though paid to be its own poet laureat,—is the conviction that the English are the most hospitable people in the world. Not that England is the most hospitable country. The French are prone to glorify *la belle France*,—the English to glorify themselves; a Frenchman adoring his *sol natal*

under some ideal emblem, — the *fleur-de-lys* or *Coq Gaulois*;—while the Englishman worships his own gross image, typified under the form of John Bull!—

There is not (we repeat it that our meaning may be unmistakeable) a greater blunder than to attribute hospitality to Great Britain; and it should be seen to in the next Useful Knowledge edition of the Vulgar Errors of Sir Thomas Brown.

We may have been hospitable, perchance, in the days when we had only hips, haws, and acorns to set before our guests, and wolf-skins for their wedding garments; for our wattled cabins possessed no door for the exclusion of strangers. But the moment the Angle became a cooking animal, and above all, from the moment the patrician Englishman became a French cooking animal, and knockers and street-doors intervened between private life and the public, our sense of hospitality was as that of an eagle in its eyry!

Set not thine arms a-kembo, excellent public, (*statua gentilissima!*) nor fling back the accusa-

tion in our teeth. We deny not that thou art a mighty giver of feasts,—that thy banquets, from Lord Mayor's Day all the year round, are savoury to the palate and ponderous to the mahogany. For thou givest dinners to thy friends, as dismissal to thy servants, at a month's warning; and at Christmas time, or throughout the hunting season, as thy thousands per annum admit, fillest thy best beds with guests, and thy steward's room with the strange menials within thy gates. Thou settest thine ale abroach, taking care that thy county paper shall note the measure of its overflowing; and biddest to the rich viands of thy many courses, those who have rich viands to offer in return.

But we say again, that, as regards the genial spirit of hospitality, thou art a very churl! Thy flesh-pots simmer only for those who are ready with an equivalent; and even *they* must feed at thy own time, and the suggestion of thy good pleasure, or seek elsewhere for entertainment!

Let a guest but keep thy dinner waiting half an hour, and he will see! How much more, if he pretend to claim a meal, when thine ostenta-

tions are laid on the shelf! Thou offerest him turtle and venison in due season; but let him ask a slice of mutton of thee at his need! While affecting an openness of hospitality worthy the tents of Arabia, thou wouldst erase from thy list of friends a man capable of requesting a crust of bread and glass of Madeira, when luncheon time was past.

The Askhams, for instance, accounted hospitality among their hereditary virtues, from seeing, in the country, the hundred weights of beef and pudding crammed into their poor on state occasions, advertised in their county paper;—and in London, their weekly hecatombs, (in repayment of the daily hecatombs offered to themselves,) recorded in the "Morning Post."

Though there was no more of the virtue that shares its bread and salt with a fellow-traveller in the desert in their frigid hearts, than in the catacombs of a metropolitan cemetery, they felt legitimately entitled, under their recent misfortune, to the sympathy of Hexham Hall and Edenbourne Lodge, by the *nachbarrecht* of mu-

tual hospitality; and Lady Askham, who had so long repudiated Mrs. Saville as a cast-away, and who, even now, would have less resented the entrance of a burglar through one of the windows of Eden Castle than that of the gentle widow, uninvited, through the door, assumed the privilege, whenever she drove to Edenbourne, of bestowing the weight of her tediousness upon Eastfield, if she failed in securing, at the rectory, ears for her querimonious discontent.

Never had her ladyship felt so in want of an auditory! A spring in the country was foreign to her habits, and out of her reckoning. No family connexions, now, to fill the castle with repetitions of her own mediocre feelings and features, a thousand-fold repeated. No noble aunts or sisters to join their crewels with those on her work-table, or maunder with her over the decline of India muslins and rise of mechanical lace. Even Lady Middlemore played her false: Eden Castle being too remote from town to justify a mere Easter visit to a family whose eldest son was beyond the reach of Helen's speculations; and Lady Askham, who regarded

Emma as a prating child, would have been often destitute of a victim on whom to vent her vain-glory when a letter arrived from Margaret with accounts of the increasing beauty of Uppingham Manor and the infant Earl, but for the humble latch-gate among the cliffs of the Eden.

There were others at the castle, however, to whom it afforded a still more valuable resource. Young and apparently thoughtless as she was, Emma was the only member of the family alive to the influence exercised over the health of Lord Askham by his recent vexations.

The prolonged excitement of a mind unused to contrariety, was wearing the life-springs of a frame rocked during the first forty years of its existence by the monotonous ease of an unincidental life. His looks were becoming haggard, his articulation imperfect. When harassed by the details of domestic economy, which his exaggerated zeal for retrenchment brought down in judgment on his head, he was often painfully incoherent.

Unwilling to alarm her mother, Emma

pointed out the change to Miss Harrison; but the governess had not an idea beyond her grammars and lexicons. She next addressed herself to the tutor, who was too much startled at being spoken to by one of the young ladies, to afford a rational answer. At length, she pretended indisposition (after the example of Percy,) to obtain an interview with Simprems; who, after hearing her details of Lord Askham's symptoms, assured her no other remedy was needful but to amuse his lordship's mind by cheerful companionship, and invigorate his lordship's frame by daily exercise.

From that day, Emma devoted herself so pertinaciously to his amusement, that Lord Askham found it impossible to throw her off.

Affecting to have imbibed the tastes of her sister Susan, she became the daily companion of his ride, or persuaded him to drive her in the pony-chaise to Edenbourne. She even permitted herself to practise on his vanity, to secure the benefit of a visit to Eastfield; by reminding him what a blessing it must be to a well-bred woman like Mrs. Saville, to be relieved by *his*

society, from the burthen of that old man of the sea, Sir Erasmus L'Estrange.

It was not to gratify her own inclination, Emma Askham condescended to these manœuvres. But she knew that, at Eastfield, the weaknesses of her parents were safe from condemnation;—that the absurd confidences of Lord Askham would not be sneered at, as at Hexham Hall, or repeated from house to house, as by the gossipping Simprems. Mrs. Saville listened so mildly to his frantic ebullitions of rage, on the failure of Lord Lauderdale's mission!—Mrs. Saville consoled him so humanely, when the brilliant *debut* of young Hardynge in parliament, reminded him that, for a year to come, his family borough must remain a monosyllable!—And though Emma knew, as well as if it had been told her, that this exercise of neighbourly charity was amply repaid by hearing, in return, that Philip was well and happy,—a guest at Carlton House,—or a cheerer in the gallery of the House of Commons,—she was not the less thankful for the benefit conferred. Even Selina was beginning to look forward to their daily visits,

as she had formerly done to those of her dear Philip.

Lady Askham took little heed of their growing intimacy. The change produced in her husband's character by the vicissitudes of the last four years, had produced in its turn tacit estrangement between them. His violence alarmed her—his peevishness wearied;—nay, she began to misdoubt the excellence of a system which had brought forth nothing but evil.

The recent reduction of her establishment, moreover, had thrown a thousand interests into her jurisdiction, more than were dreamed of in her want of philosophy. She now knew to a guinea the value per head of laundry-maids, and cost per dozen of grooms; and what was worse, could appreciate the surliness of a second table curtailed of its wine, and the discontents of a nursery docked of its double ale. Even Miss Harrison had something to complain of on the score of abridged wax-lights!—"If Miss Susan and Miss Sophia were to practise by candle-light her ladyship must be aware that a lamp was not sufficient."

No wonder that a woman accustomed for five-and-forty years to roll through life in an easy-chair, moving on golden castors, (like the gates euphoniously revolving on golden hinges described by Milton,) should become deadened in perception by petty persecutions of this nature, to the infirmities of her liege lord and the filial devotion of his daughter.

On the other hand, the greatest annoyance experienced by poor Emma in the discharge of her adopted duties, arose from the unjust revilings of Lord Askham against the fickleness of his nephew.

"He had expected better things of Middlemore!—Middlemore had shown, in the first instance, so much heart!—Middlemore was not an ordinary young man!—He might not have taken honours in Cambridge, like his cousin Henry. He was not qualified to figure among authors and actors, like his cousin Philip. But at all events, he had spurned the example of his cousin Percy; and accompanied Dr. Dactyl quietly back to England, instead of running his head into jeopardy by going round by Toulouse.

From all which, by some strange process of logic, Lord Askham seemed to infer that it was his duty to offer his hand to his cousin Emma!—

Scarcely fair, perhaps, on the part of Miss Askham, to leave him thus disposed against his nephew; whose nature was in truth as free from the meanness of sordid calculation, as that of a Newfoundland dog. But it required some magnanimity to transfer to *herself* the blame now vented on her cousin; and Emma reconciled to her conscience her want of candour, by the certainty that, if her drives and rides with Lord Askham were harassed by perpetual objurgation, they would impart less benefit to his health.

There would come a time hereafter for the vindication of Lord Middlemore! Meanwhile, it was an act of charity to Percy, as well as to herself and Philip, to enlist another whipping-boy as a butt for the animosities of Eden Castle.

We have stated this to be Miss Askham's "worst" annoyance, because, as young ladies seldom speak truth on these points, such would probably have been her own statement. But a

far *worse* "worst" was it to hear Lord Askham enumerate to Mrs. Saville, among his numerous family tribulations, the political opinions of Philip.

"Philip considers himself ill used, I am told," said he, "that I do not bring him into parliament. As if with *his* views he could ever represent a borough of mine! My son-in-law, Lord Uppingham, cannot speak of him with patience; and looks upon him as a contemptible turn-coat!"

"A turn-coat, dear papa?"—interrupted Emma, whose buoyant spirit had not adopted the habits of passive obedience she had seen so irksome to her brother and sisters. "When did Philip ever wear his coat on any other side than the present?—The utmost he can be accused of, is having failed to assume, as in duty bound, the hereditary livery of the family."

"And of having, under such circumstances, solicited office from the Tories!"—

"*Solicited* office?"—

"At all events, *accepted*."

"Surely the place he holds is wholly disconnected from politics?"—observed Mrs. Saville.

"The person who procured it for him, is not disconnected from politics!"

"The person who procured it, was his brother-in-law, Lord Uppingham,—*not* Lord Uppingham, the minister!" pleaded Miss Askham.

"A distinction without a difference!" retorted her father, with acrimony;—"mere sophistry, mere pretence. The fact is," resumed his lordship, turning towards Mrs. Saville, as though Emma were unworthy to be argued with, "Philip was too cautious to embark in a sinking vessel! Philip knew what he was about. Philip foresaw that, with the death of Mr. Pitt, the good cause must founder; and took care to keep his head above water."

"I trust and believe you wrong him," expostulated Mrs. Saville. "His opinions always tended to the liberal side. Surely, my lord, he made no secret of them, from the moment he was released from the restraints of dependence?"

"Exactly!—Just what I complain of!—The

moment he quitted my roof, and was able to dispense with my protection, he allied himself with the abettors of the Corsican blackguard, by whose monstrous violation of the rights of nations, his unfortunate brother has been exposed to the seductions of a sink of iniquity like Verdun!"

"I understood," insinuated Mrs. Saville, "that, by *his* interest with the present government, overtures had been made for the release or exchange of Mr. Askham!"

The indignant father's fury now burst forth.

"You *have* heard it, have you?" cried he. "The story is doubtless public! Everything connected with my family misfortunes is as notorious as if it had passed through the Court of Bankruptcy! I trust, however, madam, that those who informed you of Lord Askham's having declined a service at the hands of the present ministry, apprized you also of the ignominious channel through which it was offered?"—

"I heard only vague rumours on the subject," replied his hostess, perceiving by the embarrassed countenance of Emma, that she was apprehensive of being denounced as the informant.

"*I* am not like Philip!" cried Lord Askham, impetuously. "*I* do not incur obligations without considering the consequences they entail! Learn, madam, that the people by whose intervention my son's release was to have been effected, are a set of intriguing *parvenus*, ambitious of extending their connexions in society,—no matter at what cost,—or at whose cost. By *their* insidious manœuvres was Philip seduced from the party to which he naturally belongs. Their house, the resort of fiddlers and buffoons, has perverted his principles and weakened his understanding. Among these Hardynges, he is flattered and fawned upon, till he believes himself something and somebody; whereas the *true* object of their servility is to link themselves with his family, as a stepping-stone to their entrance into fashionable life."

"Mrs. Saville will scarcely be induced to infer from such a picture, dear papa," said Emma, (with difficulty repressing her indignation,) "that Sir James Hardynge is a man of eminence, fortune, and education; about to take his seat in

the House of Peers, and already of the Privy Council!"

"And what then?"—angrily interrupted Lord Askham. "It is precisely this sort of professional advancement which, by thrusting a man out of his sphere, induces him to cling, without decency or ceremony, to every object above his level, in order to secure a footing! Sir James Hardynge, or Lord Hardynge, or Lord Eske Hill, or Lord Nisi Prius, or by whatever name this new law lord is to be called, would be glad enough, I fancy, to grapple his insignificance to the consequence of Lord Askham of Eden Castle, or the Marquis of Uppingham of Uppingham Manor!"

"Was not the son of Sir James a schoolfellow of the Mr. Askhams?" inquired Mrs. Saville, hoping to give time for his lordship to recover his breath, and Emma her self-possession.

"Of course he was! Sir James is just the ambitious man to send his son to Eton, with the hope of improving his connexions."

"My *brothers* were not sent to Eton to im-

prove their connexions," said Emma, gathering courage from his injustice. "Why ascribe such an object to the Hardynges?"

"Because their motives are self-evident! Who and what *is* this Sir James Hardynge, I should like to know?"—

"One of the ablest men in the kingdom, if the judgment of our gracious sovereign is to be trusted: since he has been twice selected for an office of the highest honour and responsibility!" argued Emma in a firmer voice.

"But by *whom*, pray?—By the Whigs! who would select a chimney-sweeper to carry out their treasonable policy, if it served their ends! Sir James Hardynge is not the only man they have advanced, who has risen from the dregs of the people!"

"Surely the papers, in noticing Sir James's preferment, stated him to be the son of a respectable clergyman?" inquired Mrs. Saville.

"The papers! Ay, no doubt, the Whig papers take care of his interests!" retorted Lord Askham. "They are paid for it. It was to be expected. It is part of their system! Defeated

in their hopes of revolutionizing the country, their surest way to vilify and destroy the aristocracy, is by introducing into the Order such people as these Hardynges; who, a few years after their elevation to the peerage, are confounded by the vulgar with the ancient nobility of the realm!"

Lord Askham, whose Irish barony was a bribe of the Newcastle ministry to his grand uncle, about the middle of the last century, assumed, as he spoke, an air of as much importance as though all Magna Charta were breathing through his nostrils!

"Surely, some of our best considered peerages have been the reward of civil service?" said Mrs. Saville. "Surely it is only in France that *la noblesse de robe* is secondary to *la noblesse d'épée?*"

The proposition was hazardous; for his lordship instantly burst into execrations against a country where nobility, whether of the first or second order, had been swept from the surface of the earth. "A country," said he, "on whose heinous example the Whigs are grounding

their innovations. Such fellows as this Sir James Hardynge, (Robespierres in their soul,) would fain have exterminated the whole race of that aristocracy of which, since unable to accomplish their horrible purpose, they are now licking the feet!"

"If Philip can be believed," said Emma, more shocked than frightened by his vehemence, "some portion of the aristocracy pays its court to *them!* My brother has met at Sir James Hardynge's table, many of the most distinguished members of our great Whig families,—the Dukes of Burlington, Woburn, Bulstrode."

"Of course, of course!"—cried her father. "For party purposes people will go any where, or any lengths."

"You admit then, at least, dear papa, that Sir James is a man of influence in his party?"

"So was Wilkes—so is Horne Tooke! But enough of this. Do not let me suppose, Emma, that the example of your parents has been so lost upon you, or the excellent education you have received so thrown away, as to admit of

your contracting the vile opinions of your brother! It is affliction enough that two of my sons should have disgraced me. Let me not have to blush for my daughters!"

Emma herself was at that moment blushing deeply, lest her father should have formed inferences, from the warmth of her defence, concerning her clear-sightedness to the merits of the Hardynges; an apprehension considerably increased, when Lord Askham added, in his most peremptory tone, "If ever it be in my power again to reside with my family in London, not one of Philip's upstart friends shall ever cross my threshold!—He has a house of his own to entertain such incendiaries! and *mine* they shall never enter!"

To this denunciation, Miss Askham was dutiful (or prudent) enough to offer no rejoinder. A smile exchanged with Mrs. Saville, unobserved by her father, sufficed to convey her opinion that his lordship's stability in such matters, was not immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. That Lord Askham was now seated by the fireside

at Eastfield, conveyed a consolatory hope that Robert Hardynge might, at some future day, assume *his* place beside that of Eden Castle!

She was, however, more alarmed than gratified when, only a week after this stormy conversation, Lord Askham fell fiercely on poor Simprems, for giving utterance to a faint echo of his sentiments.—It was a very mild dose of Toryism; one grain of Askham to twenty of Simprems, made up with *quantum suff.* of bread-crumb, *i. e.* the twaddle of a country apothecary in daily attendance on a valetudinarian peer. Yet Lord Askham asked him "What he meant by such illiberality? Whether, in a great country like England, merit ought not to make its way? Whether Mr. Pitt had not conferred peerages on individuals of meaner origin, than those included in the recent creation!"

Uncertain whether this strange inconsistency arose from conviction, or mental infirmity, or disgust at the presumption of the pill-driver in administering his opinions as well as his senna at Eden Castle, she adhered religiously to her determination of abstaining for the future from

the discussion of any subject at Eastfield, likely to discompose the soothing influence of its stagnant atmosphere.

"You are Paraclete the comforter!" whispered she to Mrs. Saville, one day, at parting. "You pour balm into the wounds of our whole family! No matter which of us gambles away his fortune or his fame; no matter how many of us set our affections on things above, or below us. Eastfield is always at hand with its vulnerary, to assuage the anguish of our contusions!"

A sigh modified the smile with which Evelyn acknowledged the compliment. She thought it hard, perhaps, that the benefit was not reciprocal; for as yet, Eden Castle had done little to remedy the wounds of its infliction!

But alas! poor Emma's projects for the tranquillization of her father's mind were easier to form than to realize. Every day, the arrival of the newspapers sufficed to re-agitate his feelings. Lord Askham's stake on the event of the pacificatory negociations pending between Engglland and France, was in fact too great to admit of composure; and when the moment ar-

rived for the discharge of Percy's remaining liabilities, without bringing the smallest hope of his rescue from temptation into further excesses by release from banishment, his lordship's irritation became so alarming, that Emma took courage to communicate her fears to Philip in London, and the Marquis at Uppingham Manor.

Alas! both were so selfishly absorbed,—Lord Uppingham, in his domestic happiness,—Philip, in the complicated interests of public life,—that they were not to be startled by her evil auguries. Like Cæsar, they defied the soothsayer!

The Marquis, from whom the extent of Percy's imprudence had been carefully concealed, assured his sister-in-law, in reply, that what she took for despondency, was mere *ennui*;—that Lord Askham had merely mistaken his tastes by attempting a spring in the country;—while Philip, still more cavalierly, ascribed his father's indisposition to the reaction of political spleen.

"Do not fancy, my dear little Emma," wrote

he, "that Eden Castle contains the only bilious Tory in the three kingdoms. Not a day of my life, but I descry in the window at Boodle's faces quite as elongated as you describe that of Lord Askham; and were I to hasten down to you, as you propose, I should only magnify the evil; for I could but confirm, thank Heaven, his lordship's fears, that, for some time to come, the country is safe from the yoke of his party.

"But on all accounts, a visit to Eden Castle is just now impossible. My engagements, both private and public, will detain me in town till the close of the session; when I am off with Middlemore to the Moors.

"In a week, however, Henry will be at liberty. It is Henry's turn to make himself useful; and if you really think my father in want of one of us,—Henry is your man! For him, there are not, as for me, antecedents that render insupportable a sojourn at Edenbourne; and Lord Askham would thus secure an opportunity of examining and approving the political principles of its future representative. Write immediately to Henry, and bespeak his services for the summer.

"We had a charming *déjeûner* yesterday, at Eske Hill, including the Prince, the Duke of York, and everything most in fashion. Lord and Lady Hardynge have contrived to conciliate the great world, without affronting the little,—having made new friends by their advancement, without forsaking the old.

"I am afraid, however, that the brilliancy of their fête, yesterday, owed less to their intrinsic merits than to the patronage of the all-puissant Lady Grandison; who has taken up my friend Bob, as an eagle carries off a lambkin, and intends to marry him, they say, to the lovely Lady Anastasia. I fear, poor fellow, his head must be a little dizzy, on finding himself in so etherial an altitude!

"Since you all left town, my dear Emma, I have enjoyed Middlemore's society two hours out of every twenty-four; and of those twain, at least one and a half is devoted to the discussion of your charming self. I sincerely wish he loved you less, or that you liked him more; for 'tis a good beast, and very general favourite. According to Helen's account,

Hurstwood Castle is desperately besieged by the match-hunters,—a branch of the female art of war in which few have more experience than our fair cousin.

"Of the Uppinghams, I hear nothing, nor do I expect it; unless, indeed, the Gazette should have to announce that, as a reward for their domestic virtues, they have been translated to a higher sphere, and made into a constellation,—like some loving couple of pagan times.

"By the way, if you do not think it too much for my father's nerves, let him know, my dear Emma, that one of the Bonapartes,—Louis, I think,—has been 'created' king of Holland! One should as soon expect to hear of a 'Prince of Lincolnshire!' Lord Askham, however, need not object. There can scarcely be too many sovereigns in Europe to please so strenuous an advocate of crowns and sceptres!

"Of what use, however, to send messages in a letter which you inform me is to be kept a profound secret in the family? A clandestine correspondence!—Fie, Miss Emma Askham!

What would Miss Harrison say to such a breach of decorum?—I admit that it is only with a brother. But precedents (we office-men are instructed to say) are dangerous.

"Seriously, my dear child, dismiss from your mind all further uneasiness about my father! You are only abominably bored at Eden Castle, and falling fast into hypochondriacism.

> Weak though I am of limb, and short of sight,
> Far from a lynx, and not a giant quite,

I beg you will rely on *my* judgment rather than your own in this matter, and put your trust in the speedy recovery of Lord Askham, as well as in the good will of your affectionate brother,

"PHILIP."

"It was scarcely to be expected that Mr. Askham should be *very* fondly attached to his parents!" observed Mrs. Saville, when Emma, with tears in her eyes, and bitter accusations on her lips, placed this flippant letter in the hands of her friend, the first time they were

alone together. "He was so little cared for at Eden Castle!—He was so little favoured by Lord and Lady Askham!"—

"Philip was not a spoiled child, I admit. But his parents did their duty by him, as they have done by us all! *Our* interests have been, through life, their first object; and they have sought no other than domestic pleasures. But even were it otherwise, is a child to *calculate* its filial duty as though the mere repayment of a debt?—Dearest Mrs. Saville,—Philip is colder-hearted than a stone!"

But "dearest Mrs. Saville" would not say "Amen!" While Emma resented the cool mention of his friend Hardynge's flirtation with Lady Anastasia Grandison, *she* had been deeply touched by the allusion to "antecedents" which rendered insupportable to him a sojourn at Edenbourne. Of late, she had begun to think those antecedents utterly forgotten; and what woman would not rather be remembered with bitterness, than wholly dismissed from recollection!

Even in the incredulity of Philip concerning

his father's indisposition, *she* saw much less to blame than the anxious daughter. Philip was leading the life of a man of the world,—stunned by the tumults of public life,—enthralled by the fascinations of private. It was easy to conceive him the *fleur-des-pois* of London,—the observed of all observers at the Eske Hill *déjeûner*,—the successful rival of young Hardynge with Lady Anastasia,—or the Satan-rebuking-sin of his coaching cousin!

After deprecating his sister's displeasure at his levity by a thousand arguments, about as much to the purpose as the arguments of women in general respecting the object of their affections, she found herself so much in conceit with everything of the name of Askham, that, though the fretful old man from Eden Castle tried her patience severely on the morrow, and the morrow's morrow, by wandering into her cheerful drawing-room, and sitting there for hours,—sad, silent, and surly, as though at home,—instead of resenting so provoking an interruption to her avocations, she exerted herself doubly for his amusement; then, finding

him utterly unamusable, and nearly unconscious of her presence, she stationed herself in observant and pitying silence by his side.

"How glad I am he is gone at last!" cried little Edward, clapping his hands for glee, when released from the stillness imposed upon him during the long visit of their guest.

"How cross Lord Askham always looks, and how *very* tiresome he is!"—added Selina.

"Hush, hush!"—remonstrated the gentle mother, taking the little girl affectionately on her knee. "We should always be indulgent, darling, towards the failings of those we love, or even of those connected with them.—Never forget, Selina, that this cross-looking, tiresome old man, is the father of your own dear Philip."

CHAPTER X.

Pictures like these, dear madam, to design,
Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;
Some wandering touches, some reflected light,
Some flying stroke alone can hit them right.
For how should equal colours do the knack?
Cameleons, who could paint in white and black!

POPE.

Or stimandomi Achille, ed or Tersite.

ALFIERI.

THE extenuating circumstances pleaded by Mrs. Saville in behalf of Philip's seemingly heartless letter, were not altogether suppositious. Unwilling to aggravate the fears of Emma by owning himself alarmed, still more reluctant to hazard annoying his father at such a juncture, by arriving uninvited at Eden Castle, as if to parade the triumphs of his

political friends, and introduce an obstacle into the intercourse of the family with Eastfield,—while addressing his sister with studied unconcern, he had applied privately to Simprems for his professional opinion touching the condition of Lord Askham.

The position of Philip in his family was one of peculiar delicacy. The obligations he was supposed to have violated by his political defection,—the adverse confidences forced upon him by his father and brother,—and, above all, the still unscarred wounds of his days of dependence,—rendered frankness with his family impossible, even had frankness been in his nature.

From Verdun. still emanated the bitterest complaints against Eden Castle. Mr. Askham could not forgive the grudging spirit in which his difficulties had been relieved, or the austerity with which his offence was visited.

"This unfortunate affair might have been converted into an eternal tie upon my gratitude," wrote Percy; "instead of which, my father has conferred such cruel publicity on my follies, as to extinguish all sense of obligation.

So much the better! I stand relieved from a thousand scruples; and, mark my words, Philip, one day or other my family will bitterly repent their want of forbearance!"—

Though unable to interpret this mysterious menace, Philip did not peruse it without uneasiness. Enough had transpired through the exchanged *detenus* concerning the habits of Verdun, to convince him that Percy, if driven to desperation, might irremediably injure his future fortunes. Yet to remonstrate with Lord Askham, or even remotely suggest the nature of his fears, would only bring down persecution on himself, and provoke one of his lordship's unseemly paroxysms, without benefiting the cause of Percy.

It was consequently a great relief to be exonerated from all necessity for a visit to Eden Castle, by a letter from Simprems, announcing that he saw nothing alarming in the symptoms of his noble patient.

"A course of alteratives and attention to diet, will restore the epigastric functions to their pristine strength," wrote the country apothe-

cary. "His lordship, like other dyspeptic persons, is only a little nervous."

Cheered by such a bulletin, without pausing to consider whether Simprems possessed sufficient skill to "minister to a mind diseased," or even interpret its diagnostics, Philip felt entitled to eat drink, and be sleepless, as usual, at the brilliant balls and pleasant dinner parties just then enlivening a metropolis, for whose decimation "grim-visaged War" was whetting his thousands of swords, and Miles Peter Andrews manufacturing his barrels of gunpowder.

Though the health of Fox was already such as to excite the uneasiness of his friends, his *party* closed their eyes to his precarious condition; nor was Philip so nearly connected with the former in private life, or with the latter in public, as to experience a very poignant interest in the result. Like Lord Hardynge, and other sanguine members of the liberal government, he believed the Whigs to be fixed in office, whatsoever king might reign, or whatsoever Lord of the Treasury retain the seals.

At six-and-twenty, he could not lock up his

feelings, compact and hard, in a despatch-box, like Lord Uppingham, at fifty-six. *He* had not outlived the age when "cakes and ale," and "ginger in the mouth," have power to beguile a man out of the House of Commons even were Demosthenes himself upon his legs; and, not being chained to the oar, like Bob Hardynge, he was able to enjoy the pleasant parties at Grandison House and other fashionable resorts, while his friend remained at his post, as became one of the janisaries of the administration.

Chiefly, at Grandison House!—Seldom had so attractive a circle enlivened the *pompes funèbres* of aristocratic life, as was collected round the handsome mother of Lady Anastasia. It could not boast of possessing, or rather, it boasted of *not* possessing, those political Gogs and Magogs —those judicial *têtes à perruque* which imparted substance to the coterie at Eske Hill; but its surface was smooth as glass, and soft as satin. No importunate buffoons,—no sturdy citizens of the republic of letters. Its liturature was written on curl-papers, its politics were steeped in rose-water. To Grandison House, in

short, may be traced the germ of that refined but flimsy order of society, which expanded into full luxuriance under the regency, and died a natural death with George the Fourth.

The Countess of Grandison was a woman belonging to a species which has happily no type in Great Britain. Many creeping things are indigenous among us; but such noxious insects as scorpions, tarantulas, moschetos, *cavaliere serventi*, *chevaliers d'industrie*, and *mamans galantes*, are the growth of Italy or France. A middle-aged matron so blinded by vanity as to overlook the grown-up daughter by her side, is in England a *rara avis!*

But as when a white swallow or blue spoonbill is accidentally shot, the phenomenon is sure to be proclaimed to the public by the semi-scientific slipslop of some provincial paper, it behoved the Morning Post to announce in the spring of 1803, that an Englishwoman of high degree had returned from her travels, encrusted with gorgeous Parisianism, as a rusty key is converted into a golden one, by the process of electro-typic gilding; the homely wife and

mother being obliterated by the woman of fashion.

Lady Grandison had completed her education in the finishing school of those recondite *salons* of the Faubourg St. Germain, where the *ancien régime* reconcentrated its *bon ton*, like crystallised odour of roses in a gilded flask, during the vulgarisms of the republic ;—intent on proving that if its head had fortuitously escaped the guillotine, there was still, to borrow the expression of Sir Erasmus L'Estrange, "nothing in it;" and pursuing its *victoires et conquétes* with as little principle or compunction, as the omni-victorious emperor it took the impertinent liberty of despising.

Emerging from such an academy, Lady Grandison's object, like theirs, was to come, see, and conquer. Somewhat late in life, indeed, to enter the field! But the Prince of Wales had brought full-blown beauty into fashion; and her ladyship, like the royal favourite, was "fat, fair, and forty;" nay, *very* fair, *very* fat, and *very* forty,—for, to the knowledge of many, she had remained so for the last five years! Her merit con-

sisted in good-nature and good-breeding;—a somewhat aërial balance against recklessness, even to the breaking of the law!

What better, however, was to be expected of a woman whose husband took less heed of her welfare, spiritual or temporal, than of the condition of the least promising of his colts entered for the Houghton or Leger? For Lord Grandison was as specifically English in his habits, as his lady was inordinately foreign;—a man only to be met with in this our great hippodrome of the civilized earth!—Lord Grandison devoted twice as many thousands a-year as had ever been in his possession, to the improvement of the breed of horses in Great Britain;—such being, if acts of parliament are to be credited, the highly patriotic purpose of our great national institution—the Turf! Yet no one would have inferred from the distinction of his air and address, that his birth as a peer of the realm, had deprived the country of an experienced horsedealer.

The marriage of the Grandisons was a made-up match,—a take in of the knowing ones. As

the inmate of a ducal residence in Yorkshire during the Doncaster race-week, his lordship had been betting deep and drinking deep, though deep in no other particular;—when lo! one morning at breakfast, he was assailed on all sides with congratulations by the party staying in the house, on having been accepted, the preceding night, after his third bottle of claret, by the lovely Lady Anastasia Treby. Too gentlemanly a man and staunch a sportsman, to appeal to Grandison sober from Grandison when in his claret cups, the match came off; and Lord Grandison, who had remembered nothing of the proposal, soon seemed to remember as little of the marriage.

The new countess took care not to remind him. It would really have been a shame. For so long as he remained oblivious, Lord Grandison was the happiest of (sporting) men,—at Melton all the winter,—at Epsom, Ascot, Egham, Doncaster, York, Tattersall's, Milton's, wherever men and horses are gathered together throughout the remainder of the year:—while his lady followed,—in London or Brigh-

ton,—Paris or Rome,—the fashion and her own devices;—whereas, had the happy couple been compelled to run in harness together, an upset was inevitable.

With the decent regularity of domestic life, such a *ménage* must always be at issue; and Lady Grandison, who, like the other light substance called amber, had the faculty of attracting straws, lived surrounded by admirers; to whom the world, ever apter to conceive the existence of vice than folly,—assigned a harsher name. But the world outshot its mark. Through life, her ladyship had been absorbed by a single and engrossing passion,—Lady Grandison alone having possession of the tender heart of Lady Grandison. Adoring her own sweet face and lovely form, she encouraged a crowd of fashionable fops, only as an attestation to the public that her attachment was not misplaced.

It was a startling thing to a woman of this description, who had been pretty so long that she knew not how to leave it off, to find the little daughter, so long a plaything at her feet, shot up to the intrusive growth of seventeen

years, and claiming her lawful share of admiration. Lady Grandison, who by her recent sojourn in France had grown fifteen years younger, could not stand the test of such a rivalship. Dear Stasy must be married off out of the way;—well, if possible, at all events married;—and her mother prepared for the achievement, with the sort of fussiness certain to defeat its object.

Nothing, however, could exceed her ladyship's surprise on finding, at the close of the third season, her daughter still established in permanent rivalry at her side! Nobody could guess why. It would have been difficult to point out a prettier or more pleasing person than Lady Anastasia; or, according to *her* insight into the duties of life, a more amiable. She was fondly attached to the Countess, who, though desirous of her early establishment, was an indulgent mother and good-humoured companion; testifying her love for "dear Stasy" at twenty, much as she had done for "dear Stasy" at two, by gifts of toys and gewgaws, and bewildering her with a double allotment of the pastimes of life.

But if Lady Grandison felt deeply mortified that her daughter should remain her satellite, instead of shining as the planet of another sphere,—society was the gainer. The flirting chaperon being determined to have her opera-box to herself, the fêtes of Grandison House became every day more brilliant; and the Countess more eager for popularity and assiduous to please. It did not occur to her that she was *too* popular and pleasing for a mother-in-law; or that the young men of the day might be accustomed to hear her spoken of in terms fatal to the interests of her daughter.

Meanwhile, if her influence in society failed to marry Lady Anastasia, it availed for almost every other purpose. If it be true, that "A King's face gives grace," the countenance of Lady Grandison was almost equally potential. Her bow was a fiat of fashion; and as a momentary gleam of sunshine unfolds the blossoms of the mesembrianthemum, a passing smile from her ladyship sufficed to confer beauty and bloom.

Her caprices became the caprices of the town. On her arrival from Paris, attired in a

tunic and zone,—a Roman matron in all but decency and virtue, May Fair soon swarmed with Cornelias and Agrippinas, *manquées*, like herself; and as it was part of her system, on marking out some happy man as a desirable match for Lady Anastasia, to *talk up* the class or clique to which he belonged, and *prôner* his style of dress or person till no other was tolerated, no end to the gusts and disgusts into which the world of fashion had been betrayed by its aptitude in copying Lady Grandison!

While flattering herself, for instance, that Hurstwood Castle and its coaching lord were waiting for her daughter to seize the reins, the full effulgence of her ladyship's patronage was poured on the barouche club; and the cubbishness of Lord Middlemore was thenceforward cited as manly spirit, till box coats became your only wear.

Sir Henry Lenitive, the puny offspring of Lord Askham's Torquay dowager, succeeded to all the honours; and so long as there was hope of securing his slender person and overgrown fortune, Grandison House was never without

pectoral lozenges on its table. A new hall-stove raised the temperature of the house to fever heat; and in its *menu*, chicken-broth sufficed *pour tout potage*. An eighth deadly sin had been discovered by Lady Grandison in the vulgarity of robust health!—

The fine arts had next their turn of favour, in deference to a *cognoscente* Marquis; till the fortunes of Phillips and Christie were raised cent. per cent., by the throng of fashionable fools that followed the Grandisons to their auctions, to bid for pictures they did not want, and statues they did not understand.

Science and the Royal Institution followed; in conjunction with the young Duke of Norcliffe; who was undergoing a course of *douches* of knowledge under the keepership of Dr. Dactyl, (whose stock of learning seemed undiminished by the transfer of any portion of it to Lord Middlemore or his cousin Percy!) But when it became apparent that his grace's eyes were absorbed during the lecture by the experiments of Sir Humphrey Davy, or closed in a ducal doze, and that all Lady Anastasia and her

train of imitators gained by the loss of an hour a day in a close lecture-room, was the headache, she fell back upon duncehood in good earnest; protesting (because Sir Robert De Lacy was wild for private theatricals, and a *parti*) that all the world was a stage, and that all the men and women of fashion *ought* to be "merely players."

Soon after the elopement of Sir Robert with the *soubrette* of a minor theatre, who had won his affections by prompting him in the part of Tony Lumpkin, (which he was murdering for the benefit of a public charity to which it would have been as easy for the baronet to contribute the two hundred pounds realized by his self-exposure,) Philip Askham having made his appearance in the London world, with the reputation of being heir presumptive to a peerage and thirty thousand a year, *vu* the precarious state of an elder brother far gone in a decline, was immediately marked down by Lady Grandison.

Now, Philip was a man of a thousand; that is, a man undistinguishable by any peculiar

cachet from the thousand idlers of fashionable life; so that her ladyship, having in *his* instance no crotchet or mania to conciliate, for once condescended to be *herself!*

She could scarcely be a better thing, in the estimation of the frivolous class of whose suffrage she was ambitious. Grace and liveliness of no common order imparted a charm not only to the showy fêtes of which she and Lady Anastasia were the life and soul; but to the well-composed society frequenting the well-furnished, well-lighted, well-ventilated apartments of Grandison House. For, by never pretending to be better than well, every thing pertaining to Lady Grandison was excellent. Exonerated by her high position from the vulgarity of exorbitant refinement, or lion-feeding, or any other mode of "unparalleled attraction," there was perfect harmony and unison between herself, her guests, and the means provided for their entertainment.

The Grandisons were Whigs (in that one particular, in deference to his vote in the House of Peers, let us include his lordship in the

family!) not from conviction,—not even by inheritance;—but simply because liberal opinions were the fashion. The court of the aged sovereign being in decadence, the political principles of the heir-apparent were courtieresquely adopted, in common with the cut of his coat and habits of his household, by those who, having no ideas of their own, are fond of aping the highest in the land; and all the Graces, as well as all the talents being with the Whigs, Lady Grandison was not far off.

It was, perhaps, on this account that, on perceiving that Philip Askham was more disposed to listen to Lady Grandison than talk to Lady Grandison's daughter,—or perhaps after ascertaining that the health of Percy had been improved though his morals were injured, by a residence abroad,—the Countess became suddenly bitten by the rage of politics.

For what were dukes and marquises,—consumptive baronets or stage-struck lordlings,—compared with the greatness of one whose mission might be made to comprehend the mastership of the public mind, and grand-mastership

of the destinies of Europe;—a self-created Colossus, a heaven born minister, without any "mortal mixture of earth's mould,"—a hazard-proof Fox,—a Pitt who could weather the storm without fear of shipwreck in *port*.—In a word, Robert Hardynge had made his bow at Grandison House!—

That the only son of the future chancellor of the future sovereign, would prove a most satisfactory substitute for the impracticable Philip, soon became apparent. On this hint, Lady Grandison condescended to solicit the acquaintance of Eske Hill. On this hint, unaccustomed as she was to private prosing, she invited the new Lord and Lady Hardynge to her house; and (apparently measuring their tastes by the solemnity of his lordship's wig), gathered together in their honour all the potent, grave, and reverend signors she could think of, as conferring dulness on the House of Lords or profundity on the British Museum!

Lord Hardynge, the pleasantest of companions and most buoyant of human beings, having always heard Grandison House described as

the resort of every thing that was light in fashionable levity, scarcely knew what to make of so cogitative an assemblage. For a moment, he almost hoped the men in buckram might throw off their disguise at some appointed moment of the feast, and appear in their appropriate suits of harlequinade. Such antics had often been played in his own merry-making establishment, by an amusing knot of his associates connected with the management of Drury Lane Theatre. But, alas! they did these things differently at Grandison House!

Nor was the Countess more judicious in her management of Bob, than in catering for the entertainment of his parents. Bob Hardynge was what is called a rising young man,—clever and ambitious,—his confidence in his own powers equalling his desire of distinction. Now, Lady Grandison, convinced by her one-sided logic that an object must be the same, by whatever means accomplished, conceived that, since all he ambitioned was the attainment of social distinction, it would be pleasanter to reach the apex of the pyramid at a single step, as the son-

in-law of the high priestess of fashion, than to attain it by his own slow efforts like a Curran, a Sheridan, or a Horner. No occasion, therefore, was left unimproved of vaunting the high antiquity and alliances of the House of Grandison—the favour she enjoyed at Carlton House—and the personal influence and popularity, which rendered even that favour unimportant. Nay, she almost expressed in words, (so clear was the inference,) that the husband of a Lady Anastasia Grandison would be able to dispense with the paltry dignity of a law barony; and might be spared the trouble of speechifying himself into notice, by breaking stones upon the beaten track of the House of Commons.

To have his motives laid bare, or rather to have ignoble motives unjustly imputed to him, was not likely to subdue a heart, whose aspirings rose far above the standard of fashionable notoriety; and whose desires were unfathomable by the or-moulu gauging-stick of a right honourable patroness of Almack's.

But on discerning the impertinent calculations of Lady Grandison, instead of allowing himself to

be piqued into the loss of a charming acquaintance, he coquetted with her negociations, as Talleyrand was doing with those of Lord Lauderdale: so as to enjoy to the utmost her ladyship's brilliant parties, capital dinners, comfortable opera box, and shady villa, on the strength of matrimonial intentions which had never entered his head.—*A trompeur, trompeur et demi!*—Lady Grandison was, for once, out-Machiavelized. In dealing with a worldly woman, men are apt to lay their consciences on the shelf!

He entertained no fear that his attentions might create an impression on the heart of the lovely Lady Anastasia,—having good reason to suspect that her affections were placed elsewhere; and considered the smiles she deigned to lavish on him amply repaid by his assiduity in increasing her cortège on those public occasions of shawl-fetching and carriage-calling, which enable the fashionable Sultana to humiliate, by the extent of her guard of honour, the pride of some rival queen.

The coterie of Grandison House, meanwhile,

was sorely puzzled to decide whether Hardynge or his friend Philip Askham were the favoured adorer. When two young men are constantly seen together, like "the kings of Brentford smelling at one posy,"—driving in the same phaeton, or lounging neck and neck along Constitution Hill,—people take it for granted that they are as fairly matched in capacity, as the pair of horses in their harness.

That Johnson had his Bozzy, or Queen Anne her Duchess of Marlborough, or that a seeming level unites the majestic lion with the puppy dog in his cage,—inspires no mistrust of the intimacies arising from schoolboy chumship, or the propinquities of official life.

Yet the connexion between Hardynge and Askham was purely adventitious. No natural affinity united them, no real confidence. The ruling passion of either (of Philip, for a woman who despised him,—of Bob for one whose family paid him the same compliment,) was fated to remain a secret to the other. Their very characters were uncongenial:—Askham delighting in still water,—Hardynge in the running

stream;—the delight of the former in purple and fine linen being derived from the gratification of his epidermis;—of the latter, from its influence on the vulgar eye.

The head and heart of the young *parvenu* were at once of finer texture, and improved by higher cultivation, than those of his companion. In Bob Hardynge, there was the making of a great man. Twenty to one but the efforts of nature to that effect, might be defeated by the force of circumstances. Between the metal bubbling in the furnace, and the round, puissant, and polished statue it has been fused to create, the chances of casting intervene; and few in number are the "mute inglorious Miltons" commiserated by Gray, compared with those who, after indications of a Milton's genius and power, are dwarfed by some sinister influence, or overpowered by contemporaneous competition. In these days of universal education, the germs of hundreds of Chathams are developed, for one that comes to perfection!

No one was more sensible of this than Robert

Hardynge. He was aware, too, that he had fallen upon days when the ablest combinations of the statesman had no chance against the *coup de main* of the hero. He had heard the voice of parliament oppose a public funeral for Pitt; and beheld a weeping population follow spontaneously the remains of Nelson. By such schooling, the presumptious aspirations of his boyhood were held in check. Instead of lying crushed under his ambition, like the Maccabee under his elephant, he kept the monster firmly in subjection; pretending only to that federative or fractional glory, which suffices the desires of the wise.

Even the most infinitesimal dose of fame, however, is not to be attained without working for. To say so much as "ay" or "no" appropriately in the House, demands the most assiduous application. But the son of Lord Hardynge had every encouragement to diligence, in the honours his father had achieved, and the happiness he trusted to attain; and to render himself worthier the favour of his sovereign and smiles of Emma Askham, poor Bob was con-

tent to slave all day as a practical public man, and all night as a deliberative.

Of such materials, how was a woman like Lady Grandison to create, by the magic of a few sweet words and smiles, a puppet to be set up among the Dresden shepherdesses and Chinese bonzes, adorning her ladyship's boudoir!

"Commend me to the coolness," said Hardynge to his friend Philip,—(as they were discharging their duty to the country by lounging together in a window seat of their office, overlooking the Thames,—"commend me to the coolness with which our friend at Grandison House appropriates the faculties of the most eminent men of the day to her ridiculous purposes,—like some armourer arranging in whimsical devices the deadly weapons under his charge!—But let her look to herself! Dear Stasy may chance to cut her fingers among so many implements of destruction; which, though betrophied for the nonce into a fan or a sun-flower, retain their power of life and death."

Philip responded to this lengthy illustration by a provoking laugh. He could not quite

forgive his friend the *sangfroid* with which he had obtained and retained his footing in a spot where "angels feared to tread."

"Since when have you thought yourself so dangerous?" said he, still holding his sides.

"'Αιδως οὐκ ἀγάθη! Away with your false modesty!" cried Hardinge, unabashed.

"'Envy doth merit like its shade pursue;' and *you* and others are kind enough to afford me a shadow, fully authenticating my substance."

"You would not be quite so saucy," retorted Philip, in the same tone of *persiflage*, "if you had accompanied the Grandisons last night to Carlton House. There was a certain rich man—"

He paused: but Bob Hardynge was not to "gagged by a mystery."

"A certain rich man *at Carlton House?*" cried he. "Did they sit him down to whist, or piquet? For French hazard, I conclude, the house is not licensed?"—

"There was a certain rich man," resumed Philip in continuation, "in honour of whose

acres in Sussex, Lady Grandison has already assumed the advocacy of the landed interests. —She hunted poor Windham, last night, into a corner, and favoured him with her diamond edition of theories on poor laws, land-tax, and corn, till I was afraid he might be pestered into dealing with her as summarily as with some twaddler of the opposition benches."

"And who *is* the rustic knight she has taken under her protection?"—inquired Bob, amused that Philip should so little understand his feelings towards the Grandisons.

"I think the clodhopper was called *de* something or other; but he has a princely place somewhere on the borders of Sussex."

"My friend Sir Hugh de Bayhurst, for a thousand!" cried Hardynge. "Surely you must have often seen him speaking to my father?"

"I see many people talking to Lord Hardynge, of whom I know nothing."

"Ay, 'people' who are mere 'populace' in the estimation of Eden Castle! But Bayhurst is a name that might have been familiar to its

castleship's august ears, any time since the first crusade,—if there were *then* Askhams in the land! It was I that introduced the 'clodhopper' to Lady Grandison, and bespoke her civilities. But perhaps you know him better as Sir Hugh Saville?—The family changed its name for an estate, in the time of William and Mary; and the present baronet has just obtained the royal sanction to resume it.—Quite right! —I hate the name of Saville!—Its historical associations are far from flattering!"

Philip Askham answered not a word. He was absorbed in reflecting, *not* upon his friend's antipathy to the name of Saville; but on his own indiscretion in accepting overtures of acquaintanceship from a man of whose antecedents he knew nothing. But who could have conjectured that this Sussex baronet with the lofty title, was no other than the "cruel uncle" of little Selina?

In spite of his pretended ignorance of the "Sir Hugh de something or other," Philip had become sufficiently familiar with Lady Grandison's protégé, to feel thoroughly uncomfortable

at the discovery. The introduction had occurred some days before at a water-party, ending in one of those scrambling Richmond dinners, to which mammas of the Grandison order have recourse, towards the close of the season, when all other matrimonial ambushes have failed; and they had been thrown together too familiarly, and renewed their acquaintanceship too speedily at Carlton House, to admit of future disavowal.

Already, a thousand wild surmises were passing through the flustered mind of Philip. Aware of Lord Askham's residence in the neighbourhood of Edenbourne, Sir Hugh had perhaps sought his acquaintance for the purpose of obtaining an insight into the habits and pursuits of his banished sister-in-law; or, sharing the general impression that Philip was a first favourite with Lady Anastasia Grandison, might intend, by a sudden allusion to Eastfield, to denounce in *her* presence the pre-engaged affections of his rival!

Overlooking, in the perplexity of the moment, the Cuyp-hunting visit to Mansfield

Street, which, while exercising so potent an influence over the feelings of Hardynge, had rendered him cognizant of the existence of Selina, he pursued, with assumed *nonchalance* his inquiries respecting Sir Hugh de Bayhurst.

"Do you dine to-morrow at Grandison House?" said he. "If so, you will meet this old friend with a new name."

"I am not asked. With the Irish question before the House, Lady Grandison knows it would be an empty compliment."

"We shall have a member or two, however, besides Sir Hugh de Bayhurst."

"Members *à foison*,—for the division will be a late one.—*I* have to *speak!*—Of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst I see enough elsewhere, to dispense with meeting him at Lady Grandison's."

"Do you happen to know whether he has any brothers?" demanded Philip, abruptly, fixing his eyes on the river below, as searchingly as if fishing for whitebait.

None now surviving. There was one, I fancy, in the army, who died during the father's lifetime.

I never saw Ned Saville; but my mother describes him as the handsomest and most charming fellow in the world."

"Sir Hugh is a handsome man," observed Philip, with a short cough.

"Handsome, but not charming. Edward, they say, was worth a dozen of him. He was with the Guards in that unlucky Dutch expedition, and distinguished himself at Valenciennes."

"And was it there he met with his death?"—

"He died of a decline, when I was at Christchurch. Poor fellow!—he had made a foolish match!"

The eyes of Philip were now following the course of the river, as if to decipher the name of a wherry passing under the last arch of Westminster Bridge, while carelessly adding, "A *love match*,—of course!"—

"Desperately so, I presume; for it was in the face of the fiercest family prohibition. Old Sir Herbert swore he would never give him another guinea, and kept his word."

"What you call a decline, therefore, was perhaps starvation?"

"More likely a broken heart! The girl had something, on which they lived, or, as you wisely observe, starved. But he was obliged to sell out of the Guards, poor fellow! and a man never gets over being forced out of his position in life. In little more than a year, there was an end of him. He left a little girl,—and, unless I am mistaken, another was born after his death."

"The family, then, were reconciled to the widow?"

"Not that I ever heard of!—Strange, if they were,—considering that the match was the cause of poor Edward's banishment."

"His wife was perhaps a woman of disreputable character?"—added Philip, with a slight renewal of his cough.

"Horrible! a very monster of iniquity!"—

Philip Askham's blood ran cold in his veins.

"The daughter of some half-pay colonel, with a fortune of five thousand pounds!—What can you desire *worse* for your second

son?—Though blameless in every other particular, I quite agree in the anathema of Sir Herbert Saville! However, as poor Ned was fated to die young, it did not much signify; and by this time, I dare say they have all forgotten his name."

"The easier to be accomplished, since they have changed their own," said Philip, more cheerfully, as if a load were taken off his breast. "Thank you for initiating me into the family history. Sir Hugh being fated to make *la pluie et le beau temps* at Grandison House for the remainder of the season, it is as well to be on one's guard. When shooting in the dark, one is sure to hurt a man's feelings by some random shaft."

"Which is the greatest bore in the world!" rejoined Bob Hardynge, starting up to take his departure from the office, on catching the distant signal of the postman's bell; very little surmising the smart which, during the last quarter of an hour, *his* random arrows had been inflicting on the susceptible bosom of his friend!—

CHAPTER X.

My apprehensions come in crowds,
  I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
  Have power to shake me as I pass.
I question all, and do not find
One that will answer to my mind.

WORDSWORTH.

Solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.

VIRGIL.

PRE-OCCUPIED in mind by his growing ambitions, as in heart by the bright image of the lovely sister of Philip Askham, Hardynge had heard with unconcern that he was superseded, as absent without leave, in the favour of Lady Grandison. But, on reflection, he became curious to ascertain whether, in *his* case as in Philip's, she would enlist, as an advantageous

dangler for herself, the man on whom she no longer entertained designs for Anastasia.

"Lady Grandison has so much tact," argued he with himself, "and is so thorough a proficient in the wisdom of what calls itself the world, that she may serve as a fashionometer to determine not only *my* value, but my father's, in the appreciation of the sworn appraisers of the *beau monde*."

He was careful, therefore, not to absent himself from the *conversazione* held the following Sunday evening at Grandison House. For the Countess, among other Parisian importations, had established a weekly At-home, that rivalled the popularity of the Royal-Terrace-mob at Windsor Castle; nor was her sporting lord more assiduous in his devotions every Sabbath morning at Tattersall's, than were, every Sabbath night, under his roof, the friends, adorers, and disciples of his lady.

On the present occasion, Hardynge entered those brilliant portals with less than the gladsome anticipations they were wont to inspire. He had been dining with his father, whom he left deeply depressed by the illness of one whom

he loved as a man as much as he reverenced as a minister; and having been cautioned by Lord Hardynge against uttering a word at Grandison House confirmative of the flying reports of Fox's indisposition, the clouds upon his face were naturally attributed by the idlers of the set to jealousy of the distinction suddenly transferred to Sir Hugh de Bayhurst.

"Devilish good-looking fellow, this new man, —isn't he, Hardynge?" whispered Lord Middlemore, whom his sister Helen had with some difficulty pressed into her service as chaperon, (the dowager having scruples about attending Sunday parties, with which, in her daughter's case, she found itconvenient to dispense,—as though Helen were not arrived at a time of life to be rigidly righteous!)

"Handsome, certainly!" interposed Miss Middlemore, hoping to engage the attention of Hardynge;—"but his countenance is far from prepossessing. Whatever Lady Anastasia may think of him, he is not to be spoken of in the same day with my cousin Philip," added she, trusting that, at some future time, Hardynge

might report her generous panegyric to his friend.

"Phil is ten years younger, to begin with!" cried her brother; "and Phil has been in better training, and shows cleverer paces. But De Bayhurst is a fine figure of a man, for all that!"

"A fine figure of a *yeoman!*" replied Hardynge, slightingly. "He makes a splendid exhibition at the head of his Bayhurst volunteers."

"What! is *he* the fellow who raised that cavalry regiment in Sussex, after whose uniform the Prince is said to have altered the regimentals of the Tenth?"—exclaimed Lord Middlemore. "*By* George! then he *is* something, after all!"—

"Could you not infer as much," said his sister, with a significant smile, "from the attentions bestowed on him by Lady Grandison?"

"I never make my book on Lady Grandison's information!" retorted he. "'Ware false warrantry and forged pedigrees!—Lady G. is apt

to get bad intelligence. Why she wasted nearly as much time on Phil Askham, as would have netted a duke, only because I hummed her into the belief that he was as good as an eldest son!"

Hardynge could not altogether repress a contemptuous glance towards the coaching cousin, who pretended to be *more* than a cousin, to his divine Emma.

"Your lordship's intelligence may have had due weight with Lady Grandison," said he; "but the favour bestowed by Lady Anastasia on my friend Philip would, I am certain, be unchanged, whether he were heir to Hurstwood Castle or son to a Welsh curate."

"Bravo, bravo, Mr. Hardynge!" cried Miss Middlemore, eager to establish, for her own sake, the disinterestedness of young-lady-kind.

Yet when Sir Hugh de Bayhurst approached them, a moment afterwards, she became spasmodically affected by those galvanic influences too often exercised by single men of large fortune over single women of moderate; agitating

her eyes and fan, as if no longer mistress of herself in presence of a *parti* great enough to be booked by Lady Grandison.

Yet of her manœuvres, the saturnine Sussex Baronet saw no more than if they had been enacted by the invisible girl!—

"I was in hopes of meeting Lord Hardynge here to-night," was his mode of accosting Bob, "in disproof of the sad news I heard last night at the opera from Mr. Askham, concerning the health of Mr. Fox."

"My family are old-fashioned people," replied Bob, evading the dangerous part of the question. "To *them*, parties must appear to be hard work, for they class them with Sabbath-breaking!—Even at Paris, they refrained.—But where *is* Askham? I do not see him here to-night."

"You see plain enough that he is *not* here!" cried Lord Middlemore, with a laugh; "and what's more, I bet a pony that he is not coming. Dear Stasy is looking so deucedly down in the mouth!"

"To *me*, Lady Anastasia looks, as she ever

does, all loveliness!" observed Hardynge, more disposed than the coaching peer to favour the sentiments and pretensions of his successor in Lady Grandison's man-trap.

"Deuced civil of you to say so!" rejoined his lordship; "for, by George, she has looked our way, and been guilty of three great yawns, since you came into the room!"

"Which you attribute to my having ventured hither, unescorted by my Pylades?"—replied Hardynge, with good-humoured irony.

"I know nothing about *Pylades*," retorted the cubbish lord; "but I'm certain she'd see the whole room of us flung into the Serpentine, to save Philip's dog from drowning!"

"I trust my cousin may arrive, later in the evening," observed Miss Middlemore, in her blandest tones—to encourage Sir Hugh into asking for an introduction, "for I have a message for him from mamma."

"What! has the old lady a dinner on the stocks?" demanded her brother. "If so, I owe it to Philip to put him on his guard. My mother's dinners are what no man should be

tempted to risk, who has a young family unprovided for. All dowager dinners ought to be labelled 'poison' by act of parliament."

"My message regards nothing so pleasant as a dinner-party," observed Helen, turning a stone-deaf ear to his impertinence. "Mamma desired me to tell him,—and Mr. Hardynge, who is certain to see him, will perhaps undertake the commission,—that she had a letter yesterday from Eden Castle, and that my aunt is seriously alarmed about the health of Lord Askham."

"The deuce she is!" interrupted the unsilenceable Lord Middlemore. "If the old gentleman were to slip off the hooks, I can tell you, it would be a famous bad thing for the family. Nine younger children, and Percy as fast in the stocks as Bony and a Whig ministry can make him!"

Hardynge was proceeding to make further inquiries respecting the state of Lord Askham, (though, of the nine younger children, his Pylades was certainly not the first object of his solicitude,) when Lady Grandison, a little fidgetty

at seeing Sir Hugh de Bayhurst linger so long beside a handsome girl like Helen Middlemore, made her way towards the group. She was sufficiently versed in her calling, however, to render her purpose inostensible, by addressing herself first to Mr. Hardynge.

"Did you see poor Mr. Askham before he set off?"—said she, in a plausible tone of sympathy, which elicited only a look of blank wonder in return. "I received his note of excuse just as we were sitting down to dinner,"—added her ladyship; "and if, by the mercy of providence, Lord Grandison had not invited Sir Harry Sweepstakes this morning at Tattersall's, we should have been literally thirteen at table! However, dear Stasy (who cannot bear to see me annoyed) would probably have insisted on dining in her own room. Luckily, that fifteenth man of Lord Grandison's saved us!"

"But what possible excuse had Askham for exposing your ladyship to such a hazard?" inquired Hardynge, perceiving by a side-glance that her purpose was fulfilled, De Bayhurst having already stolen off towards Lady Anas-

tasia, whose side she had designedly left unguarded.

"Is it possible that you have not heard?" said his hostess, with suitable gravity of countenance. "Mr. Askham has been sent for express to Eden Castle!—Poor Lord Askham is not expected to live!—Poor Lord Askham has had a paralytic stroke!"

The first impulse of Hardynge was to turn towards the Middlemores. But they were already out of hearing; the wary Helen having drawn off her brother in pursuit of the handsome Baronet, on pretence of paying her compliments to Lady Anastasia.

"I am deeply concerned to hear it. I knew nothing of the matter. I shall probably find a letter from Askham on my return home," said he, addressing Lady Grandison.

"It is very provoking!" she replied. "For I had counted up Mr. Askham for our Greenwich dinner, next week; and I fear he will be detained some time in the country."

Then, perceiving, by the reflection in an opposite glass, that her end was accomplished,

and apprehensive of being detained by Hardynge with a long discussion of Lord Askham's condition, she exclaimed, as she prepared to move off, "Most likely we shall not see him again this season! In the absence of his elder brother, the charge of the family will of course devolve on your friend."

The deep sigh with which Bob responded to the observation, was naturally attributed by Lady Grandison to sympathy in Philip's impending cares; for how was she to surmise that the new member, who was supposed to be chin-deep in the hot-mud bath of politics, was lamenting only that this change in the administration of the Askham family would effect nothing in advancement of his projects; the brother of Emma Askham being the avowed advocate of her coaching cousin.

Far from satisfactory, meanwhile, were the reflections of Philip, on his hurried journey towards Wales, accompanied by Sir Henry Halford, (then known under the modest name of Dr. Vaughan,) whom he had been charged to convey with the utmost speed to Eden Castle.

Though the affections of Philip had been painfully estranged from his parents by the austerity of their early discipline, he trembled at the possibility that his neglect of Emma's warning might be the origin of the recent catastrophe. He felt completely in the wrong. He ought to have known, by long experience, that Simprems was an ass. He ought to have trusted to his sister!

To the reproaches of his own conscience, moreover, would shortly be added the recriminations of the Uppinghams,—the sententious admonitions of his brother Henry,—the accusations of the whole neighbourhood! If Lord Askham's attack should prove fatal, it was *himself* rather than the guilty Percy, who would be taxed with parricide!

Under such apprehensions, he proceeded to cross-question his learned fellow-traveller, concerning the nature, progress, and results of paralytic attacks, with a circumstantiality that would have done honour to an Oxford professor, or the College of Physicians. But the fashionable physician, who knew no more of the

constitution or habits of the noble patient concerning whom he was required to prognosticate, than could be learned by occasionally meeting him on the stairs when in attendance on the nursery in Mansfield Street, was cautious not to commit himself in reply. The account forwarded by Simprems stated the attack to be slight; that indited by Miss Harrison under Lady Askham's directions, afforded little hope that they should find him alive; and the London physician, with suitable contempt of the judgment of a country apothecary, was consequently inclined to anticipate the worst.

But Philip would not despair. Philip did his best to believe that his father was in no sort of danger,—that his inertness had done no harm,—that the family were unnecessarily alarmed. The idea of a long sojourn at Eden Castle was sufficiently disagreeable to him to redouble his interest in poor Lord Askham's condition; and already he had determined, if circumstances afforded a decent pretext for returning to town, to insist upon the duties of his office, and hasten back with Dr. Vaughan. Collision with the

neighbours would be too annoying!—Why discompose his temper by the sight of Sir Erasmus L'Estrange,—or his feelings by a visit to Eastfield?—

The lapse of a summer night and day spent on the journey, soothed by a purer atmosphere as well as by the fair landscapes passing rapidly before his eyes, served to promote a happier frame of mind.—Twelve months had passed since he beheld the country face to face; the real, right-earnest country of wood smoke, barley-bread, and sunburnt faces,—golden plains and forest-clothed acclivities; (so different from the meritricious suburban region of villas and lawnlets,—picnics and water parties!) and its noble horizon, its sweeping woodlands, and majestic parks, served at once to ennoble his feelings and dignify in his estimation his own position and the hereditary endowments of his family.

To be an estated peer of such a land as lay before him, afforded indeed grounds for assumption!—In Philip, as in others, the struggle of London life had produced a considerable

abatement of self-esteem. But the old leaven was rising again; and the sight of corn-fields and forests reminded him with welcome flattery of the vast disproportion being the *menue fretin* of professional life, and such magnates of the land as the Askhams of Eden Castle. The life or death of a man possessing such a stake in the country as his father, proprietor of a borough, patron of fifteen livings, and commanding a rent-roll of thirty thousand a year, *was* a matter of moment!—

Nothing doubting that, on this point, the borough aforesaid coincided with himself, Philip, recalling to mind his last triumphal entry with his family into Edenbourne, prepared himself, as they approached the little town, to interpret its mournful physiognomy as trustworthily indicative of the progress of events at the castle. As the carriage rattled through the market-place, he gazed earnestly from the window; hoping to greet some well-known face, on the look out for his arrival, whose expression would forewarn him at a glance.

But alas! no eye responded to his own!

With the exception of a group of ragged boys playing at hopscotch in the summer dust, who set up a shout derisive rather than complimentary as the vehicle effaced their boundaries, not a soul was visible in the street. The brass-plate on the door of Simprems shone bright and glaring as usual; and the acacia trees in full bloom in the vicarage garden, were as fair and pleasant to look on, as though no sickness of greater consequence than the workhouse fever, prevailed within twenty miles round. Unapprized of his coming, Edenbourne had prepared no parade of sympathy in token of allegiance.

On reaching the toll-bar from whence the shrubbery-belt of Eastfield was discernible, Philip carefully averted his head; but at the point of the road sacred to his own and Percy's unfilial apostrophes, he fixed his eyes wistfully on the façade of the grand old family mansion it brought in view, trusting that its aspect might afford surer anguries than that of the ungrateful borough. On this occasion, though more than ever justifying the epithet, he forbore to salute it as a "dreary pile!"

But if the arrival of the travellers were unlooked for at Edenbourne, at the Castle they were expected with breathless anxiety. Without pausing to interrogate the old servants awaiting them with grave faces on the threshold, Philip proceeded at once to usher his companion into the sick chamber; where Simprems stole forward on tiptoe to greet them with details of his noble patient far from satisfactory, and details of the remedies he had applied, satisfactory only to himself.

While Dr. Vaughan betook himself to the bedside, to examine the pulse and countenance of the sufferer, Philip withdrew hastily to the window. He had not courage to witness an investigation that might end in a sentence of death.

Sentences of death, however, are seldom orally administered by the life-preserver of a court. After a silence of many minutes, during which all was so still in the muffled chamber that Philip could hear the ticking of the doctor's chronometer, Dr. Vaughan approached the window with noiseless footsteps and well-schooled solemnity of countenance, silently

conveying the fatal decree with due deference to the rank and fortune of the sufferer.

"My father's state, then, is hopeless?" murmured Philip, forestalling the afflicting communication.

"Hopeless, as regards the restoration of his faculties," replied the oracle, in the proper sick chamber whisper. "As regards the mere functions of life, Lord Askham may survive for weeks, for months, perhaps for years. But he will drag on a miserable existence, lost to himself and his family.—I regret to say that his lordship's mind is irrecoverably gone."

Philip had not breath to inquire whether preventative measures, adopted in time, might have averted the evil. At the impulse of his startled feelings, he was already beside the bed of his father, contemplating the vacant stare and distorted countenance of the unfortunate man thus prematurely effaced from the list of responsible beings. It was impossible to blind himself to the fact, that paternal affliction had done the deed!

As an aggrieved father, the situation of Lord

Askham, deplorable as it was, became invested with a sort of dignity; and while the complicated causes of the mischief recurred to the mind of his son, Philip could scarcely refrain from exclaiming, as he pondered upon the fatal influence of Percy's indiscretions,—"What on earth took him round by Toulouse?"

The involuntary reminiscence, however, was out of place; for

> Γελως ακαιρω εν βροτοις δεινον κακον.

and the heart of Philip was sincerely touched by the solemnity of the scene.

To the rest of the family, meanwhile, the decree of Warwick Lane, rapidly promulgated through the house, conveyed considerable relief. The weeping school-room and panic-struck servants' hall dwelt only upon the fact that his lordship's life might be spared for years.—No matter his state of imbecility,—no matter his being bed-ridden!—Any thing rather than the grave:—

> The weariest and most loathed worldly life
> Is paradise to what we fear of death!

and, as the lady's maid whined consolingly to

Lady Askham, while administering a copious draught of camphor julep after the professional decree, "Her ladyship had no need to take on, for while there was life there was hope!"

If Philip saw little cause for gratulation in his father's helpless state, for a lesser mercy he was sincerely thankful. Not a syllable was uttered by the kind and judicious Emma, when he folded her in his arms, in allusion to her neglected warnings. Though her hollow eyes and wasted cheeks avouched the anxieties she had undergone, she adverted only to the future. Of what avail to aggravate their present misery by allusions to the past!

All she entreated was that Philip would not think of leaving them. Dr. Vaughan had been forced to return immediately to town. But, though Lord and Lady Uppingham, who had been sent for, were expected in the course of the day, it was impossible to dispense with Philip.

"It is to you we all look for instructions," said she. "My poor mother is too much over-

powered to act; and during Percy's absence, to *you* belongs the supreme authority here."

He,—Philip the drudge,—Philip the contemned younger son, invested with supreme authority at Eden Castle!—There was mockery in the very idea. But no! all was sad and sober earnest. The tyranny of the place was overpast. There lay before him, extended on the bed from which he was never more to rise, the proud man humbled—the angry man subdued—the selfish man, dependent for the remainder of his maimed and disabled existence, on the mercy and sympathy of other people. Already, Lord Askham, of Eden Castle, was as any other mortal clod!—

Poor Simprems who, during the brief sojourn of the courtly Esculapius, had crept about the place with drooping ears and tail between his legs, hazarded a slight attempt after his departure to renew his former twaddle about "fortifying the epigastric region by alteratives and a change of diet."

But he might have spared his pains. Lord Uppingham was now arrived; who, fixing his

eagle-glance on the confused apothecary, made it apparent by a few authoritative questions and comments, that half the evil was the result of his incompetency; and that all he could do in atonement, was to attend strictly to the suggestions of a judgment sounder than his own.

For the Marquis was come, as usual, to advise and govern, not merely to deplore. Though deeply touched by the self-accusing tears of his beloved Margaret as she surveyed the altered form of her helpless father, his predominant concern was lest the welfare of his lordship's equally helpless family should thenceforward lie at the mercy of the unstable and selfish Philip; and remembering the state of subjection to which he had seen his brother-in-law reduced by the former oppressions of Eden Castle, he rashly attempted with *him* the same course of stern cross-examination to which he had submitted the apothecary.

But Pope Sixtus had long since flung away his staff; and stood upright in the conclave. The Marquis might as well have attempted to bend the mainmast of the Victory, as bully the

new and improved edition of Philip Askham. Forewarned and forearmed against one who claimed over him the superiorities of a benefactor, he encountered his dictatorial brother-in-law with an impassible dignity of reserve, such as would have made the fortune of his diplomatic career.

There was every excuse, however, for the anxieties of Lord Uppingham. Still ignorant of the details of Percy's rash improvidence, he knew not what to make of the reduced establishment at Eden Castle, so different from his own princely household, and its former methodical array; and, dreading that Lord Askham's seizure might bave been produced by the pressure of pecuniary difficulties, and the family of his precious Margaret be on the brink of ruin, there was no one but Philip to whom he could apply for information.

His own poor little wife, spell-bound the moment she crossed the threshold of her former prison, was devoting all her thoughts and moments to her mother; and as to Lady Askham, *her* faculties seemed scarcely less impaired than

those of her lord! After living five-and-twenty years with one who was bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh, by the law of nature as well as by sacramental grace, she felt herself so completely identified with him, that, since it was proved in his case that paralysis was in the blood, she felt convinced her own turn was coming; and having communicated her fears to Simprems, so anxious was he to make amends for former lack of zeal, that already he had prepared for cupping, and talked of sinapisms to the feet.

Deprived of his usual companion by all this ill-timed folly, and finding it as impossible to extract information from Philip as from his unconscious father-in-law, the Marquis of Uppingham went wandering about the desolate place, sorely in want of some one over whom to exercise his ascendancy, (an operation which *he* called taking into his confidence!) and great was the relief to his feelings when Henry Askham made his appearance from Cambridge,—to enter into his grievances, and assume a place behind him on the opposition benches.

Henry Askham, a cleverish but priggish young gentleman, still dizzy on the stilts of his university honours, and inflated with ambitions generated by the discovery that a family borough was keeping warm for him in the oven, was overjoyed to receive overtures of friendship from one of whom he had hitherto regarded Philip as the exclusive *protégé;* and whom he venerated as a Tory and borough-holder far more than as a marquis or a brother-in-law. A league offensive and defensive was speedily entered into between them; on the grounds of many national alliances, that, being devoid singly of power or information, and two negatives being supposed to make an affirmative, their weakness and ignorance united, might produce enlightenment and strength.

In every numerous family where diversities of interest prevail, parties are as certain to arise, as in the body politic of the state. Before three days were over its head and that of Lord Uppingham, Eden castle was irreconcileably divided against itself. The vidual seclusion of Lady Askham's chamber afforded a

gathering point for the malcontents; while Emma, who had been thrown out of her mother's good graces by her coldness towards Lord Middlemore and friendship for Mrs. Saville, remained the solitary ally of Philip; in common with whom, she devoted herself to the care of the invalid.

"I can understand *my* being in their black books," said Philip, as they sat together at the dressing-room window adjoining Lord Askham's room, enjoying the dewy twilight of a sultry July day, while discussing the family politics; "but what have *you* done, dear Emma, to offend them? *You* have neglected no duty towards your parents,—*you* do not dine at Carlton House,—*you* are not the friend of Lady Grandison———"

"But I am the friend of Mrs. Saville!" interrupted Emma;—"a far less pardonable offence!"

"I fancied," replied Philip, lowering his voice, though they were alone, and the ears of the sick man in the adjoining room would have remained insensible to a park of artillery,—"I

fancied that she had of late become a favourite here?"

"Yes, so long as you remained in London."

"Why, what influence have *I* in the question;—I, who have neither seen nor thought of her for years."

"You will see her often enough *now:* unless, indeed, Lord Uppingham should instigate mamma to a new declaration of war."

"Lord Uppingham?"—reiterated Philip, with some *hauteur*, "I should not advise *him* to interfere."

"I have heard papa assert, a thousand times, that it was only to break off your intimacy at Eastfield, my brother-in-law applied for your appointment."

Indignant to find that he had been dealt with as a puppet, Philip expressed in stronger terms than ever, his determination to rebut all future intermeddling on the part of the Marquis.

"If Lord Uppingham *often* exhibit as much defect of sagacity as in anticipating danger to *me* from a passion for Mrs. Saville," said he with bitterness, "it strikes me that his reputa-

tion as a public man, must be somewhat usurped!"

"Perhaps the danger he apprehends, lies in Mrs. Saville's passion for *yourself?*"—remonstrated Miss Askham.

"Her passion for *me?*"—cried Philip, with a gesture of impatience.—"How can you utter such absurdities?—I could forgive Margaret, who never had an idea—unless suggested by Miss Harrison, and is now enslaved by her husband's opinions. But you, Emma, who are more observant, and have had opportunities of judging the case, *you* know the indifference with which I was always regarded at Eastfield!"—

"*Always* is a wide word!" replied his sister, smiling at his vehemence. "I suppose, however, there *was* a time when you visited there as a mere acquaintance."

"Certainly! and *since* that time, I have not visited there at all."

"Absence is no great security against the growth of an attachment!" rejoined Miss Askham, with a sigh that seemed to bear some

personal reference;—" and as regards Evelyn's affection for yourself—"

"Emma!"—interrupted her brother, with deep emotion,—" you are choosing a strange moment and a strange subject, to practise upon my feelings!—On such points I never distressed *you!*—From the moment you convinced me of your antipathy to Middlemore, I refrained from mentioning his name!"

"You are not, I trust, so ungrateful," said Miss Askham, with spirit, "as to compare *my* contempt of that foolish fellow with *your* feelings towards Mrs. Saville?—I wonder whether all men endeavour to excuse the levity of their hearts, by pretending to disbelieve in the attachment of which they are the object!"

"Do you persist, then, in asserting me to be regarded at Eastfield as more than a common acquaintance?"

"As an object of *adoration!*" — replied Emma, "I can solemnly assure you that little Selina"—

"*Selina!*" interrupted Philip, half frantic

with disappointment. "Just now, you seemed to be alluding to Mrs. Saville!"

"And so I was! What but her attachment to your ungracious self, has kept her still a widow?"

"Her attachment to the memory of her husband!—Had you seen her as *I* did, in her first broken-hearted days of widowhood—"

"Hearts tender enough to be broken by such losses," interrupted Emma, "are tender enough to love again. But you exact too much in requiring me to explain the why, when, and wherefore of her affection. All I know is, that it sufficed to prevent her forming a most advantageous marriage."

"Do you call a match with Sir Erasmus L'Estrange a most advantageous marriage?"

"Had poor Simprems been in sufficient favour with you to venture upon gossip, you would not be still ignorant that, after the ball here last year, my poor father's protégé, Sir Henry Lenitive, who was staying at Eden Castle, placed his splendid fortune at her feet."

"A man far gone in a consumption!"

"Helen Middlemore assured us *that* was a recommendation in the eyes of your fine lady friend, Lady Grandison!"

"But who told you, my dear Emma, that he had been refused by Mrs. Saville?"

"Himself!—Half mad with disappointment, he confided to me, as the friend of Evelyn, that, in order to set the matter at rest for ever, she admitted her affections to be engaged."

"But not to *me?*—She never said they were engaged to *me?*"—cried Philip, gasping for breath.

"Urge me no further on the subject," replied his sister. "I cannot say more without violating the confidence of Mrs. Saville. But where are you going, Philip?"—cried she, perceiving that he had started up, and was looking for his hat and gloves.

"Merely to take a turn in the park. I have scarcely been out to-day; and the evening air is so refreshing!" replied her brother, about to quit the room.

"Stay a moment, and let me fetch my bonnet

to accompany you," cried Miss Askham, alarmed by the impetuosity of his movements.

"*One* of us must remain here to make a report by-and-by to Simprems," said Philip, evidently resolved that it should not be himself. "*You* have been with my father the greater part of the day, and can give the most detailed account of him."

And away he hurried; leaving Emma to muse over his selfishness;—for, as he truly asserted, she *had* spent the greater part of the day in the sick-room.

Nevertheless, when Simprems made his appearance, she was forced to admit that Philip must have been indeed in want of air and exercise; for it appeared that he had gone in pursuit of them, literally as far as Edenbourne!

After the discharge of his professional duties, the gossiping apothecary could not refrain from mentioning that he "had not expected to find Mr. Philip at home, having met him about an hour before on the high road, within a stone's throw of Eastfield."

At that moment, Emma agreed with all the world except the turnpike-man, that it was strange her brother should prefer a dusty high road in the dog-days, to the fragrant shrubberies of Eden Castle!—

CHAPTER XII.

In a house full of children, you shall see the eldest respected, and the youngest made wantons: but in the midst some that are as it were forgotten, who, many times prove the best.

BACON.

Satis magnum alter alteri theatrum sumus.

EPIC.

IN the course of the ensuing three weeks, the London journals more than once informed the public, (doubtless profoundly interested in the event,) that "the state of Lord Askham's health was such as to afford to his medical attendants and afflicted family, no hope of his recovery;" and for a wonder, the London journals spoke truth. A second consultation of physicians had decided that his lordship's mind was utterly gone, and his body soon to follow.

A considerable change had occurred, however, in the prospects and politics of the family. The Uppinghams had returned to the North,—Margaret being of opinion that a helpless infant had stronger claims on her maternal care than a helpless father, on her filial; and previous to their departure, Lady Askham, as if arming herself against all opposition, by the support of her son-in-law, summoned into her sick chamber the members of the family council.

In the capacity of her attorney-general, the Marquis opened the proceedings; and though, in any other, the deep feeling with which he adverted to the calamity of his noble contemporary, and exhorted all present to make the comfort and credit of the head of the family their first object, would have excited as strong an interest in the mind of Philip, as the loyal burst of Lord Thurlow, in the case of his afflicted sovereign, had done in that of the whole kingdom,—yet, viewing him in the light of a benefactor aspiring to become an oppressor,—or of a Tory out-of-place, seeking to assume the reins of government wherever they were hanging loose,

Philip Askham hardened his heart. Having now ascertained that the service rendered him by Lord Uppingham was the result of a cold-blooded desire to part him from the woman to whom he was supposed to be attached, all tie of gratitude was at an end.

"Were it likely," said the Marquis, at the close of his exordium, "that the life of poor Lord Askham would be of long continuance, it would be necessary to apply to Chancery to appoint a curator of his person and estates. But the annoyance and publicity of such a proceeding may be spared. His medical attendants are unanimous in opinion that his days are drawing to a close; and Lady Askham is competent, under such circumstances, to execute all minor acts in his name. By the deed of William, first Lord Askham, a sum not exceeding five thousand a year, was fortunately set aside out of the estates, for the express maintenance of Eden Castle; to be enjoyed by the head of the family for the time being, or such members of it as he shall appoint, on condition of resid-

ing there six months in the year;—a provision which forestalls all necessity for judicial interference."

"*Quand l'orgueil donne des conseils,*" says Helvétius, "*l'orgueil les fait repousser: l'enclume fait rebondir le marteau.*" The authoritative tone assumed by Lord Uppingham would have rendered unpalateable the wisdom of Solomon; and though the clause to which he referred had been kept a secret by Lord and Lady Askham only to make a virtue of their enforced adherence to home, Philip chose to make his brother-in-law accountable for their hypocrisy.—It was not to *him*,—unkindred with the Askham blood,—that the mystery should have been first entrusted; and on his proceeding to lay down the law, in his usual decisive tone, concerning the treatment to be adopted towards the invalid, Philip lifted up his voice to intimate, in a tone equally overbearing, that "it was his intention to be solely guided by professional advice."

"I am merely signifying the pleasure of

Lady Askham," was the stern reply of the Marquis. "Your mother's authority, Philip, is still paramount here."

"And I, my lord, am maintaining the rights of my brother Percy," rejoined Philip, with firmness; "of whom, during his absence from England, I am the representative."

"You are mistaken, sir; his parents are his natural representatives," rejoined Lord Uppingham, with increasing *hauteur*.

"His *natural* representatives," retorted Philip, "but not his *legal* ones!" And having laid upon the table a power of attorney, formally executed by Percy, investing him with the fullest powers, he had the satisfaction of seeing a glance of dismay exchanged between his mother and her dictatorial son-in-law.

"You have lost no time!" said the latter, refolding the parchment, after examining the signature, and ascertaining that it was of a week's date. "But, with such legal advisers as Lord Hardynge, and such couriers as a secretary of state, all difficulties of time and place are easy to overcome!"

"It was your lordship's suggestion on your arrival here that active steps ought to he taken," rejoined Philip, with an air of defiance: "and I have received from Lord Hardynge, as a *friend*, only such counsels as *you* have been seeking in behalf of others, from the professional advisers of my father."

Had Lord Uppingham at that moment provoked him by further sarcasm, Philip might have been tempted, perhaps, to produce the letter by which the transmission of the power of attorney was accompanied; in which Percy, after the bitterest invectives against the officious counsellor who had induced his father to withdraw his name from the list of prisoners selected for exchange, so as to excite specifically against him the animosity of the Emperor, and render impossible all future negociations in his favour, appealed forcibly to his brother, as his steady friend,—his only real friend in the family,—to adopt his interests as his own, and repudiate all interference in his concerns, in the event of his father's decease.

"It may perhaps suit the projects of one

who has spent his life on the back-stairs, and among the intrigues of the court," added Percy, "to prolong my banishment for life, as, thanks to the universal triumphs of the French army, will probably be the case. But, by Jove, *he* shall not profit by my loss!—On *you*, my dear Phil, I can wholly depend. *You* are my representative at Eden Castle; and I adjure you to be on your guard against the craft of those whose wits have been rendered sharper than ours only by longer contact with the hard whetstone of the world."

But the Marquis of Uppingham was too high-bred and self-possessed a man to provoke useless altercation. Sufficiently versed in human physiognomy to see that Philip was armed with the strength of his obstinate selfishness, as well as with an efficient power of attorney, he foresaw clearly, on quitting Eden Castle, that his first visit would be his last. Having recommended the interests of Lady Askham to her son Henry, (in confidential terms, which so tickled the young man's vanity, that for the remainder of the day he stalked about the

castle, mysterious and consequential as Malvolio,) he turned his face joyfully toward that happier home; where for *him* the best joys of life were commencing, while of Lord Askham, though his junior, the mortal race was run!

Meanwhile the secret of Philip's assumption of consequence soon transpired in the neighbourhood, as was plainly to be inferred from the deferential tone of Simprems's application to him for instructions, and Dr. Hacket's for tidings of his noble father, interlarded with scriptural texts, as became a note addressed to the patron of fifteen livings. But what was far more satisfactory, whenever either of them *now* descried him walking towards Eastfield, he took care to have immediate business in the opposite direction; or was so lost in reverie, as to pass him by unobservantly on the other side. But this was not the greatest wonder accomplished by the sovereignty of Philip. If the rector and apothecary were struck blind, Lady Askham was miraculously restored to health! Her nervous panic subsided under the shock of a real grievance.

Had Lord Askham died a sudden death, his cousin-wife,—his companion of a quarter of a century,—would doubtless have experienced the sentiments of affliction becoming her widow's weeds.—But his mode of attack and present condition, excited terror rather than pity.—She had scarcely courage to look upon her second self, disfigured and idiotized; and was in the position of the horror-struck victim chained by Mezentius to a corpse.

As usual when the fine sensibilities of the heart are blunted, meaner feelings found room to expand. Touched on the tender point of her interests, she discovered that she had no leisure to cultivate symptoms of a flying palsy; that, to protect the seven younger children still unprovided for, against the encroachments of Philip, she must be vigilant as Argus. For though, had her ladyship been *compelled* to reside at Eden Castle, she would have complained of the insufficiency of the means assigned to keep up the place, and the hardship of being tethered to a spot connected with reminiscences of her earlier and happier days,—

no sooner was it clear that, on Percy's attainment of title and fortune, she must be reduced to the insignificance of dowagerhood, and dismissed from her olden home, than she began to feel herself ill-used!

Never till now had she been duly sensible of the beauties of Eden Castle, or the merits of her country neighbours! When glancing from her dressing-room windows towards the unsightly outline of Hexham Hall, which stood regarding her with neighbourly compassion from the opposite hill, she admitted with a sigh, that there could not be a more friendly woman than Mrs. Gwatkin, or a more harmless old gentleman than Sir Erasmus: then, as her eyes descended from the Hexham chimney-tops to the verdant glade of the home-park, an exclamation burst from her lips, resembling in humble prose the apostrophe of Milton's hero,—

> "And must I *leave* thee, PARADISE!"

Hard, indeed, to find her career of domestic prosperity cut short, full twenty years before the allotted age of man—or nobleman!

Such sentiments as those of Lady Askham it may be necessary to describe at length, for they were sentiments proper to Lady Askham. But in the confident hope of possessing among our readers fifty young, generous, and tender souls for every selfish dowager, it appears less urgent to relate that the paradise *she* was preparing to lose, was already gained by others better qualified to do it honour. The sympathy of the attentive reader cannot but have forestalled the announcement, that, from the first evening of Emma's revelations, the road through Eden Chase had resumed its former attractions in the eyes of Philip; and strange to relate, though his visits to Eastfield were now daily repeated and daily prolonged, not a soul had a word to say in reprobation!

Mrs. Saville had become as much an object of respect in the neighbourhood, as she had always been of admiration. Her pleasing manners, and sterling virtues, had won golden opinions for her on every side. Aware of her having forborne to monopolize the splendid fortune of the devoted Sir Erasmus, Mrs. Gwat-

kin revered her as the friend of her family; while the rector, aware how large a portion of her narrow income and bespoken time was devoted to charitable purposes, respected her as the friend of the poor: nay, the passion of Lord Askham's son, which, so long as she passed for an adventuress, had doubled her opprobrium, centupled her merits now that she had progressed into an angel!

The saint in crape was twice a saint in lawn!

But what mattered, at that moment, either to Philip or herself, how she was talked of, or what degree of sympathy their courtship was exciting?—So happy were they in themselves, so happy with the exuberant happiness of an attachment long thwarted by interference and long harassed by misunderstandings, that the livelong summer day would not have sufficed for mutual explanations and protestations, even had the day been wholly at their disposal. But alas! how limited a fraction of it could be snatched by Philip from his painful duties at Eden Castle!

After all, though five years had elapsed since their accidental encounter, their probation had not extended to a *very* advanced period of life! Mrs. Saville was scarcely three-and-twenty; and the calm seclusion of her recent life having counteracted the effects of early care and early maternity, she retained the almost girlish air imparted by extreme fairness of complexion and slenderness of form.—Philip Askham was justified in exclaiming, under the fascination of the beaming smiles no longer withheld from him, that among the daughters of fashion as among the dowdies of Edenbourne, not one was comparable in beauty with his future wife.

Under the delicate circumstance of the family at Eden Castle, their engagement was for the present kept a secret; their union being postponed till Philip should be released from attendance on his father.—*Whom* had they to consult?—*Whose* displeasure had either of them to deprecate? Philip wisely foresaw that rejected by her nearest connexions, Mrs. Saville would become wholly dependent on his will. And how

pleasant it was, now that their fears and perplexities were at an end, to go over, step by step, and hour by hour, the past, so pregnant with vexation; to account mutually for their long blindness and gradual enlightenment to the nature of their sentiments,—the sleepless nights,—the repining days,—produced by the alternations of hope and fear symptomatic of unhappy love!

When mirth was wanting to relieve the oppression of their overcharged hearts, it was easy to find amusement in the absurd jealousy conceived by Philip of the nankin-coloured Romeo of Edenbourne Lodge. Nay, when the fillip of a lover's quarrel seemed desirable, there was good ground for a mimic war, in the widely-bruited flirtations of Philip Askham with the young beauty of Grandison House.

But no such stimulants were necessary. The sands in the hour-glass of the lovers were all of gold. Impossible to be happier, whether in themselves or each other. Eastfield was at that season of the year a bower of roses; and now that Philip experienced no nervous vertigo to

attribute to their fragrance, he admitted the little nook to be indeed the "Garden of Eden,"—especially since the old serpent, Sir Erasmus, was crawling in the sun elsewhere.

Next to the peaceful-hearted woman who sat hand-in-hand with Philip, enjoying the summer atmosphere and letting the pleasant hours go by, the happiest person at Eastfield was Selina! As the day-and-night companion of her mother, the child instinctively imbibed her attachments; and having no remembrance of the father lost in infancy to qualify her affection for one who petted her so kindly, and whose personal fascinations were so considerable, the little girl welcomed him back with as rapturous a joy, as though aware of the heartfelt delight experienced by her mother in his return.

Little Edward, a year younger than herself, and endowed with twice her animation and half her sensibility, — content to be amused, no matter by whom, and noisy no matter where,—still preferred the lodge, the pony, the terrier and Sir Erasmus, to the long explanations and silence, almost equally prolonged,—be-

tween the daily visitor and mamma. But Selina, skipping about the lawn at Eastfield like the guardian fairy of the place, was no obstacle to the confidences between the happy pair; and so truly did the little creature enjoy the company of her dear Philip, (even when he had no attention to bestow on herself, as was now usually the case,) that she would loiter for hours beside the garden-gate, listening for his coming footsteps;—a post of observation, which, but for the shame of detection, Mrs. Saville might have been occasionally tempted to share.

The happiness of the loving couple in each other was perhaps all the greater, that they had no confidants on whom to expend the expression of their joy. Sole survivor of her own family, and disavowed of her husband's, Evelyn Saville had none but her children to divide her affection with Philip; while he, restrained by the fear of creating family discussions from allowing Emma more than a guess at the origin of his auspicious change of humour and mysterious absences from the castle, and prevented by the

intimacy between the Hardynges and De Bayhurst from confiding his altered prospects to his friend, was all in all to *her* whose future life was to be all his own.

From Bob, indeed, he received frequent letters, on pretence that, in the melancholy seclusion to which he was condemned, news of the London circles might be acceptable; but, in reality, because it was easy to insinuate into every epistle some ridiculous anecdote of Lord Middlemore. Nor was his account of his own engagements and pursuits framed with a view to *depreciate* himself in the eyes of Emma; to whom he took care to despatch such long and intricate messages, as, with a person so indolent and averse to explanations as Philip, insured that the whole letter would eventually be placed in her hands.

Graver subjects, however, than the bets and boobyism of Lord Middlemore, or the coquettings of Lady Anastasia Grandison, soon occupied his pen. To Philip, he made no secret of the precarious situation both of Fox and the Whig

administration; and the depression of his father under this double cloud occasionally communicated itself even to his buoyant spirits.

But though Philip fulfilled Bob Hardynge's unexpressed purpose by the regular communication of his news to Emma, (perhaps as some atonement for his reserve on other matters,) he carefully avoided in reply all allusion to the happy events which rendered Grandison House, and the Middlemores, and all the other shreds and patches of London fashion, altogether vanity in his sight.

Cheered, on the other hand, by the political prospects so unsatisfactory to Philip and his friend, Henry Askham, the embryo man of genius, was already off to the north, to confederate with Lord Uppingham touching their mutual prospects, in the event of a change of of ministry.

The state of his mother was no longer such as to require his support, nor of his father his assistance. Lady Askham was absorbed in gathering together her household pelf, that she

might be prepared for immediate departure from the castle, "in case of the worst;" and though poor Lord Askham had recovered sufficient strength to be wheeled into an adjoining chamber for change of air, he was incapable of distinguishing between the attendance of his sons and that of his servants.

Emma, indeed, untirable in her assiduities, often spent hours by his side; protesting that he was aware of her presence, and had several times made efforts to address her—But that this was *impossible*, Simprems proceeded to demonstrate by all the rules of art; and by dint of much obstinacy and much Latin, he succeeded in convincing Lady Askham, that his noble patient was as morally and physically dead, as though the marble tablet were affixed in form over his lordship's sepulchre, and her ladyship's weeds already rusty.

What therefore was the surprise, almost the dismay, of Philip, when, one afternoon, as he was inditing a letter to Verdun, acquainting Percy with the progress of events at Eden Castle, he was hurriedly summoned by the

nurse in attendance on his father. "My lord had recognized her,—my lord had spoken, almost distinctly,—my lord had asked for my lady!"

If the grave had given up its dead, he could not have been more startled; and it was difficult to subdue his amazement into a more becoming sentiment, when, on entering the chamber where, propped in his easy chair, sat Lord Askham, still gaunt and ghastly, but conscious of all that was passing around him,—his affectionate greetings were answered by a fixed stare of some moments' duration; at the close of which, he marked his recognition of his son by faintly articulating the name of "Philip."

The delighted Emma was addressed with tenderer recognition; and from the few words to which he gave utterance, it was clear that his impressions remained at the point where they were arrested by his paralytic seizure. He not only called for the favourite dog by which, on that occasion, he was accompanied, but in his incoherent words to his daughter, alluded kindly to Mrs. Saville!

Marvellous to relate, the person who, it

might have been supposed, would experience the greatest triumph in this resuscitation, seemed far from overjoyed.

Lady Askham, panic-struck by his attack, was panic-struck by his recovery!—Had Edward Saville suddenly made his appearance at Eastfield, he could scarcely have produced greater consternation, than poor Lord Askham, the despot of Eden Castle, by suddenly, after six weeks abeyance of his faculties, venturing to "ask for my lady!"

For my lady was conscious of having sinned against him!—My lady had unceremoniously ransacked his private papers in search of a will, and invaded his secret sanctuaries, to hunt for title-deeds. Many of his letters were destroyed, —many of his treasures demolished,—many of his plans rendered abortive. But it was all the fault of Simprems!—Had not Simprems assured her, in the most positive manner, that the mind of Lord Askham was as irreparably gone as though he had been dead a twelve-month, she should have been more careful in her proceedings,—*anglice*, more scrupulous in

her spoliations!—She made her appearance, in short, in presence of the dead-alive, as though summoned before the quarter-sessions.

That day was a day of stupid wonderment at Eden Castle!—Philip, not venturing to be a moment out of call of his father, so far from enjoying his usual expedition to Edenbourne, could not find a moment to dispatch an explanatory line to Mrs. Saville; and when Simprems made his appearance in his turn, so overpowered was he by the unlooked-for reversal of his sentence of death, that, with his usual precipitation of judgment, he fell into a contrary extreme;—hinted that a miracle had been accomplished, (perhaps in requital of the prayers of the most virtuous of wives!) and, after feeling the pulse of his patient, protested that nature having operated so great a crisis, there was no reason why, in some days' time, Lord Askham might not be refreshed by carriage exercise! In a few weeks, God willing, (and the healing art permitting,) all might be at Eden Castle as heretofore.

In the course of the day, this marvellous in-

telligence was communicated by letter from Emma to Uppingham Manor,—from Philip to the lady of his love,—and from Lady Askham to her man of business. The very newspapers were instructed to acquaint the world with Lord Askham's miraculous recovery.—Death and the doctor were distanced!

But the result of such shallow and short-sighted hopes is easy to anticipate. The expiring lamp had brightened only at the moment of extinction; and Mrs. Saville was awoke next morning, after a night of feverish restlessness, by a strangely lugubrious sound,—the great bell of Edenbourne tolling the knell of Lord Askham!—

Sad omen!—that her first intimation of the event securing her marriage, should be a passing bell!—Sadder still, that when, two months afterwards, on the removal of the widow and family from the castle to Mansfield Street, her wedding really took place, the parish church was gloomy as night with the funeral altar and pulpit-cloths of its deceased patron;—the very pew-opener exhibiting a suit of sables!

Nay more, — as the carriage conveying the newly-married couple entered the quadrangle of Eden Castle, the first object that met the eyes of the bride, on raising her head from the shoulder of her husband to salute the scene of her future happiness, was the achievement of Lord Askham recently fixed over the gateway, with its emblazoned mockery of skulls and cross-bones !—

"In Cœlo Quies!" involuntarily repeated the gentle bride of Philip Askham, as, with a swelling heart, she crossed the threshold of her future home!

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.